

Session I—Afternoon of the Fourth Day

Seventh Talk

Important Background for the Speaker

The sixth talk explained the *theology* of Christian brother/sisterhood and its relation to the sacramental mission of priests. If this retreat said nothing more about brother/sisterhood, the retreatants could easily fail to see the crucial practical aspects of brother/sisterhood for their *pastoring*. The seventh and eighth talks explain those practical aspects.

This talk first explains the pastoral benefits of brother/sisterhood at the practical level of the support Christian individuals and families need. Then the talk introduces the practical steps pastors can take to achieve it. The eighth talk, Session C, will be at the even more practical level of specific do's and don'ts of the leadership needed to establish, maintain, and continuously improve brother/sisterhood. So retreatants' receptivity to the following talk presupposes that they have grasped the practical steps introduced in this talk sufficiently to be open to learning more about them.

Most of the material consists of things that pastors need to know about but all Catholics do not need to know about. So while all of it needs to be learned by pastors, the laity do not need to learn all of it. Still, the talk does contain some important material that the laity needs to hear.

This is a 40-minute talk.

Goals

To ensure that pastors understand:

- The role Christian brother/sisterhood in overcoming secularism.
- Practical steps that can achieve Christian brother/sisterhood.

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 the retreatants understand how to present these points?

1. Many of our problems are due to Catholics being influenced by their secular environments. If we had Christian brother/sisterhood, we would have Christian environments to overcome that problem.
2. Other than secularism, our most profound pastoral challenge is “the decline of natural community.” Our pastoring once presupposed stable communities that were people's support systems. Families could succeed in evangelism because of the support that stable communities gave it.
3. The decline of community and the influence of secularism both come from technological progress. Countries where the Church is thriving are usually places where technological

progress hasn't come. When it does, we will not know how to cope with secularism and individualism unless we learn to cope with them here.

4. Many church-going Catholics do not see the Church as a family but as an institution providing religious goods and services. The institutional aspects of the Church are absolutely necessary, but as means to familial unity.
5. The full effectiveness of the Eucharistic depends most, not on liturgical reform, but on celebration in a pastoral context of brother/sisterhood based on repentance and personal faith in Jesus.
6. Evangelism in the personal sense is the most important step in creating brother/sisterhood. Christian brother/sisterhood cannot even make sense otherwise.
7. To evangelize and create community, use movements that God raises up. Movements have been misused by leaders with unbalanced pastoral priorities. Proper pastoral agendas reflect the Hierarchy of Christian Truths.
8. We cannot predict the models of evangelization and brother/sisterhood that God plans for the future, but we can learn from our past mistakes.
9. Having a liturgy in a pastoral program should not be automatic, but discerned carefully. Having that which is incomparably the greatest has sometimes interfered with that which is most important: achieving the goals of the liturgies we have already celebrated.
10. Movements can provide things that the fruits of the Mass presuppose and that are insufficiently present today. Pastorally inappropriate uses of the Mass can defeat its purpose.
11. Most priests may not be called to leadership in movements, but all priests must be open to let God show them how to revise their pastoral agendas.

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. Grace works with nature. Being influenced by environments is natural; so we need Christian environments to cooperate fully with grace.
- II. To see the need of Christian environments we don’t need to know secular social history. Jesus’ pastoral commandment to build brother/sisterhood is a command to build Christian environments.
- III. The main step to the goal of Christian brother/sisterhood is to preach, not love, but accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior.
- IV. To evangelize and build brother/sisterhood, we must use the movements that God raises up, even though all movements will be imperfect.
- V. One good purpose for which movements have sometimes been mistakenly used is so good that it can mistakenly seem more important than the pastoral work of evangelizing and creating community.
- VI. God may not call all or even most priests to become leaders in future movements.

Expanded Outline

- I. Grace works with nature. Being influenced by environments is natural; so we need Christian environments to cooperate fully with grace.
 - A. The sacraments are not intended to free us from the influence of environments. Being influenced by our milieu is part of the nature God gave us; He intends us to be social beings who ordinarily need the support and acceptance of others.
 1. Our pastoral strategy, which is to give Catholics the sacraments and catechesis, de facto and unintentionally acts as if grace suppresses nature.
 2. Sacramental celebrations alone are not equivalent to Christian environments and cannot be fully effective without Christian environments.
 - B. Environments supportive of Christian living no longer exist where they once did.
 1. People used to spend all their lives near the same group. They had a sense of community and identity.

2. 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.
 3. Natural community supported the family as the primary evangelizer in two ways.
 - a. Marriage itself was supported by proximity to parents, grand parents, siblings, relatives and long-term friends. Now people move once every five years. It's hard for marriages to have close, lasting support systems.
 - b. Outside the home, children's environments included a sufficient number of Christian peers to re-affirm the family's teaching.
- C. The same technological changes that spread secularism caused the decline of natural community.
1. In countries where the Church is thriving, technology has not yet broken up natural community. But it can.
 2. Then there won't be Christian environments to counter the secularism technology will allow to flourish in those countries.
 3. If we don't learn how to respond to secularism here, we can lose those countries too.
- II. To see the need of Christian environments we don't need to know secular social history. Jesus' pastoral commandment to build brother/sisterhood is a command to build Christian environments.
- A. Secular learning can be helpful. But the main step in coping with post-Christian society is to re-learn Jesus' pastoral plan.
- B. Unless Catholics experience the Church as a visible, not just spiritual, family, we are practicing Protestant doctrine on Church unity, not Catholic.
- C. Outside of the nuclear family, in our society, groups form to carry out business, political or recreational functions; close personal ties result only by accident. This change can distort our perception of the Church.
1. 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.
 2. The balance between being a presbyter, a leader in an extended family or village, and a hierus, one 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.

3. The equality of clergy and laity as brothers and sisters is more important than the inequality of their social roles. So priests need environments where they can primarily be brothers with all those who act in persona Christi in the highest way.
 4. The Church's institutional structure is absolutely necessary but as a means to an end. If the structure does not achieve the end of visible familial unity, it is not serving its purpose.
 5. But the Church's institutional aspects are not the only means needed for the end of Christian brother/sisterhood. Even intrinsically holy and powerful rituals are not enough to achieve Christian brother/sisterhood.
- D. Over the centuries the Church has used different pastoral strategies to make the Eucharist more effective. But its effectiveness depends most on a pastoral context of brother/sisterhood based on repentance and personal faith in Jesus.
1. Discouraging frequent reception at least had the pastoral effect of raising your consciousness of what you were doing when you did receive.
 2. Fasting from midnight had a similar pastoral benefit. You had to consciously decide that you were going to receive the next day.
 3. More recently celebrating the liturgy in a liturgically uplifting way has been our strategy for maximizing the effectiveness of the liturgy.
- E. But the full effectiveness of the sacraments depends much more on the context of visible and practical Christian brother/sisterhood, since supportive personal relations are among the operantis goals for the sake of which the sacraments exist.
1. In addition to sacramental celebrations, Christians need interactions that are social, not ritual, but are religious, not just secular: social interactions that build up, encourage, admonish, comfort (use quotes 13-18 below).
 2. Converts to Catholicism from sinful lifestyles often need new groups of friends to replace their old. As a brother/sisterhood, the Church should be able to provide that by its nature.
 3. Providing new support systems is one way groups like AA sometimes seem to help people avoid certain sins better than the Church does.
- F. We can naively romanticize Christian brother/sisterhood. Protestant experience shows that Christian fellowship needs the right institutional backbone. Good intentions are not enough.
1. Only the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have the right kind of organizational structure. And only Catholicism has it in the fullness called for by Jesus' pastoral plan.

2. For the full power of the sacraments to be released in Christian individuals, the Church must be a visible brother/sisterhood.
- III. The main step to the goal of Christian brother/sisterhood is to preach, not love, but accepting Jesus as personal Lord and Savior.
- A. Mutual love must be based on each one's awareness of the awesome dignity of being a Christian. Read aloud the following quotes (already handed out):
 1. "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)
 2. "I have given them the glory you have given me, *that* they may be one as we are one." (Jn 17:22 NAB)
 - B. Christian brother/sisterhood cannot even make sense to anyone unaware of the real presence of the Trinity within every Christian.
 1. I cannot appreciate the awesome dignity you acquired in becoming Christian unless I appreciate the awesome dignity I acquired.
 2. Again, only we who know the awesome gift nonChristians are called to can love them as they deserve.
 - C. The absence of Christian brother/sisterhood is not our deepest pastoral problem. It is a symptom of the absence of personal evangelism.
- IV. To evangelize and build brother/sisterhood, we must use the movements that God raises up, even though all movements will be imperfect.
- A. God has usually renewed the Church by raising up movements.
 1. God wouldn't have inspired those movements unless there was something that was both
 - a. Missing or insufficiently present in the normal pastoral life of the Church at that time, and
 - b. Needed for the normal pastoral life of the Church to achieve the goals of the sacraments.
 2. So even if we don't get involved in a movement, we must be ready to learn from them what God is saying about something important that is missing from our own pastoral agendas.
 - B. We can't know the models of evangelization and brother/sisterhood that God plans for the future, but we can and must learn from our past mistakes.

1. Movements have sometimes had inadequate local leadership due to the failure of priests with leadership gifts to get involved.
 - a. All movements will be imperfect and subject to abuse. That's why they need good local leadership.
 - b. If a movement's faults keep leaders who could correct them from getting involved, those faults will only get worse.
 - c. Shunning a movement because of faults can be a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure to improve the Church's pastoral life.
2. 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.
 - a. To use movements effectively, we have to know our true pastoral needs, namely, to make the sacraments we have ALREADY received bear fruit.
 - b. To achieve the goals of the sacraments Catholics have already received, we need to use movements for two things: (1) personal evangelization and/or (2) fostering community.
3. Movements with other direct purposes, like scripture study or charity, can create Christian environments as a by-product. Leaders should encourage them to do so whenever appropriate.

V. One good purpose for which movements have sometimes been mistakenly used is so good that it can mistakenly seem more important than the pastoral work of evangelizing and creating community.

- A. Past experience with evangelistic and communal movements teaches us to use them as venues for celebrating the Mass only with much discernment.
 1. With the greatest possible act present, the pastoral work that the goals of the Mass most need can take second place in the minds of the clergy and laity involved.
 2. In the charismatic renewal, enthusiastic liturgies often became more important than the pastoral work of which the enthusiasm was a by-product.
 - a. Sometimes people didn't want to have a prayer meeting if the priest wasn't there for the Mass, even though the prayer meeting was doing the pastoral work that made their Mass enthusiastic.
 - b. All the power behind that pastoral work came from prior sacraments, but that work was still needed to achieve the goals of those sacraments.

- c. We all need uplifting experiences and the Church should provide as many as possible, but only if they do not interfere with what is more important.
 - d. When the desire for uplifting experiences interferes with achieving the goals of the sacraments, that desire is a form of “spiritual gluttony.”
 - 3. Once again, pastors need to discern the difference between what is greatest and what is pastorally most important.
 - a. The Mass is always the greatest act but not always the most important in a given context.
 - b. When the sacristy is on fire, it is more important to put the fire out than to proceed with the greatest possible act.
 - c. The Mass’s being the greatest act can be a reason for NOT using it for what is most important: laying the foundations needed for the Masses we have already celebrated to achieve their goals.
 - 4. Our criteria for whether or not to include a Mass in an activity must be *pastoral*: what conditions are necessary for the effectiveness of our Sunday Eucharists?
 - a. Some charismatic groups added a Mass to witness to their Catholic orthodoxy to skeptical Catholics.
 - b. If so, they did not automatically add a Mass because it is the greatest prayer; the basis of the decision was a specifically discerned pastoral purpose.
- B. We must not jump from the *theological* truth that the Mass is the source of the Christian life to the false conclusion that it is the foundational *pastoral* activity.
 - 1. The exclusion of the early catechumens from the liturgy of the Eucharist proves otherwise.
 - 2. Receiving Communion is serious business (1 Co. 11:27-30). In many pastoral programs we may not be able to prevent frequent unworthy reception.
 - a. Evangelistic programs, e.g., charismatic prayer meetings, are meant to include those who may not yet be properly disposed to receive.
 - b. If all healing services have a Mass, many may receive who are not properly disposed.

- c. The Neo-Catechumenal Way avoids disrespecting the Eucharist by ministering to such people through a “liturgy of the Word.”
- C. If God continues to use pastoral activities like prayer meetings, whether or not they are charismatic, there can be one more reason for caution about the use of the liturgy, a reason that is very close to our great High Priest’s heart: Ecumenism.
 - 1. Many charismatic prayer meetings were once venues for ecumenism at the grassroots, not just at the rarified heights of specialized committees.
 - 2. When they added a Mass and told Protestants not to receive, most Protestants understandably stopped coming.
 - 3. That experience taught us how difficult it is for programs with a Mass to be ecumenical since not all can share communion.
 - 4. If God uses ecumenical prayer meetings in the future, priests will have an important place there even if they don’t celebrate Mass.
 - a. The prominent presence of a clerically dressed priest can inoffensively remind everyone to respect the presence of Catholics.
 - b. The priest can gently correct, at the appropriate time, any teaching or behavior that would harm the faith of the Catholic participants.
 - 5. We can still learn much by grassroots ecumenism, especially from seeing Protestant enthusiasm for, and methods of, personal evangelism.
- D. The *theological* truth that the Mass is the summit of the Christian life means that the Sunday liturgy should be the highest *pastoral* act of Christians who are consciously trying to be a brother/sisterhood outside of the Sunday liturgy.
 - 1. The goals of the Sunday liturgy require additional specifically religious activities that build Christian fellowship.
 - 2. In the charismatic renewal, the enthusiastic Mass often distracted from the work of building fellowship.
 - 3. Letting the Mass as summit interfere with building fellowship is like putting the roof on a building with insecure foundations and walls.
- E. If pastoral leaders view the life of the Church mainly from the viewpoint of their sacramental powers, we may never achieve the life the sacraments are meant to enable, or have enough priests to celebrate the sacraments.
 - 1. Lengthy, enthusiastic Masses may not leave movements enough time to do their work.

2. Unfortunately, we don't live in a world where many have the time to go "in a body to the temple everyday" and "meet in their homes for the breaking of the bread" (Acts 2: 46, NAB).
3. We must apportion the scarce and precious commodity, time, to achieve the goals of the sacraments Catholics have already received.
4. Can inappropriate over use cheapen the Mass? Frequent communion was once frowned on; do we sometimes make the opposite pastoral mistake and over use the Mass?

We could debate that question. But the answer would have to be yes if our use of the greatest act makes the pastoral work needed for the goals of the sacraments seem less important.

5. Caution in discerning when to have a Mass is not contrary to the modern Church's correct promotion of frequent reception of the Eucharist.

To draw more people to frequent Communion, we need new pastoral methods that evangelize and create brother/sisterhood.

- F. But it would be just as self-defeating to always leave the liturgy out of renewal programs.

1. Christian brother/sisterhood cannot fully develop without the liturgy as its highest activity.
2. Leaders who choose to include a Mass in a pastorally needed program must teach Catholics to distinguish what is greatest, the Mass, from what is most important: the pastoral work where the sacraments are meant to bear fruit.
3. The main reason for caution in discerning the pastoral use of the liturgy is that so many Catholics today don't think there could even be a place for pastoral caution in the use of the greatest prayer.

- VI. God may not call all or even most priests to become leaders in future movements.

- A. That kind of leadership involves charisms that are not guaranteed by the sacrament of holy orders. (Eph 4:11; 1 Co 12:28-31)

1. Leadership by an unsuited person would be just another form of poor leadership for renewal movements.
2. But those priests who are not called to be leaders in renewal movements should be open to learning from movements about what might need changing in their pastoral vision.

- B. Unless we develop environments where priests can fulfill their vocation to be presbyteroi, we may not have enough priests to satisfy our need for hiereon.

1. Which is more likely to foster vocations in our anti-Christian culture:
 - a. Enthusiastic liturgies
 - b. Environments that give Christian family life the support it needs?

Explanation of the Outline

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

Section I.

Since Christian brother/sisterly love is the main way people will come to know Jesus, must not our neglect of Christian brother/sisterhood have much to do with the pastoral problems the Church is facing today? Here is something necessary for the full efficacy of the sacraments yet largely missing in today's Church: Christian environments. Being influenced by our milieu is part of the nature God gave us; He intends us to be social beings who ordinarily need the support and acceptance of others.

Many of our problems exist because Catholics are more influenced by their secular environments than by the Church. Almost all of our environments promote anti-Christian values to one degree or another. Through the media, anti-Christian values even invade the Christian home. Consequently, our behavior too often reflects anti-Christian values. If we had Christian brother/sisterhood, however, we would have Christian environments that counteract this problem.

Secular society has very much that is good; not all of it is anti-Christian. Moreover, to shun secular environments and retreat into Christian enclaves would be contrary to our mission. But to deal with the pastoral problems that we now have, we need to understand those features of our society that do in fact create obstacles to the Christian life. Christian environments do not require the whole society to be Christian, but because society is not Christian, we need Christian milieus in addition to our secular milieus.

We should view our actual pastoral practices as being a pastoral strategy, a pastoral plan, for dealing with our spiritual needs. For even if our ways of pastoring were not consciously designed as a pastoral plan, they are what the Church is doing to meet our needs; so they constitute a de facto pastoral strategy in default of a consciously designed one.

If we ask how the Church plans to overcome the influence of non-Christian environments and view the life of the average parish as an answer to this question, the answer must be: The Church's main remedies for this influence are sacramental celebrations, especially the Sunday liturgy, which is the Church's primary pastoral contact with the faithful.

The sacraments, however, are not intended to free us from being influenced by our environments; that is part of our nature by God's design. Doctrinally, the Church teaches that sacramental grace cooperates with nature, but pastorally, it inadvertently acts as if grace suppresses nature, by expecting the sacraments to be fully effective without Christian environments.

One reason we did not notice that our practice conflicts with our doctrine is that, while we were concerned with certain problems, we failed to see the world creating new problems. Vatican II brought the Church up to date with the modern world, but at that very moment, the western world was undergoing profound changes that the Church has not yet fully responded to.

Today, Christian environments no longer exist where they once did. Other than secularism, the most profound pastoral challenge in contemporary life has been called “the decline of natural community.” For example, the extended family and the ethnic community, which until recently formed the basis of the experience of American Catholics, no longer exist. Until the generation preceding Vatican II, most people in western society spent their lives in close contact with the same relatively small group of people. Even their sense of personal identity was to a great extent identity as a member of a particular community.

The Church's pastoral methods presupposed those stable communities, communities that provided the support systems for people's lives, especially for their marriages. While those communities existed, the Church could concentrate on Christianizing pre-existing communal structures. The pre-existing communal structures then became environments that influenced people to live Christian lives and supported their attempts to do so.

Contemporary society, however, isolates people and deprives them of community. Instead of living in close proximity to an extended family, people find their families widely scattered. Instead of establishing close, supportive personal relations with the same relatively small group throughout our lives, we are forced to form superficial relations with a shifting population of those who cross our paths and then move on. The average American now moves once every 5 years. The Church can no longer count on Christianizing the natural communal structure because that structure no longer exists. As a result, Christians who need the support that can only come from a Christian environment do not have it.

The reason, for example, why in the past the Church did not have to give training leaders for personal evangelization a high priority was that we could assume that the nuclear family would do the basic evangelizing. Families could succeed in evangelism, however, because of two kinds of support that natural community provided them. First, there was the help for the marriage itself provided by the proximity of parents, siblings and other relatives, and the proximity of strong friendships that relieved the marriage of the impossible task of fulfilling all the spouses' needs for enriching relationships.

Second, even if all the children's peers were not Catholic, there were a sufficient number of them to re-affirm the training the children received at home. Today, not only do parents lack support from their own and their children's peers, but also their efforts to form their children as Christians are opposed by secular media right in the home. (As the example of media influence illustrates, environment and community are not identical. Any genuine community is an environment, but even communityless postmodern people find themselves in environments that influence them for good or ill.)

The decline of natural community and the pervasiveness of secularism's influence have the same cause: technological progress. That is why countries where the Church's pastoral work is most effective are usually places where the technological dismantling of natural community is still to come. But when those countries industrialize, there is no reason to think that natural community and the Christian environments it now supports will survive. To prevent secularism from becoming dominant where the Church is now thriving, therefore, the Church must learn

how to compensate for the decline of natural community, something it has not yet learned in the advanced world.

On the one hand, our pastoral problems are in great part the result of our not having yet caught up with changes nobody could have predicted. On the other hand, now that those changes have occurred, we can reasonably predict that the same kind of changes will take place elsewhere in the world as industrialization and technology spread. So it is also reasonable to predict that in those places where the Church is now thriving, it will soon become as weak and ineffective as the first-world Church has already become, if we do not learn how to remedy the problem. Formerly, Christian environments could result from the conversion of people in geographic areas where strong communal structures already existed. Today, the creation of contexts where Christian fellowship can flourish has to be a pastoral strategy.

Section II.

To see the necessity of Christian environments, however, we do not have to study secular social history. Basic Christian spirituality requires the Church to provide supportive environments. The Church is supposed to be a fellowship (Acts 2:42), a family (John 17:11, 21), a brother/sisterhood (1 Pet 2:17). And it is supposed to be that not only in a "spiritual" or invisible way, but in a visible way. Training in sociology and psychology can be very useful. But the most important step in learning how to cope with our pastoral crisis is to re-learn the pastoral principles the Good Shepherd himself taught us.

You may be tempted to respond here that no matter how little the Church may look like a family, it always remains a family spiritually and invisibly, since that is its essence. If this is your response, you are espousing perfectly good Protestant doctrine, not Catholic doctrine. In reaction to the concept of Church unity as the unity of an organization or institution, many Protestants hold that the unity Christ spoke of was an invisible, strictly spiritual, unity. Catholic doctrine has always been that the unity Christ asks the Father for is visible unity; the Church itself is a sacrament.

The choice between an invisible unity and a visible unity that is principally organizational and institutional is a false dichotomy. The unity Christ commanded and prayed for is a visible familial unity. The irony is that we unintentionally practice Protestant doctrine by making the familial aspect of the Church spiritual and de facto invisible. What kind of visible unity do we present to the world? Not the unity of a brother/sisterhood, but the unity of an organization or institution, as if we were a family only in a spiritual sense.

Many, perhaps most, church-going Catholics do not experience the Church as a family but as a place where they go to get religious services performed, somewhat as they go to the doctor or the market to get secular services performed. Weekly attendance at a sacred out-patient clinic, no matter how intrinsically holy the clinic is, is not going to overcome the influences of our secular environments.

One reason for viewing the Church principally as a provider of religious goods and services is that the decline of natural community taught us to view human groups other than the nuclear family individualistically and functionally — not as communities united by and existing for the sake of personal relationships, but as organizations that exist for the sake of performing functions for individuals. Instead of principally being sites for supportive and fulfilling relationships, groups outside of the nuclear family seem to exist for the sake of tasks and

services that are de facto for the private benefit of isolated individuals, individuals who do not live in communities that foster supportive personal relationships among their members.

In the past, when people spent most of their lives in close proximity to the same people, they formed many strong personal relationships, and their relationships of a significant and supportive character were not confined to the nuclear family. As natural community has declined in the postmodern world so has the value we place on personal relationships. Today, our personal relationships of a close and significant nature are confined almost exclusively to the nuclear family — which is an important cause of the weakness of the family, since it puts an unreasonable demand on the nuclear family to be the sole source of supportive relationships.

Most often, our dealings with people outside of the isolated nuclear family are not based on our personal relationships with them; instead, we associate with them primarily for the sake of the performance of tasks and the providing of services. For example, most people spend their whole work day associating with people, not because of any personal relationship between them, but for the sake of performing tasks with them, providing services to them, or having services provided for us by them.

This modern attitude to relationships outside of the nuclear family seems to influence the way Catholics view the Church. Often clergy and laity appear to view the Church the way society teaches us to view associations outside the immediate family, as an institutional structure providing sacred goods and services the way other institutions provide secular goods and services. This tendency is inevitable because outside of the nuclear family we have almost no experience of any way of associating with people other than by functional, or otherwise superficial, relationships. Younger generations may even think it has always been that way because they have no idea of what they are missing and can hardly imagine anything else.

No wonder it is so difficult today for us to understand what the New Law actually commands and the reason for it. Individualism is so ingrained in our perspective that it does not occur to us that the phrase “one another” in the New Law means what it says and so refers to the specific community of people who are being addressed. If that idea does occur to us, we do not see the law’s purpose to be that of defining the life of a community, not of individuals, because our experience of natural communities and extended families is so limited. We experience groups other than the nuclear family as having only a functional, pragmatic value, as opposed to the kind of value constituted by loving personal relationships.

As a result, both clergy and laity seem to expect pastors to be leaders of a religious service organization. In New Testament terms, they view a priest's vocation as that of a "hiereus," a performer of sacred acts and conductor of religious services, but not that of a "presbyteros," an elder within an extended family, a clan or a village, one to whom the other members look in matters that concern the well being of the family, clan or village as a whole.

Today, we hardly hear Christians apply the word “brother” to other Christians, unless it is a priest referring to “brother priests.” No wonder the life of the parish priest is so lonely. What should be primary in the life of the priest is that he is one of us, a Christian united to the person of Christ and to the rest of us, in the greatest way possible, by the royal priesthood of divinizing grace. The priest is our brother before he is our elder brother or “father,” and his life within the Church, including his ministry, should visibly reflect that. Secondly, the priest shares Jesus’ leadership role in the Christian family, a social role that we do not all share. But today there is almost no family, other than in a spiritual sense, for him to have a leadership role in.

The institutional aspects of the Church are absolutely necessary but as means to an end (*The Catechism*, 1547). That end is another kind of unity, familial unity. The institutional aspects of the Church do not serve their purpose if they do not lead to familial unity. The familial unity, moreover, must be visible. If it remains invisible while the only visible unity is organizational, the institutional aspects of the Church fail to achieve one of their most important reasons for being. And achieving that end would satisfy our need for Christian environments.

Over the centuries the Church has used different pastoral strategies that resulted in making the Eucharist more effective. Even discouraging frequent reception had at least one pastoral benefit: When you received, you had to make the conscious decision to do so. Receiving wasn't automatic whenever you went to Mass, as it is now. So your consciousness of what you were doing when you received was raised.

Fasting from midnight had a similar pastoral benefit. When you were going to receive, you had to decide not to have breakfast, or decline food after midnight at parties, and so each time, you had to make a conscious choice to receive. It was not uncommon to hear someone decline food by saying "No thank you; I'm receiving tomorrow."

More recently the pastoral strategy the Church has used to make the Eucharist effective has been to celebrate the Mass in a liturgically uplifting way. Appropriate celebration is certainly something we need, but we can hardly credit it with the pastoral success that liturgists had hoped for.

The reason liturgical reforms have not had more pastoral effect is that, for the full effectiveness of the Eucharist, everything else is secondary to what is most important: that the celebration has the proper pastoral *context*, namely, a context of visible and practical brother/sisterhood based on repentance and personal faith in Jesus. The liturgy's full effectiveness depends most on being celebrated in a context of Christian brother/sisterhood because supportive personal relations are among the *operantis* goals for the sake of which the Eucharist exists.

The pastoral documents known as the epistles explicitly mention the Eucharist only twice (1 Co 10:16-17; 11:17-34). To conclude from the absence of references that the Eucharist was not important to the apostles would be to miss the forest for the trees. Most of the epistles were probably meant to be read during the liturgy. But more importantly, the apostles' intentions in the epistles were to achieve the goals of the Eucharist and the other sacraments that Christians already knew about.

The apostles were telling the Christians what they needed to know to adequately respond to the grace that came from the apostle's sacramental ministry. That was what the pastoral side of their ministry was all about. They knew that the *operato* effects of the sacraments take care of themselves. So their pastoral ministry had to be concerned with what does not take care of itself: proclaiming the truths and creating a context that would allow their converts to properly cooperate with sacramental grace. St. Paul said "Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the Great News" (1 Co 1:12-17; see also 3:-10), even though he knew that baptism was the most necessary sacrament.

And when the epistles do talk about the Eucharist, what pastoral point do they make?

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)

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 . . . Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. . . . 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)

What was spoiling the Corinthians' Eucharists to the extent that "That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died" (1 Co 11:30), was their not celebrating it in a context of genuine brother/sisterly love, which is a goal explicitly assigned to the Eucharist.

Much of the activity in a Christian environment will be social and personal, as opposed to being ritual, but not "social" in the secular sense, as opposed to being explicitly religious. Scripture gives us pictures of sisters and brothers building each other up by acting in ways that are personal yet specifically religious. For that is what Christian environments are, namely, contexts in which brothers and sisters can fulfill the scriptural exhortations to:

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; see also 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 Co 14:26; see also Eph 5:19).

Furthermore, it is especially important that we have environments where these things are not done solely by people in official roles of ministry. Those scriptural exhortations were meant for all Christians, so that ordinary Christians could see other ordinary Christians doing such things and profit from their example.

Today, priests often minister as if the life of the Church is meant to consist mostly of sacramental celebrations and the pastoral dimension of their ministry is meant to consist mostly of the exercise of their sacramental powers. Does this attitude come from traditional spirituality or from the individualism and functionalism that views groups as existing for the sake of performing tasks, even sacred tasks? We should define the Church's life in terms of the Church's nature as a "sacrament," a sacrament whose life is meant to be visibly familial and so must extend beyond its official public worship. The goals of the sacraments require that Christians

have a life together as a Church, as a body, beyond gathering for sacramental celebrations. We need environments where we live the fellowship that the sacraments call us to and prepare us for.

Priests and deacons sometimes give the impression that their pastoral goal is the laity's faithful attendance at Sunday Mass. Maintaining the laity's connection to the institutional Church, the sacrament delivery system, is necessary but is far from sufficient. (And if seminary training is aimed at the goal of keeping Catholics connected with the institutional Church, that training is no longer achieving its goal; far from it.) Vatican II correctly taught us that the effectiveness of the sacraments requires their proper celebration, but even more important for their effectiveness is that they have the proper pastoral *context*, a communal context of faith. The full efficacy of the sacraments requires Christian environments.

A few years ago, a small Baptist church held a funeral for a woman who at one time in her adult life had been a relatively fervent Catholic. Her father, still a fervent Catholic, said that after connecting with the Baptist parish she stayed with them because they supported her through her divorce. What could she find at the Catholic Church that she could not find at the Baptist? Sacraments of intrinsic infinite holiness. What could she find at the Baptist Church that she did not find at the Catholic? Supportive personal relationships. Aren't the sacraments more important? Yes, in their independent (*ex opere operato*) effects.

But those independent effects do not exist for their own sake; they are for the sake of lived (*ex opere operantis*) effects. The lived effects for the sake of which the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, exist are meant to include supportive person-to-person relations among the members of a Christian fellowship of the kind she did not find in her Catholic parish but did find in the Baptist. The Baptists offered her an extended family; we did not.

The Church should be a place where, just by the fact of converting, new converts normally enter into supportive personal relationships. Something new has just become the most important thing in the convert's life; but all of her environments attack that most important thing. Providing new support systems is one way groups like AA sometimes seem to help people avoid certain sins better than the Church does. Becoming a convert should normally include becoming a member of a loving family in more than a "spiritual" sense. Even if the following promise was strictly meant only for believers who adopt a consecrated lifestyle, the principle behind it should apply, in appropriate ways, to all:

There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life (Mk 10:29-30).

For that to happen we will have to stop viewing the Church in its visible aspects mainly as a delivery system for sacraments and doctrinal catechesis. An indication of how much closer some Protestant parishes are to being families, and not just institutions for providing religious goods and services, is that when they see newcomers on Sunday, they greet the newcomers and make them feel welcome by personally inviting them in.

At the same time, we must avoid the danger of romanticizing the Church's nature as a community of love. Communities need structure, just as the natural family does. The institutional aspects of the Church will always be necessary. The experience of many Protestant groups shows that, without the institutional Church as the backbone, communities that are mere

fellowships will not only be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14), but with every wind of trouble, friction, misunderstanding, disagreement, personal offense and unforgiveness.

So let us not idealize the Protestant situation. Do all Protestant parishes offer the kind support the Baptist parish offered that former Catholic? Very probably not. Does that Baptist parish still offer that kind of support today? Perhaps, but whether it does and will continue to depend on many contingencies: Does it still have the same pastor; if so, is he or she still providing the right kind of leadership? Have divisions and factions undermined the unity they once had? And these are just some of the contingencies.

The only way to ensure that Christian fellowship and brother/sisterhood occur regularly and survive consistently is to found them on a secure institutional structure. The apostolic churches, Catholic and Orthodox, alone have a sufficiently secure structure. And only the Catholic Church has it to the full degree that Jesus wants all Christians to have the benefit of. But the Church’s institutional structure will not adequately support Christian brother/sisterhood if its ordained ministers are not taught to have that pastoral goal, as Jesus taught the apostles.

In sum, Christian brother/sisterhood is necessary not only for the Church’s mission of saving nonChristians, but also to enable Christians to live their own Christian lives as they should. We will never know what the power of grace can do in the lives of individual Christians until the Church is a visible brother/sisterhood.

Section III.

How do we create Christian brother/sisterhood? The most important thing to do is to bring each Christian to an awareness of the glory he or she received in baptism. Christians should relate to other Christians as members of the divine family. So the basis of our love for other Christians must be our awareness of the glory they received in becoming Christians, the glory of Trinity dwelling within them. But you cannot appreciate the awesome dignity others acquired in becoming Christian unless you appreciate the awesome dignity you acquired in becoming Christian. If you know the dignity you received at baptism, however, the only just response you can give others who are also visible members of Christ is to love them with a love worthy of the dignity they have received. And only Christians aware of the awesome glory we have received can have a love for nonChristians based on awareness of the awesome glory that nonChristians are called to share.

The pastoral vision of Christian brother/sisterhood cannot even make sense to those who are unaware of the presence of the Trinity within every Christian. In order to communicate this pastoral vision to Catholics, we must first be able to ask with Paul “Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?” (2 Co 13:5). So the first step in fostering Christian brother/sisterhood is to bring Christians to a personal awareness of the glory of God dwelling within them. That awareness is promised to every Christian as a consequence of receiving the Holy Spirit: “In that day you will know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you” (Jn 14:20).

Doctrinal faith is necessary but not sufficient for the awareness of God's indwelling that can create brother/sisterly love among Christians. To achieve the goals of sacramental grace, we must have a faith by which we apply truths of doctrine to ourselves at the personal level. The grace to which we respond comes to us through the sacraments because it comes from the person and work of Jesus. Responding to sacramental grace on the personal level requires responding to

the personal source of that grace, Jesus, not just to this or that way in which he is sacramentally present. It requires responding to that person because of what he did to become the source of grace: He took away my sins and offers me God's own divine life as a free, unmerited gift.

The absence of Christian milieus is a symptom of deeper problems, including not having the goal of Christian brother/sisterhood. Without that goal, we have missed Jesus' pastoral plan. But since Christian fellowship is based on a personal relation to Jesus, our ignoring of the New Law is not the only — or even the principal — reason for our pastoral crisis. To achieve the goals of the sacraments, our pastoral priority must be to evangelize already sacramentalized and catechized Catholics in a way that leads them to make doctrinal faith personal, a way that makes each Christian aware of their personal relation to God dwelling within them. In the advanced world the family is no longer sufficient for successful personal evangelization. (And how much longer will it be sufficient in the third world?)

We acquire the awareness of Christian dignity that is the basis of Christian fellowship by having a particular kind of relationship with Jesus, the relationship of allowing Jesus to live His life within us. We allow Jesus to live His life within us by doing two things: repenting and believing the Great News, turning our intentions from sin (repenting) and accepting the promise that Jesus will freely give Himself to us and accomplish our reformed intentions for us (believing the Great News). Christians need social contexts where they are continuously called to repentance and belief in the Great News.

Section IV.

How do we evangelize in a way that will make the sacraments effective on the personal level? And how do we develop environments where we build each other up by sharing our Christianity in personal ways? Throughout history, God has renewed the Church by raising up movements to supply something then lacking in its pastoral life. No one method of evangelizing or of creating community may be right for all times and places. But God knows what our times need. Every movement will be imperfect, but when we find something working reasonably well, we should take advantage of it and nurture it.

Most importantly, however, we have to *learn* from movements about how to make the sacraments effective. But to learn from movements, we have to *let* God teach us. Too often, movements have not gotten the proper leadership because their local leaders had incorrect pastoral priorities. In general, lay leaders of movements get their pastoral priorities through the training they receive, ultimately, from priests. Some of the most powerful and promising renewal movements have accomplished much less than they could at least in part because priests failed to take advantage of them, since their own pastoral goals did not match the goals God was trying to achieve — and trying to show needed to be achieved — through those movements.

Sometimes omissions in leaders' priorities prevented them from appreciating what God was doing through a movement, because they couldn't relate what the movement was accomplishing to their pastoral agendas. Some priests who attended the Cursillo, for example, seemed to think that what it was doing for many lay people was frosting on the cake. No, it was supplying things many people—though not all—were not getting from the Church's normal pastoral life. That's the reason God raises up movements; something must be missing from our normal pastoral life that some people need. The pastoral agendas of those priests seemed not to go beyond Catholics' participation in Sunday Mass. If that agenda was ever sufficient to achieve the goals of the sacraments, it is certainly no longer sufficient in our secularized society.

Due to incorrect pastoral priorities, other priests used movements for good purposes but not for what the Church needs most. The Cursillo, for example, was intended to foster evangelization, and when properly led, it often succeeds in doing that. But many local leaders turned the Cursillo into a vehicle for promoting social action. While we unquestionably need more social action, our need of evangelization is greater. So movements can fail to make their full contribution to Church renewal because leaders use them for purposes that are good but are not what the Church needs most at a particular time. There have even been instances where enthusiasm for liturgical dance or music has distracted some leaders from providing what is most important.

To take full advantage of movements, we have to learn from them. To learn from them we have to have our priorities straight or at least be open to letting God straighten them. When are our priorities straight? When they reflect the hierarchy of Christian truths.

Most renewal movements, like the liturgical movement before Vatican II or the Little Rock Scripture program today, can create Christian environments as a by-product, if their local leaders are sufficiently aware of our pastoral needs to allow them to. Some pastoral programs, however, exist specifically for the purpose of being environments where we share Christianity in personal ways. The Cursillo, for example, has its small group reunions and its larger Ultreyas for this purpose. Other such evangelistic programs, like Teen Encounter Christ, Tabor weekends, and Antioch weekends, follow those evangelistic activities with on-going meetings for Christian sharing. Communion and Liberation members share personally in their School of Community. Prayer meetings, both charismatic and noncharismatic, serve a similar purpose.

Can we expect movements like the ones just cited to solve our pastoral crisis, when their accomplishments to date may seem so modest in comparison with the problems? There is reason to believe that future movements can do better than current ones, if future movements can learn from the difficulties current ones have had in evangelizing and creating fellowship. We cannot predict the models of evangelization and brother/sisterhood that God plans for the future, but we can and must learn from our past mistakes. And if we provide fertile ground for future movements, whose purpose is to create community, by evangelizing Catholics personally beforehand, who knows what power we will see when God unites already converted Catholics in love?

Of course, every renewal movement in the history of the Church has been imperfect and subject to abuse. Abuses in recent movements have sometimes caused priests to avoid getting involved in them. But to use the existence of problems as an excuse for not getting involved in a movement can be a self-fulfilling prophecy, since the reason the problems exist is often lack of adequate local leadership.

A fine priest, call him Fr. Joe, told a leader in the charismatic renewal that he avoided a particular prayer meeting because of the way some of its members acted. Unfortunately, circumstances prevented the leader from saying that he had similar problems in his group, but he could not correct them because people will not accept certain kinds of correction from a lay person as readily as from a priest. By declining to get involved with that group because of those problems, Fr. Joe was ensuring that the problems would be much more difficult to solve.

Any renewal movement will have failures as well as successes. The question is how much better off spiritually most participants in a given movement are than they would be without it. If potential leaders shun involvement in a movement that has demonstrated, when properly

led, the ability to produce personal conversion and Christian fellowship, are they really letting God teach them how to unleash the power of the sacraments?

Section V.

One good purpose that can inadvertently interfere with movements doing the work we most need deserves attention because it is so good and has therefore been so frequently pursued. Leaders of Ultreyas, prayer meetings, and other communal programs often augment, or even replace, very valuable pastoral activities with liturgies celebrated with the enthusiasm that the liturgy deserves. But we have to be very discerning about if and when to include a liturgy in a pastoral program. We have to be especially discerning about how to use the liturgy in view of the specific needs for evangelization and fellowship in the Church today.

The Sunday liturgy must always be the primary pastoral contact between the Church and Catholics who are already evangelized, catechized and consciously trying to live Christian brother/sisterhood. But outside of the Sunday liturgy, including the greatest created act -- indeed, the greatest conceivable created act -- in a pastoral program can make everything else in the program de facto secondary. Therefore, providing for our most important pastoral needs can become secondary.

This retreat is not meant to promote any particular renewal movement. We offer the following example from the charismatic renewal, not to promote it, but to learn from our mistakes with past movements; so that we won't make the same mistakes in future movements. Charismatic prayer meetings often included an uplifting Mass celebrated with an enthusiasm appropriate for the greatest sacrament. What made those Masses more enthusiastic than the average Mass was the pastoral work being done with instruments like prayer meetings and the Life in the Spirit Seminars.

But the enthusiastic Mass often became more important to those groups than the pastoral work from which the enthusiasm came as by-product. Sometimes people didn't want to have a prayer meeting, if they couldn't have the liturgy, even though the prayer meeting was where the pastoral work that made those Masses uplifting was being done. All the power behind that pastoral work came from prior sacraments, since sacraments are meant to bear fruit by providing the power for pastoral endeavors. So to the extent that pastoral work was valid, it was achieving the goals of the Masses people had already participated in. And to the extent that pastoral work was not being done, due to people not wanting a prayer meeting without an uplifting Mass, some goals of the Masses they had already participated in weren't being achieved.

Seeking uplifting experiences at the liturgy is a form of seeking consolations in our prayer life. That desire is not bad in itself. But when that desire gets in the way of doing pastoral work necessary for the goals of the Masses we have already celebrated, it is akin to what authoritative spiritual writers like St. John of the Cross call "spiritual gluttony." Spiritual gluttony is an excessive desire for the consolations that can come from prayer. Consolations are something good, and God certainly uses them in our spiritual development. But the desire for them becomes excessive when it interferes with the desire that is the essence of spiritual development, the desire to surrender to the will of God; for God can will to deprive us of consolations.

This is an example of one of the retreat's recurring themes: the difference between what is greatest and what is most important pastorally. The Mass is always the incomparably greatest

act but not always the most important in a given context. When the sacristy is on fire, it is more important to put the fire out than to proceed with Mass. With the greatest possible act present, the pastoral work that our prior Masses are meant to provide the power for can take second place.

The lived effectiveness of the Eucharist is at stake in our decisions about how we use renewal movements. We all need uplifting experiences, and the Church should provide as many as possible, but only if they do not interfere with what is more important. Using the liturgy in a pastorally inappropriate way can defeat the purpose of the liturgy. The liturgy should not be included in a pastoral program just on the grounds that it is the greatest prayer. Its being the greatest prayer can be a reason for not including the liturgy, since its very greatness can distract from the pastoral work that needs to be done to achieve the goals of the liturgies we have already participated in.

For the Sunday liturgy and other sacraments to bear the fruit they should, they must provide the power for the pastoral work that needs to be done beyond the celebration of the sacraments. Outside of celebrating the Sunday liturgy and the other sacraments, the pastoral work that is most important today is not to get people to more liturgies but to provide ways of fulfilling the goals of the sacraments we have already received and make the sacraments fruitful at the level of their lived effects.

So respect for the Mass as the greatest act does not mean we must automatically include it in every pastoral program we can. Instead, respect for the greatest prayer requires that we make that decision on the basis of careful *pastoral* discernment; for achieving the goals of the Sunday liturgy is at stake in the pastoral decisions we make about what to do outside of the Sunday liturgy. The criteria by which we make those decisions have to include a clear understanding of the goals of the sacraments. But the criteria must also include a clear understanding of the obstacles to those goals that the situations we actually live in present. We must have pastoral plans, and those plans must be designed for the actual conditions that we are dealing with.

In the early days of the charismatic renewal, for example, there may have been a good pastoral reason for having a Mass. But that reason was not just a jump from the theological truth that the Mass is the greatest prayer to the pastoral conclusion that they should include the greatest prayer. Rather, including the Mass served the specific pastoral purpose of showing understandably skeptical Catholics, both clergy and lay, that charismatics could be solidly orthodox Catholics. At that time, doing something to show their orthodoxy was called for by the situation Catholic charismatics were facing.

Decisions about the pastoral use of the liturgy bring up another recurring theme of this retreat: We can understand a doctrine theologically and still draw the wrong pastoral conclusions from it. The question here is not the glorious theology of the Eucharist but how to achieve the goals of the Eucharist. The Church has made pastoral mistakes about the Eucharist, in spite of being doctrinally correct, before, when for centuries it allowed pastors to discourage frequent reception of the Eucharist.

In the theologically true and important sentence, “The liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life,” the most significant words from a pastoral perspective are “the Christian life”; for that which the Mass is the source and summit of, namely, the real presence of the

Trinity's life in us, is spiritually the "one thing necessary" (Lk 10:42). (The Magisterium has never used the false and pastorally misleading formula "The liturgy is the summit of the *Faith*.")

The Mass is the *source* of the Christian life because it is the real presence of Jesus' saving acts. But we should not jump to the false pastoral conclusion that being the source in this theological sense means that the Mass is the source of salvation in the sense of being the most foundational pastoral act. The proof is that the early Christians did not even let catechumens attend the liturgy of the Eucharist. The early Christians knew theologically that the actual graces the nonbaptized were responding to came through the offerings that the already baptized made at Mass. But they also knew that the Mass was not the pastoral activity through which the catechumens were getting the benefit of those graces. Instead, the Mass provided the power behind the catechesis the nonbaptized were getting, and even more fundamentally, behind the evangelization that catechesis presupposes. Again, "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News (1 Co 1:17).

For example, if God raises up a future group program that evangelizes lapsed Catholics, should you include a Mass in the program? Before you do, please remember St. Paul's admonition:

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. . . . That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. (1 Co 11:27-30)

At pastoral programs that include a Mass it can be difficult to prevent people from receiving Communion who probably shouldn't. Charismatic prayer meetings drew many people who needed personal evangelization, including nonpracticing Catholics who were already catechized and sacramentalized. That meant many people were coming to those meetings who probably shouldn't receive communion. But they weren't prevented from receiving, and how could you prevent them?

At funerals and weddings we can explain courteously that nonCatholics should abstain from Communion. But before a large group including many lapsed Catholics, how do you ask those in mortal sin to refrain from receiving? Wouldn't that be like saying "Would those in mortal sin please stand in the back"? And you would have to repeat that every week for the new attendees.

The Eucharist is also the principal place from which physical healing comes, but does that mean that healing will not occur unless every healing service includes a Mass? The Mass is the principal source of all grace; does that mean we don't receive many of those graces outside of the Mass, when praying, reading a book, at a conference, or whatever? As you probably know, healing services draw all sorts of people. If every healing service includes a Mass, isn't it almost certain that the Eucharist will be received in the manner that Paul says causes sickness and death, instead of causing healing?

Perhaps that's the reason the Neo-Catechumenal Way's primary meeting functions as a (noncanonical) Liturgy of the Word only; they want to minister to, among others, people who for whatever reason shouldn't yet receive the Eucharist. They have a structured Liturgy of the Word. Charismatic prayer meetings often functioned as spontaneous (noncanonical) Liturgies of the Word. We're not asking you to join either movement but to learn from them and other

movements God will certainly raise up about pastoral needs in today's world that such movements are meant to meet.

Today we have a possibly unique situation of huge numbers of baptized Catholics who, if they are catechized, are barely so and who, if they are catechized, have never had a relation to Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Hopefully, God will raise up programs to meet their needs for evangelization and catechesis. If so, do not add a Mass to the program if that would result either in their receiving Communion unworthily or not coming because they feel embarrassed or unwelcome after having been told not to receive.

There can be other important reasons for having pastoral activities without a liturgy. One of them is a reason that is still sadly underappreciated fifty years after Vatican II: ecumenism. There could hardly be anything closer to our great High Priest's heart than ecumenism. If God continues to use pastoral activities like prayer meetings — and prayer meetings do not have to be charismatic — they can be great incubators for ecumenism. But another thing we have learned from the recent history of movements is that including a Mass can interfere with ecumenism.

Many charismatic prayer meetings were once venues for grassroots ecumenism, which is at least as important as ecumenism in the rarified air of committees of specialists and professionals. But early in the charismatic renewal, many of those meetings decided to add a Mass. When they did, almost all Protestants gradually stopped coming. That is understandable, since they were not able to share communion with us. So adding a Mass meant a loss of ecumenical activity that has yet to be replaced.

If God uses prayer meetings or other such public gatherings for ecumenical purposes in the future, there will be an important place for priests, even if priests do not exercise their sacramental powers. The Church, which includes all validly baptized Christians, is itself a visible sacrament. When a priest in clerical garb is present at a public gathering, everyone there is visibly reminded to respect the presence of Catholics.

That can be particularly important at gatherings where Christians from differing traditions are sharing their relation to Jesus. The visible presence of a priest is an inoffensive way of saying to the nonCatholics present that we believe we are authentic disciples of Jesus just as they are, and a way of saying that we recognize that the things we share with them are more important than the things that separate us. And a priest who is present can protect the other Catholics present from any harm that might come to their faith by the words or actions of a nonCatholic. When something potentially opposed to Catholic faith is said or done, the priest can discern the right way, including the right time and place, to instruct the Catholics so that they will not be harmed.

It would be wrong to think, however, that we have no more to learn from associating with our beloved Protestant brethren. Anyone who thinks that has not had the privilege of experiencing the enthusiasm of many Protestants for Jesus, their gratitude for his free gift of salvation, and their zeal for sharing the Great News. Nor has he had the benefit of learning their methods of proclaiming the Great News, methods which have often proven effective in the contemporary world.

As the *source* of the Christian life, the liturgy is a means to further ends. As the *summit* of the Christian life, the liturgy, especially the Sunday liturgy, is not just a means to further ends. Celebrating the liturgy, especially on Sunday, is integral and essential to the *goal* of all the

sacraments, the perfection of the Christian life. In fact, it is highest and greatest way we participate in the Son of God's life of worshiping the Father. As summit, therefore, the Mass is the highest, most holy, and most glorious pastoral act in the Christian life. But since the Christian life is meant to be visibly familial, the Mass as summit should be the highest act of Christians at least trying to be a brother/sisterhood outside of the Sunday liturgy. So we must not use Masses outside of Sunday in a way that interferes with pastoral work that achieves the life of which the Mass is meant to be the source.

Much closer and much more visible brother/sisterhood was frequently a fruit of charismatic prayer meetings, but enthusiastic Masses too often made the pastoral work that prayer meetings could do secondary. Making the Eucharist the main activity in programs whose purpose is to supply our need for evangelization and Christian fellowship can amount to putting up the walls and roof of the building before laying the foundation. Baptism creates the Christian community: "By one Spirit we were baptized into one body" (1 Co 12:13), but the Eucharist perfects it. Today, however, there is almost no community, in the visibly familial sense, for the Eucharist to be the highest act of. How often do lay people not even know the names of the people next to them at Mass?

In celebrating the source and summit of the Christian life, a priest fulfills his calling to be a hiereus. But the goal for which the Mass is the source requires the Church to be a place where priests fulfill their calling to be presbyteroi, elder brothers in a society that is visibly familial. Will there be contexts for priests to fulfill their calling as presbyteroi if the pastoral use of the Mass interferes with the pastoral activities where the power of the Mass is being unleashed? If pastoral leaders view the life of the Church mainly from the viewpoint of the use their sacramental powers, the Church may never have the life the sacraments are meant to enable, and we may never have enough priests to celebrate the sacraments themselves.

And there may not be time for Christian environments to do their work, if our principal activity at meetings of renewal movements is a Mass, especially a lengthy, enthusiastically celebrated one. Unfortunately, we do not live in an era like that of the first Jerusalem community, when people had plenty of time to go "as a body to the temple everyday but meet in their homes for the breaking of the bread" (Acts 2: 46, NAB). Our pastoral decisions must take into account the limited amount of time people have and must aim at using that time for their maximum benefit. For example, how much time should we spend lecturing on interesting scholarly questions like the authorship of the pastoral epistles when we hardly have the time to explain their message?

But something more basic than lack of time is at stake in a decision to include the liturgy in a pastoral program. Movements can provide things that the fruits of the Mass presuppose and that are insufficiently present today. The Jerusalem community was prepared for the Eucharist by evangelization that led to personal conversion (Acts 2:37). We have, in effect, done things the other way around, sacramentalizing and catechizing people without personally evangelizing them. The fruits of the Eucharist normally presuppose that personal evangelization has already occurred, and Jesus' pastoral commandment implies that the Eucharist will bear fruit most fully if it is offered as the chief act of a body at least trying to achieve Christian brother/sisterhood.

There is a good reason why the Church was able to make the mistake of discouraging frequent reception of the Eucharist: Receiving Jesus' body and blood is very, very serious business, joyful business but serious. Look at how Jesus used the liturgy. He gave the disciples the Eucharist last, not first. He celebrated the liturgy only after spending years drawing the

disciples into a personal relationship to Himself and to one another on the basis of their relationship to Him.

We may think that our pastoral approach should be different from Jesus', because Jesus' presence in the liturgy, including His presence through ordained ministers, takes the place for us of His pastoral presence with the disciples. The Sunday liturgy must always be the Church's main pastoral contact with the already evangelized and catechized. But there could be no liturgy and no ordained ministers without each Christian's prior encounter with the more fundamental real presence of Jesus in his most glorious priesthood, the royal priests of his communal body.

The Sunday liturgy's full effectiveness requires that, outside of the Mass, Catholics have religious social contacts with Jesus as present in other members of the Christian community, because all of them have received gifts through the sacraments for ministering to each other. The full efficacy of Eucharistic grace is accomplished through those gifts, because that grace is meant, among other things, to empower us to use those gifts in love.

Including the liturgy in programs can also reinforce the Church's perceived role as a delivery system for religious goods and services, rather than as an extended family where brothers and sisters fulfill the goals of liturgical grace by building one another up and evangelizing others. In some third-world countries, and even among Hispanics in this country, the Church is losing communicants to evangelical groups for whom preaching acceptance of Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior and fostering Christian fellowship are the main pastoral methods.

We also have to ask at what point does the liturgy become cheapened by over-use? Can we assume that the reverence due the greatest possible act will not be lessened by too frequent use, if we use it in pastorally inappropriate ways? Should the greatest possible act be the way we celebrate every occasion, such as the anniversary of this or that event or activity? If we answer questions like these in the affirmative, will we ever be without a shortage of priests? Or, if Jesus had said, "Whenever two or three are gathered in my name, you should have a Mass," would we ever have enough priests?

We are not in any way disagreeing with the modern Church's strong recommendation of frequent communion; unquestionably that is pastoral progress. And the power behind the Christian life does not just come from the Sunday liturgy. From the viewpoint of the independent, operato, effects of grace, the Church's daily offering of the Mass is also the source of that power, including any power that renewal movements in the Church have. Realistically, however, how many lay people are our current pastoral practices succeeding in drawing to daily Mass and communion? Wouldn't the evangelistic/communal approach this retreat espouses draw many more people than the few that current pastoral practices draw? And wouldn't this approach foster many more vocations than we have now. If this approach does foster more vocations and draws more people to daily Mass, we would be sawing off the limb we were sitting on if including the liturgy in evangelistic and community-building programs interferes with the pastoral work of those programs.

Nor does any of this mean that we should always leave the liturgy out of renewal programs. That would be self-defeating in another way. The full development of Christian brother/sisterhoods requires that they celebrate liturgies as their highest familial act, just as the liturgy requires brother/sisterhood for its full effectiveness. But the inclusion of the liturgy in a program must be based on discernment of our pastoral needs and the means for providing them.

The liturgy should not be included just on the grounds that it is the greatest prayer. Its greatness is the reason we must discern the proper pastoral use of the Mass carefully, according to what Christ's communal body needs in order to experience the fruit of the Masses they have already celebrated.

And when groups discuss whether to include a liturgy in a pastoral program, the groups' leaders have the responsibility to teach Catholics to distinguish between what is greatest and what is most important in that pastoral context. We cannot take for granted that the average Catholic will understand that difference without teaching. In fact, the main reason for urging caution in discerning the pastoral use of the liturgy is that the way many Catholics today have been taught, they probably can't even imagine that there could be a place for caution in the pastoral use of the greatest prayer.

For example, the charismatics who wouldn't stay for a prayer meeting without a Mass clearly didn't understand Christian brother/sisterhood as a value in itself. The reason they didn't understand it was probably that the leaders of those groups hadn't taught them the meaning of Jesus' pastoral commandment.

Section VI.

The fact that we should make use of the (always imperfect) movements God raises up and that these movements always need good leadership (without which they can sometimes do more harm than good) does not mean that all or even most priests and deacons should become leaders in movements. That kind of leadership involves charisms that are not guaranteed by the sacrament of holy orders. From the following lists, the ordained are only guaranteed gifts that require and are required by succession from the "apostles":

God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, the workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. (1 Co 12:28-31)

It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ. (Eph 4:11)

Leadership by an unsuited person would be just another form of poor leadership. But even those ordained ministers who are not called to be leaders in renewal movements should be open to learning from movements about what might need changing in their pastoral vision.

Finally, God could renew the Church without Christian movements. For example, he could create secular social changes that would make our current pastoral methods effective. If we wait for Him to do that, however, we may soon have too few priests to use our current methods. Christian environments, especially environments that support Christian marriage, would foster many more vocations than we now have. But without environments where priests can fulfill their vocation to be presbyteroi, we may not have enough priests to satisfy our need for hiereon.

Usable Quotes

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

1. 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)
2. 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)

Sacramental Grace's Operato Effects Come Via the Church's Extra-sacramental Life Quotes:

7. God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. (1 Co 12:28-31)
8. It is he who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service for the faithful to build up the body of Christ. (Eph 4:11)

Mutual Christian Love Comes from Appreciation of Our Divine Glory Quotes:

9. 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)
10. I have given them the glory you have given me, *that* they may be one as we are one. (Jn 17:22 NAB)

Sacramental Grace's Operato Effects Require Laying the Right Pastoral Foundations Quotes:

11. One of you will say, "I belong to Paul," . . . "I belong to Apollos," Thank God, I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanas. . . . For Christ did not Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News" (1 Co 1:12-17 NAB)
12. I planted the seed and Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. . . . I laid a foundation as a wise master-builder might do, and now someone else is building upon it. (1 Co 3:6, 10)

Christian Social Interaction Quotes:

13. Stir up one another to love and good works (Heb 10:24).
14. Teach and admonish one another (Col 3:16).
15. Encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thes 5:11; see also Heb 10:25).

16. Admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak (1 Thes 5:14).
17. Comfort one another (with God's words) (1 Thes 4:18).
18. 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).