

Why Western Catholicism Has Been Losing Communicants and Vocations—for 50 Years!

Evidence from the Magisterium and Scripture for 5-Pastoral-Truths.pdf

N. B. In the developed world, the Church has been shrinking even in places where sound doctrine is taught, though it has shrunk somewhat less rapidly there. Sound doctrine cannot overcome unsound when pastors do not present it according to the Church's foundational "Hierarchy of Christian Truths" (HCT), which is described in the "Short Study Guide" *What Catholic Seminaries Are Omitting* at www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org/ and in the present document:

"A catechesis that neglects this interrelation and harmony of its content can become entirely useless for achieving its end." ((Congregation for the Clergy, *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, 39)

Pastors must reinforce truths in the HCT even if they are already understood:

"Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it is right, as long as I am in this body, to arouse you by way of reminder. . . . I shall also make every effort to enable you to remember these things after my departure." (2 Pt 1:12-13, 15)

Neither the sacraments that require ordination nor the Church's institutional structure are at the top of its Hierarchy of Christian Truths:

"What unites Catholic and nonCatholic Christians is greater than what divides us." (St. John XXIII, *Ut Unum Sint*, 20) "How little divides Catholic and nonCatholic Christians in comparison to what unites them." (St. John Paul II, *ibid.*, 22. See pp. 1-3 of the study guide.)

This document gives study groups and individuals immediate access to all the supporting evidence, from the Magisterium and Scripture, cited in *What Catholic Seminaries Are Omitting* (the Short Study Guide) without having to look anything up. The guide itself includes evidence, but most of the supporting evidence is merely referenced and not quoted. The present document supplies the remaining evidence not already quoted in the guide, preceded by the statements from the guide that cite the evidence. Not all statements from the guide are repeated in this document, only those statements for which the guide itself does not quote all the supporting evidence.

Further explanation of all the points in the study guide and in this support document is at

www.joyfulshepherdretreat.org

There, click on *Retreat Outlines* and/or on *Theological Background*.

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Imprimatur: To be supplied.

Scripture citations are from the *Revised Standard Version* and the New American Bible. Emphasis in Scripture citations is, of course, added.

Please send comments and questions to the principal author:

John C. Cahalan, Ph.D.

cahalanj@comcast.net

23 Pilgrim Circle, #E

Methuen, MA 01844

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Introduction: Pastoral Training's Outmoded Assumptions

Evidence for statements on page 1 of the study guide:

1. “Responding to grace is up to each of us, but for us to do that fully, we must be properly pastored.”

- Ezk 3:17-19: Son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel. When you hear a word from my mouth, you shall warn them for me. If I say to the wicked man, You shall surely die; and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his wicked conduct so that he may live: that wicked man shall die for his sin, but I will hold you responsible for his death. If, on the other hand, you have warned the wicked man, yet he has not turned away from his evil nor from his wicked conduct, then he shall die for his sin, but you shall save your life.

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

- Ezk 33:8-9: If I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way; he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.
- Ep 4:11-16: His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, **when each part is working properly**, makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love (Emphasis here and in other Scripture quotations is, of course, supplied).
- 1 Co 12:28-30: 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 in tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
- See also the bulleted quotations, with the paragraphs preceding and succeeding them, on p. 16 of the study guide.

[Comment: The doctrine of the independent (*ex opere operato*) as opposed to the lived

(*ex opere operantis*) effects of the sacraments is balanced by the doctrine that grace presupposes and perfects nature. By nature we are social beings who achieve the fullness of life, including spiritual life, only by being helped by, and helping, one another. That is why God put such a rich diversity of ministries in the Church.

Sacramental grace is meant to bear fruit through the members of the Christian community interacting, and especially through the work of pastoral leaders, both ordained and lay; grace is meant to produce its lived effects by providing the power for fruitful pastoral work. Why else was it the purpose of Vatican II to renew the Church pastorally? St. Paul says “Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel (which we will hereafter translate as ‘the Great News’)” (I Cor 1:17). That is, Christ did not send him to perform sacramental baptism but to lead Christians to the dispositions necessary for the lived effects of baptism and so of all the later sacraments. (See this document for the quotations and comments for statements 4 and 5 under Truth III.)]

2. “Remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith.” (*Unitatis Reintegratio*, II, 11; *Catechism*, 90 and *Ut Unum Sint*, 37 (quoted verbatim); *Evangelium Gaudii*, 36-38, 246)

- *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, 4: There exists an order as it were a hierarchy of the Church's dogmas, as a result of their varying relationship to the foundation of the faith. This hierarchy means that some dogmas are founded on other dogmas which are the principal ones, and are illuminated by these latter. But all dogmas, since they are revealed, must be believed with the same divine faith.
- *Catechism*, 234: The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith".
- *Evangelium Gaudii*, 36-38: The Second Vatican Council explained, “in Catholic doctrine there exists an order or a ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith”. [38] This holds true as much for the dogmas of faith as for the whole corpus of the Church’s teaching, including her moral teaching. . . . The Church’s moral teaching has its own “hierarchy”, in the virtues and in the acts which proceed from them. . . .

It is important to draw out the PASTORAL consequences of the Council’s teaching . . . In preaching the Gospel a fitting sense of proportion has to be maintained. This would be seen in the frequency with which certain themes are brought up and in the emphasis given to them in preaching. If, in the course of the liturgical year, a parish priest speaks about temperance ten times but only mentions charity or justice two or three times, an imbalance results, and precisely those virtues which ought to be most present in preaching and catechesis are overlooked. The same thing happens when we speak more about law than about grace, more about the Church than about Christ, more about the Pope than about God’s

word. (Emphasis added)

[Comment: One way to speak “more about the Church than about Christ” is to speak more about what the sacraments—including the most important, baptism, and the greatest, the Eucharist—do for us than about what Jesus of Nazareth did, and continues to do, for us. That well intentioned but misplaced emphasis reflects our defensive reaction, in protection of the Catholic (and Orthodox) understanding of the sacraments, against the Protestant Reformation. In the early Church some “disciples” (Ac 19:1) who had been “instructed in the new way of the Lord” (Ac 18:26) had not even heard of sacramental baptism. And see the quotations and comment for statement 4 under Truth III in this document.]

- *Evangelium Gaudii*, 246: Given the seriousness of the counter-witness of division among Christians, particularly in Asia and Africa, the search for paths to unity becomes all the more urgent. Missionaries on those continents often mention the criticisms, complaints and ridicule to which the scandal of divided Christians gives rise. If we concentrate on the convictions we share, and **if we keep in mind the principle of the hierarchy of truths, we will be able to progress decidedly towards common expressions of proclamation, service and witness.** The immense numbers of people who have not received the Gospel of Jesus Christ cannot leave us indifferent. Consequently, commitment to a unity which helps them to accept Jesus Christ can no longer be a matter of mere diplomacy or forced compliance, but rather an indispensable path to evangelization. Signs of division between Christians in countries ravaged by violence add further causes of conflict on the part of those who should instead be a leaven of peace. How many important things unite us! **If we really believe in the abundantly free working of the Holy Spirit, we can learn so much from one another! It is not just about being better informed about others, but rather about reaping what the Spirit has sown in them, which is also meant to be a gift for us.** . . . Through an exchange of gifts, the Spirit can lead us ever more fully into truth and goodness.

[Comment: We have not listened to those last statements of Pope Francis on the hierarchy of Christian truths (HCT). Surely the success of Evangelical Protestants at converting adults in our secular society, including Catholics, to a personal relationship with Jesus and participation in communal Christianity means that we should be trying to learn from them, not only about how to evangelize, but even about what personal evangelization and communal Christianity in secular society *is*. Without integral doctrine and the sacerdotal sacraments, Protestant pastoring may not be able to achieve deep holiness as often as it should. But until we learn to lay the *sine qua non* foundation of personal evangelization as well as they do, neither will our pastoring.

If priests and seminarians can get reliable references to reasonably well pastored evangelical parishes, large and/or small, it would be worth it for them to make unannounced and anonymous visits in street clothes. They

should also make use of the Protestant publications and videos referenced in two important Catholic books about parish reform: *Rebuilt* by Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran, and *Divine Renovation* by Fr. James Mallon. (These are both excellent books as far as they go, and Mallon's book is unquestionably required reading for anyone who knows how deep the pastoral crisis in the western Church is. But both are seriously incomplete concerning: (1) the explicit pastoral plan Jesus gave to his first pastors—Truth I in the study guide and this document; (2) how the apostles motivated Christian behavior in the already evangelized—Truth II; (3) the misinterpretations concerning Vatican II's "the source and summit of the Christian life" and "*in persona Christi*" that inadvertently led to the problems in today's priestly culture that Fr. Mallon so correctly deplores—Truth IV; and (4) what pastors need to tell already evangelized Catholics about suffering—Truth V.)

Why has God permitted some Protestants to evangelize and, sometimes, develop Christian community so well while we don't? Perhaps because they have little else to build on. But as the quotations in the second bullet on page 3 of the study guide state, the things they share with us, which are all they have to build on, are greater than the things that divide us.]

Pastoral Truth I. The Visible Unity that Makes the Church a Sacrament

Evidence for statements on pages 4-5 of the study guide:

1. “The world-saving ‘unity’ of John 17 is brother/sisterly love (visible love, not just ‘spiritual’) of disciples for disciples. You never heard that? **Vatican II teaches it.**”
 - *Gaudium et Spes*, 21: It is the function of the Church . . . to make God the Father and his incarnate Son present and in a sense visible. [Comment: So the Church is a Sacrament, as *Lumen gentium* also teaches.] 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*. . . [Comment: So love of neighbor, both Christian and non-Christian neighbors, is essential to the Church's role as a sacrament making God visible. But consider what the Council immediately adds:]

What does the most to reveal God's presence, however, is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit as they work together for the faith of the Gospel and **who prove themselves a sign of unity**. (Official Vatican translation of “*Ad praesentiam Dei manifestandam maxime denique confert caritas fraterna fidelium, qui spiritu unanimes collaborant fidei Evangelii, et signum unitatis se exigent.*”)

[Comment: So the witness of believers' individual lives and the witness of their love of neighbor, that had already been mentioned in this text, are not the main ways the Church is a visible sign (a sacrament) revealing God to the world. The main way is the brother/sisterly charity—as distinguished from the “justice and love, especially regarding” all “the needy,” mentioned immediately prior in the text—of Christians that unites them with other Christians *spiritually* (*spiritu*) and also makes them a *visible* (*se exigent*) sign of unity. The brother/sisterly love which unites *the faithful*, that is, unites Christians with other Christians, is supposed to be what makes the Church a sign of unity. As distinguished from the witness of Christians' individual lives, which is certainly necessary, the life of the Church as a visible brother/sisterhood, rather than as a delivery system for spiritual goods and services, is what does most to reveal God to the world. Familial love, not just unity of doctrine or of membership in the same religious organization, is the visible sign by which the Church *is* a sacrament of God because God *is* a family of persons ecstatically in love. The familial relations that constitute the Trinity are the infinitely joyous interior life of God that he is now sharing with his extended family. But how often do pastors, and seminaries, explain that?]

2. “The Church’s visible *sign* as a *sacrament* is being a loving family.”

[Comment: The visible sign of baptism is water; the visible sign of the Eucharist is food and drink. What is the visible sign by which the primary sacrament, the Church, of whose life the traditional seven sacraments are expressions and supports, is a sacrament? Vatican II and Scripture, as the rest of this section shows, say that sign is brother/sisterly love of Christians specifically for other Christians: Christians (not the world [Jn 17:9]) being one, not just in doctrine or in any other way short of love, but “in the same way that you and I are one” (Jn 17:22-23), that is, in the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Co 13:14), love.]

3. “on the *communal* goal of priests’ *Eucharistic* ministry.”

- 1 Co 10:16-17: Is not the cup of blessing that we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a sharing in the body of Christ? Because the loaf of bread is one, we, many though we are, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

[Comment: “Sharing” translates *koinonia*, that is, a *communal* sharing, a common participation, from which we get the name “Holy *Communion*,” meaning holy *mutual* sharing.]

- 1 Co 11:17-20: Your meetings are doing more harm than good. First of all, I hear that when you meet as a church there are divisions among you, and to a degree I believe it; there have to be factions among you in order that (also) those who are approved among you may become known. When you meet in one place, then, it is not to eat the **Lord’s supper**, for in eating, each one goes ahead with his own supper, and one goes hungry while another gets drunk. Do you not have houses in which you can eat and drink? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and make those who have nothing feel ashamed? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this matter I do not praise you.

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread, and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

[Comment: So Paul is not just talking about the agape meal accompanying their liturgy. He is saying that their meetings for the “*Lord’s supper*” “are doing more harm than good” *because they violate Christian brother/sisterly love*, the purpose of the Lord’s supper. That violation is the only reason Paul brings the Eucharist up at this point in the epistle. He does not bring it up here as if it was only loosely related to the virtue whose violation causes their celebration of the Lord’s Supper to actually do them more harm than good.

That Christian brother/sisterhood is essential to the meaning of the Eucharist is shown both by what the fourth gospel's discourse at the last supper includes that the Synoptics do not and by what it excludes that the Synoptics include. Having emphatically affirmed the *doctrine* of the Eucharist in Jn 6, in Jn 13-17 the fourth gospel deliberately chooses not to repeat the institution of the Eucharist that the Synoptics each record. Instead, it presents the Eucharist's spiritual, and so *pastoral*, meaning.

In doing so, it repeats the *commandment* of mutual love between Christians three times (13:34-35; 15:12 and 17). And as if that wasn't enough, most of John 17 is spent, not commanding mutual love between Christians, but praying for it. So what is uppermost in Jesus' mind as he prepares to go to his death? Love of his disciples for their fellow disciples. "I am praying for them, *not* for the world, that they may be one *in the same way that you and I are one.*" And how are the Father and Son one? By the fact that they agree on doctrine? Hardly. they are one by loving each other in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Father and Son's mutual *Sigh* ("Spirit" means breath; see Rm 8:23, 26-27) of love.

As expressing cognition, the Word (*logos*) of God is the perfect *articulate* expression of God's knowledge of himself. As expressing affection, God's Sigh of love is his perfect "*unutterable*" (Rm 8:26) expression of his love of himself, which is shared by the Father and the Word. Though in itself the *divine* Sigh of love is not an articulate Word, the *human* words that God has given us to express the meaning of that one and the same love are, as the Father's love for Jesus, "You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and, as Jesus' love for the Father, "*Abba!*, "Daddy!"

The Father contributes two things to the Trinity's life, generating the Son and breathing the Holy Sigh of love with and to the Son. The Son contributes only one thing, breathing the Holy Sigh with and to the Father. When the Son breaths his Sigh of love in us, we become united to and in the Person of the Son, since we participate in the Second Person's sole Trinitarian role of breathing the Holy Sigh of love with and to the Father. So receiving the Holy Sigh unites each of us together in the person that is God's Son, and when the Son breathes his Sigh of love into us, the Father is also breathing into us the same Sigh of love that he breathes for his Son.

For other ways in which we can misuse and/or weaken the liturgy, even with good intentions and liturgical propriety, see the last statement for Truth IV in the study guide, and see the study guide's Conclusion. Also see the quotation for statement 5 under the Conclusion in this document.]

4. "Pastors must explain why mutual Christian love isn't discrimination."

[Comment: In order to keep the study guide as concise as possible, it focused mainly on one

side of the modern seminary's pastoral ineffectiveness, it's failure to teach presbyters to pastor for discipleship in ways that the epistles demonstrably did. Seminaries don't tell pastors what Christians most need to know and do to fully cooperate with grace. But there is another side to our pastoral weakness that is equally important. Seminaries in the western world do not explain to presbyters how poorly disposed the congregations they will pastor are to receive the things pastors most need to give them.

Western society not only ill disposes Catholics to even understand some of the basic principles they most need if *operato* grace is to achieve its *operantis* effects; it counter-disposes them. Western society gives us assumptions that prevent us from understanding basic principles of discipleship. The New Law is one of those principles.

Our society so much stresses that all human beings are created equal and have equal civil *rights* that when Christians are told that they have a special *responsibility* to show love to their fellow Christians, they are usually scandalized. At least, that has been the frequent experience of one Joyful Shepherd Retreat team member who is now prepared to be verbally crucified when he brings up Jesus' New Law of disciples loving fellow disciples.

And why shouldn't they be scandalized? Although, tragically, modern racial problems have made it necessary to keep emphasizing that all people are created with equal rights, it is hardly necessary to remind most people that they have different obligations to different people. It is obvious to most people that, in normal circumstances, they should not show love to their neighbors' families the way they are obligated to show love to their own parents, children, grandparents and siblings. Most people do not need to be told that they have responsibilities to their employers that they do not have to someone else's employer, that they have a duty to keep their neighborhood clean that they do not have to just any other neighborhood, that they have obligations, like taxes, military service, voting, to their countries that they do not have to other countries, etc., etc. These are examples of discrimination. So the real problem is not discrimination; it is *unjust* discrimination.

But a special obligation to love fellow Christians is so far outside of most Catholics' thinking that they can hear homilies about it and not know that it was the subject. The principal author of the study guide has only heard one priest, a bishop, give a homily on the need for mutual Christian love in over fifty years. Afterwards, the author asked several serious and intelligent Catholics in the congregation if they had heard the bishop talk about Christians loving other Christians. They had not. And at least one priest who was present did not know that the bishop was talking about that.

For all his good intentions, however, the bishop had not bothered to explain the New Law in a way that would address the obvious objection, in our culture, of apparent unjust discrimination. If he had understood his audience well enough to do that, they probably would have gotten the point. Seminaries must bend over backwards to inform future pastors of what their congregations do *not* know sufficiently. From the side of pastors' failure to understand how poorly prepared their congregations are, as opposed to the side of pastors not learning how the apostles pastored, taking for granted that Catholics appreciate the basics better than they do is our biggest pastoral mistake.

For other examples of pastorally crucial truths that we falsely take for granted are well enough known, see Truth II in this document for the quotations and comments for statement 5, the comment for statement 8, and the final comment for statement 9.]

5. “Christian brother/sisterhood is where we learn to love **all** people as Jesus does.”

- *Evangelii Gaudium*, 91-92: The solution will never be found in fleeing from a personal and committed relationship with God which at the same time commits us to serving others. *This happens frequently nowadays, as believers seek to hide or keep apart from others*, or quietly flit from one place to another or from one task to another, without creating deep and stable bonds. “*Imaginatio locorum et mutatio multos fefellit.*” This is a false remedy which cripples the heart and at times the body as well. We need to help others to realize that the only way is to learn how to encounter others with the right attitude, which is to accept and esteem them as companions along the way, without interior resistance. Better yet, *it means learning to find Jesus in the faces of others, in their voices, in their pleas.* And learning to suffer in the embrace of the crucified Jesus whenever we are unjustly attacked or meet with ingratitude, never tiring of our decision to live in fraternity.

There indeed we find true healing, since the way to relate to others which truly heals instead of debilitating us, is a mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a **fraternal** love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our **neighbour**, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. Here and now, especially where we are a “little flock” (Lk 12:32), **the Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community** which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:13-16). **We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together** in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community! (Emphasis added.)

[Comment: So *brother/sisterly* love among Christians is not in conflict with love of *neighbor*. Rather, it is what enables us to fulfill the difficult task of loving all our neighbors. We are deceiving ourselves if we think we can achieve the great love of neighbor Jesus calls for without the support of loving Christian environments, where sacramental grace is first meant to bear fruit. Grace presupposes and perfects nature. The nature God gave is that of social beings who need supporting environments.

N.B. Some of Pope Francis’ language in these paragraphs may make it seem that he is referring only to Catholics called to the “religious” life. No. He addresses all “believers” who “seek to hide or keep apart from others.” He says, without making distinctions between disciples that do and do not belong to religious orders, “*The Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world.*” And he says, without making any distinctions between them, that the Lord’s disciples “*are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together* in fidelity to the

Gospel.”

Also, the following quotation alludes to “some Christian communities, and even consecrated persons” in a way that shows he is not thinking just of communities consisting of consecrated persons.]

- *Evangelii Gaudium*, 99-100: I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let **everyone** admire how you care for **one another**, and how you encourage and accompany one another: “By this **everyone** will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for **one another**” (Jn 13:35). This was Jesus’ heartfelt prayer to the Father: “That **they (Jesus’ disciples)** may all be one... in us... so that **the world** may believe” (Jn 17:21). Beware of the temptation of jealousy! We are all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Let us ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each, which belong to all.

[Comment: The Pope connects the New Law of love for *one another* that will be known by *everyone* with the prayer for unity only among *the disciples* that will convert *the world*. See the last five bullets, with the comments, for statement 7 in this section.]

Those wounded by historical divisions find it difficult to accept our invitation to forgiveness and reconciliation, since they think that we are ignoring their pain or are asking them to give up their memory and ideals. But if they see the witness of authentically fraternal and reconciled communities, they will find that witness luminous and attractive. It always pains me greatly to discover how some Christian communities, and even consecrated persons, can tolerate different forms of enmity, division, calumny, defamation, vendetta, jealousy and the desire to impose certain ideas at all costs, even to persecutions which appear as veritable witch hunts. *Whom are we going to evangelize if this is the way we act?*

[Comment: Immediately after Vatican II, pastors tried to achieve the love of neighbor that the council called for mainly by preaching love of neighbor. That fell flat on its face. We learned that you don’t get love of neighbor just by preaching love of neighbor. How do you get it? One necessary condition is that Catholics have supporting environments of mutual Christian love. Unless our commitment to love of *all* springs from and is supported by loving brother/sisterhood with our fellow *Christians*, we will not sustain that commitment as Christ wants us, and our nonChristian neighbors need us, to.]

6. “Didn’t Jesus announce the New Law only to his first pastors (; 17:9, 11, 20-23), from whom alone other disciples would learn it and its purpose?”
 - Jn 13:34-35: I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

- Jn 15:12: This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.
- Jn 15:17 This I command you: to love one another.
- Jn 17:9-11: I pray for them. **I do not pray for the world** but for the ones you have given me, so that they may be one just as we are.
- Jn 17: 20-23: I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, **so that** they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that you sent me, and that you loved them even as you loved me.

[Comment: We show the world our faith in what the Father has done for us in sending Jesus, not primarily by our devotion to Jesus *sacramentally* present as true food and drink in the Eucharist, but by our love for the members of his communal body in whose souls he is *personally* present. (Some theologians think we should suppress the word “soul.” In fact, pastoring needs it. See the fifth bullet for statement 5 under Truth II in this document.)]

7. “Why else did those pastors repeat the call for Christian love specifically for fellow Christians *over and over and over*?”

[Comment: Please read the following texts one-by-one to see how important love specifically for other Christians was in the apostle’s pastoral thinking.]

- Eph 1:15-16: Since I have heard of . . . your love **for the saints**, I do not cease to give thanks.
- Col 1:3-5: We always thank God . . . because we 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.
- Philem 4: I thank my God always . . . because I hear of your love . . . toward . . . all **the saints**.
- Heb 6:10: God is not so unjust as to overlook . . . the love which you showed for his sake in serving **the saints**.
- Eph 6:18: Keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for **all the saints**.
- Rom 12:13: Contribute to the needs of **the saints**.
- 1 Co 16:15: They have devoted themselves to the service of **the saints**.

- 2 Co 8:4: They begged us insistently for the favor of taking part in the service to **the saints**.
- 1 Tm 5:9-10: Let a widow . . . be well attested for her good deeds, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the feet of **the saints**.
- Gal. 6:10: Do good to all men--but especially to **those of the household of the faith**.
- 1 P 2:17: Honor all men. Love **the brotherhood**.

[Comment: So loving “*the brethren*” in First Peter means loving other Christians, as in the next text and in 1 Pt 1:22, below.]

- 1 Pt 3:8: Have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of **the brethren**, a tender heart and a humble mind.
- 1 Th 4:9-10: Concerning love of **the brethren** . . . you do love all **the brethren** throughout Macedonia.

[Comment: So “*the brethren*” in Paul’s epistles means other Christians.]

- 1 Tim 6:2: 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 Co 8:12: Sinning against **your brethren** and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

[Comment: The context concerns scandalizing weak Christians by eating food offered to idols.]

- 1 Jn 3:14: We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love **the brethren**.
- 1 Jn 3:16: By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for **the brethren**.
- 3 Jn 5: Beloved, it is a loyal thing you do when you render any service to **the brethren**.
- 1 Jn 4:20-5:1: 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**. **The person who believes** that Jesus is the Christ is a child **begotten** of God. Now everyone who loves the father loves **the child he has begotten**.”

- 1 Jn 3:1: 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.

[Comment: The last two texts show that “*the brethren*” whom John’s first epistle repeatedly calls us to love (2:9-11; 3: 10, 14, 16; 4:20-21) are other Christians. For they alone, as opposed to “the world,” are God’s children in the epistles. (See the comment for statement 6 under Truth II in this document.)]

- 3 Jn 15: The **beloved** here send their greetings; greet the **beloved** there, each by name.

[Comment: Only a specific group “here” and a specific group “there” are called “*the beloved*;” otherwise, each could not be addressed by name.]

- 1 Pt 1:22: Having purified your souls . . . for a sincere love of **the brethren**, love **one another** earnestly from the heart.
- 1 Thes 4:9-10: About love of **the brethren**, you have been taught by God to love **one another**, and indeed you do love all **the brethren** throughout Macedonia.
- 2 Thes 1:3: **Brethren** . . . the love of every one of you for **one another** is increasing.
- Rm 12:10: Be devoted to **one another** in **brotherly love**.

[Comment: In the last four texts, loving “*one another*” is synonymous with loving “*the brethren*.” And the previous 15 texts identify *the brethren*, or “*God’s children*” (who are thereby siblings), or “*the beloved*” with Christians.]

- 1 Thes 3:12: May the Lord make you . . . abound in love to **one another** and to all men
- 1 Thes 5:15: Do good to **one another** and to all.

[Comment: The last two texts show that Scripture distinguishes between “*one another*,” the people the epistle is addressing, and “*all*” people. Those texts come from the earliest epistle, First Thessalonians, the epistle written soonest after Jesus gave the New Commandment. So when Jesus adds to the New Law “By this will *all* men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for *one another*” (Jn 13:35), the early Christians would have understood him as distinguishing the people he is commanding to love one another from the rest of humanity, “*all*,” who will identify his disciples as a separate group by the disciples’ love for “*one another*.” The special call of Christians to love other Christians is not an invention of the last gospel, nor is its pastoral

importance. Though very brief, the earliest Christian pastoral document we have repeats it three times (1 Thes 3:12; 4:9-10; 5:15; and see 2 Thes 1:3 above).

This interpretation of “*one another*” as not meaning “all people” in these texts is confirmed by statement 1's evidence that John 17's prayer for *unity*, from which nondisciples are explicitly excluded (Jn 17:9), is a prayer for mutual Christian *love*: “one *in the same way* we are one,” that is, “in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Co 13:14), not united just doctrinally or organizationally. See the text and comments for statement 1 in this section.]

- Gal 6:2: Bear **one another's** burdens, and so fulfill **the law of Christ**.

[Comment: The person, St. Paul, who wrote the previous six texts about Christians loving *one another* says that their bearing *one another's* burdens does not just keep the Old Testament's second great commandment but the New Law of Christ; so Paul believes the New Law concerns love between Christians.]

8. “In Scripture, ‘love **one another**’ usually means love members of the specific *community* addressed, the Church.”

[Comment: In the last seven texts for statement 7 of this section, “*one another*” means fellow Christians, as it does the following texts. Please read them all to appreciate the usual Scriptural meaning for “one another” and its importance in apostolic pastoring.]

- Eph 4:2-4: . . . forbearing **one another** in love, eager to maintain **the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace. There is **one body** and one Spirit.
- Col 3:9-16: Do not lie to **one another**, seeing that you have put off the old man with his practices, and put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his creator. **Here** there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but **Christ is all and in all**. . . . forbearing **each other** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called **in one body** teach and admonish **one another** . . . as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in your hearts.
- Rm 15:5-6: May God the source of all patience and encouragement enable you to live in perfect harmony with **one another**, according to the Spirit of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and voice you may glorify God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Comment: In the last three texts, “*one another*” clearly refers to the united members of the one communal body of Christ.]

- 1 Co 16:20: Greet **one another** with a holy kiss.

- 2 Co 13:12: Greet **one another** with a holy kiss.
- 1 Pt 5:14 Greet **one another** with the kiss of love.
- Eph 5:19: Speak to **one another** with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs

[Comment: Paul and Peter were not saying to kiss *everybody* or serenade them. And instead of “Greet *one another* with a holy kiss,” 1 Thes 5:27 says “Greet all *the brethren* with a holy kiss.” So kissing “*one another*” means kissing the brethren.]

- 1 Th 4:18: Comfort **one another** with these words (about the parousia)

[Comment: NonChristians would not have been comforted by hearing about Jesus who is coming to judge them.]

- Heb 3:13: Exhort **one another** every day, as long as it is called “today,” that **none of you** may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

[Comment: But the author would have considered those outside the Church, to be already hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. So “*one another*” refers to members of the Church.]

- Heb 10:24-25: Let **us** hold fast the confession of our hope . . . and let **us** consider how to stir up **one another** to love and good works, not neglecting to **meet together** as is the habit of some, but encouraging **one another**.

[Comment: “*One another*” refers to those who are supposed to meet together and so to members of the Church.]

- Jm 5:16: Confess your sins to **one another**.

[Comment: That is, confess your sins to your fellow Christians.]

[Comment: In each of these texts, the epistles are talking about how Christians should behave toward fellow Christians. The idea is not that we refrain from loving all people as Jesus loves them but that our witnessing to faith in our deification by loving fellow Christians as *alter Christi*, other Christs, is so important in God’s plan for the salvation of all. “So shall the world know . . . that you have loved them (my disciples) **as** (with the *same love* by which) you love me.” (Jn 17:23)

9. “‘Love one another’ is a law for the life of the Church.”

- *Lumen gentium*, 9: Its (the Church’s) law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us. (Cf. Jn 13:34)

[Comment: The council knew that all individual members of the Church are still bound by the two great commandments of the old law. So why describe the new law as *the Church's law* unless it is a law specifically for the life of the Church (a community of brothers and sisters more than a delivery system for spiritual goods and services), rather than the life of individuals?]

10. “He says the evangelization of **all** people depends on it.”

- Jn 17:23: . . . so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

[Comment: See the second bullet, and comment, for statement 5 and the fifth bullet, and comment, for statement 6 of this section. As the quotations and comments for statement 1 of Truth II in this document show, appreciation of our deification (“You have loved them even as you have loved Me”) is the main motivator for Christian behavior, including Christian love both of other Christians and of all people. We prove to the world that our belief that Christ has deified us is not just intellectual by loving other Christians as the Father loves the Son (“In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”). And we love nonChristians the way we now appreciate that the Father already loved us before our deification, namely, as destined for the same glory Christians now have.

The witness of individual Christians' lives is essential for saving others. But the Lord could hardly make it clearer that the witness of the life of the Church as a brother/sisterhood is most important, and that depends on the Church's pastoral leadership. Likewise, devotion to Jesus as really present in the Eucharist is essential to proving the genuineness of our faith. But the meaning of his sacramental presence is shown by the sacramental sign: food and drink, *sacrificial* and *shared* food and drink. So devotion to the Eucharist proves our faith in Jesus' words that “My flesh is real food and my blood is real drink” (Jn 6:55). But it is our love for Jesus really present by grace in *persons* that proves the genuineness of our belief in “the wonder that surpasses them all, the redemptive incarnation” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 58). See the comment for the fifth bullet for statement 6 of this section.

The adequacy of the witness of the Church's brother/sisterly love does *not* depend on all of its members being perfect in their individual lives. Rather, loving “one another as I have loved you” (Jn 13:34) includes forgiveness of one another as an essential element. That presupposes that we need forgiveness. “See how they love one another” must in significant part mean “see how they forgive one another.”]

Evidence for statements on pages 6-7 of the study guide:

1. “Appreciation of the infinite glory of **the Gift of God** that Christians receive”

[Please read each of the following:]

- Jn 4:10-14: If you knew **the Gift (*dora*) of God**, and who it is that is saying to you “Give me a drink,” you would have asked him and he would have given you living water . . . that . . . will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

Jn 7:37-39: If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink . . . Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.” This he said about **the Spirit**, which those who believed in him were to receive.”
- Ac 8:18-20: When Simon saw that **the Spirit** was given through the laying on of hands, he offered them money, saying ‘Give me also this power,’ . . . But Peter said to him, “Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain **the Gift (*dora*) of God** with money.”
- Rm 6:23: The wages of sin is death, but the free **gift (*charisma*) of God** is **eternal life** in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Co 9:14-15: They (the Jerusalem Christians) long for you (the Corinthian Christians) and pray for you because of the surpassing **grace (*charis*) of God** in you. Thanks be to God for **his** inexpressible **gift (*dora*)**.
- 2 Tm 1:6-7: Rekindle **the Gift (*charisma*) of God** that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a **Spirit** of timidity but a **Spirit** of power and love and self-control.
- Heb 6:4-5: . . . those who have been enlightened, who have tasted **the heavenly gift (*dora*)**, and have become partakers of **the Holy Spirit**, and tasted the good word of God . . .

[Comment: The texts from John, Acts and Second Timothy seem to identify *the Gift of God* with the Holy Spirit. But the Romans and Second Corinthians texts seem to identify the Gift of God with *sanctifying grace*, the real presence not just of the Spirit but of the entire Trinity. The Hebrews text may do that also, since it seems to distinguish *the heavenly gift* from the Holy Spirit. But any contradiction is only apparent. These texts are from pastoral writings, not from academic theology. But academic theology, at least of the technically precise Scholastic variety, explains that the Holy Spirit's presence within us as *efficient cause* of our sanctification is necessarily connected with its *formal effect*: the real presence of the entire Trinity, that is, sanctifying grace. Unless receiving the Holy Spirit resulted in our sharing the Trinity's life and so becoming members of the divine family, receiving the Holy Spirit

wouldn't be contributing to our sanctification and so our salvation.

In particular, the reception of the Holy Spirit associated with water baptism results in our being in the state of sanctifying grace, the state of having the Trinity really present within us. (Jn 14:23; 1 Co 12:13) The reception of the Holy Spirit associated with Pentecost gave the disciples the *conscious appreciation* of the interior presence of the Trinity that caused their overflowing joy at Pentecost. See the quotation and comments for statement 10 in this section.]

2. "I have given them our glory **so that** they may love each other as we do."
 - See the quotations for statements 1 and 6 of Truth I in this document.
3. "The pastors who wrote the epistles repeatedly call on our appreciation of the great things God has done for us to motivate Christian behavior."

[Comment: In addition to the quotations on p. 6 of the study guide, please read each of the following.]

- 1 Co 6:15: Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
- 1 Co 6:19: Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- 2 Pt 1:3-9: His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to **his own glory and excellence**, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may . . . become **partakers of the divine nature**.

For this very reason make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, . . ."

- 2 Co 6:16-7:1: For we are the temple of the living God: as God said, "I will live in them and move among them . . . and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." **Since we have these promises**, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit.
- 1 Jn 3:1-3: See what love the Father has given us that we should be called **children of God**; as so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall know him as he is. And **everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure**.

[Comment: We avoid sin because it is *beneath the glorious dignity* that Christians are supposed to appreciate having, and on the basis of which we are supposed to live in joyous expectation of future glory. (See the quotations for statement 7 of Truth V in this document.) Those early Christians knew that to be a child of God is to share divine life itself. (See the

texts and comment for statement 5 in this section.) That knowledge was the basis of the hope so great that for the sake of it they would keep themselves pure. Until we die, fear must be part of Christian motivation. But that fear should be fear of losing the “surpassing, inexpressible” (2 Co 9:14-15) gift we know we have already received.]

4. “The Trinity’s life really lived in and among human beings is what Christianity is; its essence.”

- *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 35-36: The celebration of the Eucharist, however, cannot be the starting-point for communion; it presupposes that communion already exists, a communion which it seeks to consolidate and bring to perfection. The sacrament is an expression of this bond of communion both in its *invisible* dimension, which, in Christ and through the working of the Holy Spirit, unites us to the Father and among ourselves, and in its *visible* dimension, which entails communion in the teaching of the Apostles, in the sacraments and in the Church's hierarchical order. The profound relationship between the invisible and the visible elements of ecclesial communion is constitutive of the Church as the sacrament of salvation. . . .

Invisible communion, though by its nature always growing, presupposes the life of grace, by which we become “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4), and the practice of the virtues of faith, hope and love. Only in this way do we have true communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Nor is faith sufficient; we must persevere in sanctifying grace and love.

- *Catechesi Tradendae*, 5: The aim of catechesis is to put us in intimacy with Jesus: only he can lead us to the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the Trinity’s life.”
- *Catechism*, 234: The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith". The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin"

5. **“Catholics’ appreciation of their glory is now too weak to be the motive for Christian behavior in our secular society.”**

[Comment: Pastors need to see how woefully weak Catholics’ appreciation of the “surpassing,” “inexpressible” Gift of God is at the pastoral, as opposed to the theological, level today. In the formation Catholics have received, there are many serious obstacles to appreciating the indwelling of the Trinity. The result is that most Catholics have only the vaguest idea of what they should be rejoicing in. Some of the obstacles:

- Many think of “the state of grace” as a white mark replacing a black one on the soul, or as a ticket into the next life with no particular bearing on this life.

- Since we grow in grace, many think it starts out as something small. But infinitely glorious life is in us from the moment we receive grace. We do grow in grace, but so did Jesus, not only “before . . . men” but also “before God” (Lk 2:52), and he always had the whole Trinity dwelling in him. “Participating” in divine life cannot mean having only “part” of it. The Trinity does not have “parts” in that sense. Growth means that the way the Trinity lives their life in us develops. But it is always the Trinity already dwelling in us causing that development.
- Catholics are told, correctly, that God is in all people. But only those baptized, by water or desire, have the Trinity’s life as their own life; only acts of the baptized can also be acts of the Trinity’s own life. To struggle to live differently from everyone else, Catholics need to know the infinite, but not at all obvious, *difference* between their life and everyone else’s. Without appreciating that nonobvious difference, Catholics can’t be adequately inspired to struggle joyfully to live differently from others.
- Catholics are often told that Christ is present “in our hearts,” which causes many to think his presence is merely subjective. “In our hearts” can describe the way our families are in our hearts when we are apart; that way of being in our hearts is subjective and does not deify us. But God’s glory is in us the way it was in Jesus’ humanity before his Transfiguration and Resurrection. Rather than being subjective, grace causes us to be existentially recreated, to be new creatures. Creation failed the first time but starts over in us.
- Other true descriptions that are too vague to be pastorally effective without more explanation are “Jesus is in our lives” or “Jesus is with us.” And it is difficult to find adequate explanations when some theologians tell us to suppress the word “soul,” on the factually false theory that in our society it communicates something Platonic or at least dualistic, rather than the deepest interior source of our conscious life. (That theory tells us more about the inability of some intellectuals to understand metaphysical truths than it does about our culture. People ordinarily have an intuitive, and naturally humble, grasp of metaphysical truths that some kinds of “higher” education can suppress.)
- All people, not just Christians, are now called “children of God,” which undercuts Scripture’s reason for saying that Christians are children of God and for calling God “our Father,” namely, that only those baptized by water or desire share the Trinity’s life. See the quotations and comment for statement 6 in this section.
- Today Catholics are told, correctly, that you don’t have to be visibly Christian to be saved. So they need an explanation of why it is so important to be Christian. Theologically, the Joyful Shepherd Retreat does not deny the explanation that salvation is more secure for Christians. But that can cause the pastoral problem of *appearing* to say that God unjustly makes salvation harder for some, those who have never had the chance to believe in Jesus, than for others. Truth V of the study guide offers an

underappreciated alternative explanation that is at least as important as, but can be more inspiring than, that one.

- Many Catholics believe a loving God cannot condemn. Pastors cannot afford to be naive about this spiritually deadly fallacy. And they need to be able to explain why God can condemn without causing an unbalanced promotion of fear as a spiritual motive. A full development of that explanation is at the web site. There, click on *Theological Background*. Then click on “Fourth Secret: The Shareable Gift of God,” and see pp. 8-20. And/or see *Retreat Outlines with Commentaries*, click on the highlighted link under “Session K, Ninth Talk.” There, see outline sections IV and V, pp. 7-13, and the corresponding explanations, pp. 18-27.

Such obstacles to appreciation of the Gift of God, the main motivation for Christian behavior, show the pastoral state of the Church today, and priests need to be absolutely realistic about it. Communicating Christianity’s essence is not easy today. What the seminary taught priests they would be expected to do is no longer adequate. Due to all these obstacles, we urge using the language of the Trinity’s real indwelling and of our really living the Trinity’s life to communicate the *sine qua non* reality that the first Christian pastors tried to communicate in terms that so often are drastically watered down or misunderstood today. Living the life of the Trinity is a specifically and unambiguously Christian concept. That is what our pastoral ministry needs, since the awesome reality that needs to be appreciated is specifically Christian.]

6. “Today ‘God’s children’ means all people? It usually means the opposite in Scripture: how those in grace (by water baptism or desire) are infinitely *different* from other people.”

- 1 Jn 3:1-2: See what love the Father has given **us** that we should be called **children** (*tekna*) **of God**; as so we are. The reason why **the world does not know us** is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall know him as he is.
- Jn 5:1: The person who **believes** that Jesus is the Christ is a **child begotten** (*gegennatai*) of God.
- Rm 9:8: This means that it is not the children of flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned descendants (of Abraham).

[Comment: The early Christians knew that being a child of God meant sharing God’s own life. There are 15 places in the New Testament where “sons” or “children” of God is used exclusively for Christians: *sons*, Matt. 5:9; Lk. 20:36; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:19; Gal. 3:26; *children*, Jn. 1:12; Jn. 11:52; Rom. 8:16; Rom. 8:21; Rom. 9:8; Phil. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:1; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:10; 1 Jn. 5:2. In only one place in the New Testament (Ac 17:28-28) are all human beings described as children of God, and then by a different word (*genos*), often translated “offspring.”]

7. “We grow in grace as Jesus did.”

- Lk 2:52: Jesus increased in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

[Comment: The is growth at the human level, of course. The way the Trinity lives its life in us develops.]

8. “Who but Christians who know the glory to which nonChristians are called can love nonChristians as they deserve and need?”

[Comment: Again, Christians love nonChristians the way we now appreciate that the Father already loved us before our deification, namely, as destined for the same glory we now have.]

9. “To fully cooperate with actual grace, we must hear the glory of the Great News and Gift of God regularly proclaimed, *even assuming we already know it.*”

- 2 Pt 1:3-13: His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to **his own glory and excellence**, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may . . . become **partakers of the divine nature. For this very reason** make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control,

Therefore I intend **always to remind you** of these things, **though you know them and are established in the truth that you have**. I think it is right, as long as I am in this body, **to arouse you** by way of reminder.”

[Comment: We could hardly ask for a more explicit instruction about pastoring from our first pastors. To his surprise Paul had learned by hard experience the need to *reform* his pastoring by regularly reminding Christians of what he thought they were already sufficiently aware of: the greatness of the Gift of God (see the first two bullets for statement 3 in this section and the second two bullets on p. 6 of the study guide) and of the Great News (salvation as entirely free and unmerited; see Ga 3:1-5:12, too long to quote here.) Second Peter is a quite late epistle, as its defense of the delay in the Second Coming (3:3-9) and knowledge of the epistles Paul wrote (2 Pt 3:15-16) show . So the author of Second Peter was giving us a pastoral principle God had already taught the apostles by hard experience. (“I have more things to teach you, but you cannot bear it now.” Jn 16:12)

But even regular reminders about the greatness of the Great News and glory of the Gift of God would be insufficient today, because most Catholics have not been personally evangelized (Truth III) and adequately catechized to begin with. (“A catechesis that neglects this interrelation and harmony of its content”—the HCT—“can become entirely useless for achieving its end,” a

quotation from the Magisterium on p. 2 of the study guide.)

Ecclesia de Eucharistia, 61, says, “There can be no danger of excess in our care for” the Eucharist, “for in this sacrament is recapitulated the whole mystery of salvation” But the Pope is there assuming that the “whole mystery of salvation” has been properly taught and understood according to the HCT. We know that because the same document reminds us *en passant* that the Eucharist is not “the wonder that surpasses them all,” but that “the redemptive Incarnation” is (58). The pope’s fleeting mention of the wonder that surpasses them all indicates that he assumes his readers know that mystery and its importance so well that he doesn’t need to elaborate. Tragically, pastors cannot make that assumption today; so mere reminders will not do.

When pastoral formation fails to sufficiently emphasize the whole nature of that mystery, it under emphasizes by omission one of the fundamental conditions needed for the Eucharist to achieve its goals. Distorting the place of the liturgy in the plan of salvation does not honor the liturgy. Pastoral formation has unintentionally distorted the place of the liturgy, but not by overemphasizing the Eucharist as much as by under emphasizing more important and fundamental things.

The Church has *never* called the Eucharist “the source and summit of the Faith.” Instead, it calls the Eucharist the source and summit of “the Christian life.” That statement implies that to appreciate the Eucharist we must understand what “the Christian life” is. The Christian life is the life of the Trinity itself really present in human beings, which is infinitely more important than anything else created could be. God could have created, and perhaps has created, a different world(s) and given his community a different structure and sacramental system. But he couldn’t have saved it from sin without bestowing sanctifying grace. (By the HCT) *Do seminaries stress grace’s primacy over everything else?*]

10. “The Spirit given in confirmation will make that proclamation fruitful. Scripture says that receiving the Holy Spirit is meant to: Give us a personal appreciation of God’s glorious real presence in us; so that we will obey God out of love and joy, not just out of fear of punishment.”
 - Ez 36:26-27: A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.

[Comment: This amazing promise that by putting his Spirit within us God Himself will *cause* us to keep his commandments (so that all we have to do is give him permission do it, as Mary did [Lk 1:38]) is the completion of the following prophecy of Jeremiah given just a few years before:]

- Jr 31:31-34: The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . not like the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts No longer will each man teach his neighbor and teach his brother, saying “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.

[Comment: God’s writing his law on our heart means we will obey him out of the desire of our heart, not grudgingly out of mere fear of punishment. So Ezekiel’s promise of gift of the Spirit as our new heart is the completion of Jeremiah’s promise that in the new covenant we will obey God out of love and joy. Their promises were fulfilled at Pentecost and in the sacrament of confirmation. And just how did the Spirit promised by Ezekiel give the first Christians, and give us, that love and joy? By fulfilling Jeremiah’s promise that we will each have a personal awareness of God, as the following quotations show:]

- Jn 14:16-20: I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor . . . whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. . . . **In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.**
- Ga 4:6: Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, **crying** “Abba! Father!”
- Rm 8:15-16: You have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself **bearing witness** with our Spirit that we are children of God.

[Comment: The exclamation “Abba! Daddy!” in the previous two texts expresses an appreciative awareness of our sonship, which is our sharing in divine life. Likewise, the Synoptics’ “You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” indicates that the descent of the Spirit gave Jesus a new awareness, on the human level, of his divine Sonship. (See the comment for the second bullet under statement 3 of Truth I in this document.) Like Jesus, the disciples at Pentecost already shared divine life, and as in Jesus, the disciples’ new appreciation of the indwelling of divine life is what empowered them to undertake their public ministry.

Reading the accounts of Jesus’ baptism in terms of Scripture’s theology of what receiving the Spirit did for Christians does *not* require taking those accounts as history. If those accounts were not intended as *history*, they are a fortiori intended to express the authors’ *theology* of what it means for human beings who already share divine life, as Jesus did, to then receive the Spirit. But if they were intended as history, and receiving the Spirit had not given the readers an appreciation of their divine sonship, as it did in Jesus’ human consciousness, the readers would have had to wonder why not.]

- 2 Co 1:22: He . . . has given us his Spirit in our hearts as a **guarantee**.
- 2 Co 5:5: God has given us the Spirit as a **guarantee**.
- Eph 1:14: You . . . were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, which is the **guarantee** of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

[Comment: “Guarantee” in the previous three texts is also translated “pledge,” “deposit,” “down payment.” This is a *consciousness* of God’s interior presence that, while based on faith, goes beyond faith. Giving someone a deposit or down payment on a promised future benefit is the opposite of asking the person just to have faith in the promise. The change in consciousness that motivated the disciples on Pentecost was later called “infused contemplation,” that is, infused consciousness. If the change in consciousness at the four descents of the Holy Spirit in Acts, was not what saints later called infused contemplation, then nothing in later Christianity shows us what happened when early Christians received the Spirit. But, as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila taught their communities, receiving the Spirit does not require a dramatic experience.]

- 1 Co 2:9-12: “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him,” **God has revealed to us through the Spirit**. . . Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might **understand** the gifts bestowed on us by God.

[Comment: This is one of the most incompletely quoted passages in Scripture. That no one has seen, heard or humanly conceived what God has prepared for us is only a half truth. Paul immediately adds that the Spirit has now revealed precisely that to us, so that we can understand what God has done for us. We know that what awaits us is the very infinite, eternal happiness of God himself, because we already know that he has given us his own divine life.]

- 1 Co 2:10-12: For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man’s thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, **that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God**.

[Comment: So the interior awareness we acquire by receiving the Spirit is a sharing in God’s own interior awareness of himself.]

[Comment: Paul’s knowledge that receiving the Spirit had made his converts personally aware of the freely given interior presence of the Trinity may well be why he mistakenly took it for granted that Corinthians’ and Galatians’ appreciation of the Great News and the Gift of God did not have to be regularly reinforced in his pastoring. What God taught him through

the shocks of his experience with the Corinthians and Galatians was that the Spirit, after being personally received by Christians, would continue this work in them through the ministries the Spirit also gave those in Jesus' communal body. As with receiving the Eucharist, the fruit of the personal awareness of God given by receiving the Spirit comes through our closer union with our sisters and brothers, with all their ministry gifts, in the Trinity's extended family. (See the third and fourth bullets under statement 1 of the Introduction in this document.)]

Evidence for statements on pages 8-9 of the study guide:

1. “Allowing God to work in us, as Mary did, is all we can do.”
 - Lk 1:38: Let it be done to me as you say.
2. “That calls for two basic ongoing dispositions.”
 - Mk 1:15: The kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the Great News.**

[Comment: Even Mary, who did not have to repent since she was already full of grace, had to believe the Great News.]
3. “All we have to do to let the Spirit work is sincerely want to change (repent) and ask Jesus to change us trusting that he will do it (believe).”
 - Ezk. 36:27: I will put my Spirit within you, and **cause you** to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.
4. “*Operato*, my relation to Jesus comes from the Church and the sacraments. But *operantis*, the quality of my relation to them (Church and the sacraments) comes from my conversion to the person, Jesus.”
 - 1 Co 1:17: Each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; lest any one should say that you were baptized in my name. . . . **For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News.**
 - 3:10-11: **According to the commission of God given to me**, like a skilled master builder, **I laid a foundation**, and another man is building upon it. For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

[Comment: So even though baptism is, as Paul knew, the first and most important sacrament, its effects require a different “foundation,” the proclamation of Jesus of Nazareth as Lord and Savior from sin, which has a power that is independent of the sacraments. Paul’s converts already had sanctifying grace; what their later baptism added was the permanent “character,” an acquired disposition. (See “Character” in the 1917 *Catholic Encyclopedia*.) Unless we have a faith relationship, as sinners needing salvation, to a specific human being, Jesus of Nazareth, baptism cannot bear fruit in us, and so neither can any of the sacraments subsequent to baptism. The Great News consists of news about Jesus and what he did for us, and about what accepting Jesus in repentance and faith does for us, but instead we most frequently hear about what baptism and Jesus’ presence as true food and drink (Jn 6:55; a

sacrament's sign shows its *meaning*) in the Eucharist does for us. Again, the Tridentine seminary needed to stress the distinctively Catholic/Orthodox against the Protestant reformers. Now we must return to stressing the HCT both theologically and pastorally.]

5. “Personal evangelization is “pre-catechesis.” The *operantis* effects of the sacraments and catechesis depend on it.”

- *General Directory for Catechesis*, 61-62: The Church usually desires that the first stage in the catechetical process be dedicated to ensuring conversion. In the "*mission ad gentes*", this task is normally accomplished during the 'pre-catechumenate'. In the context of "new evangelization" it is effected by means of a "kerygmatic catechesis", sometimes called "pre-catechesis", because it is based on the precatechumenate and is proposed by the Gospel and directed towards a solid option of faith. Only by starting with conversion, and therefore by making allowance for the interior disposition of "whoever believes", can catechesis, strictly speaking, fulfil its proper task of education in the faith.
- *Catechism*, 1072: The Sacred liturgy (here, the sacraments in general) does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church” (*Sacrosanctum consilium*, 9); it **must be preceded by evangelization**, faith, and conversion. It can then produce its fruits in the lives of the faithful: new life in the Spirit, involvement in the mission of the Church, and service to her unity. (Emphasis added.)

6. “Doesn’t St. Paul’s justification by *faith*, not “works of the law,” (Rm 3:28) mean by personal faith *and repentance*?”

- Rm 2:4-5: Do you not know that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance. But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself.

[Comment: So the rest of Paul’s teaching in *Romans* presupposes that the Romans know repentance is necessary.]

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

[Comment: Since Paul made this statement in the midst of his contrast between living by faith/grace and living by law, he is assuming that he is addressing people who want to obey the law, that is, who have repented in the sense of sincerely intending to do good and avoid evil. The support for the next statement, 7, however, makes it clear that repentance, “a firm purpose of amendment,” is insufficient to change behavior.]

7. “From these two (repentance and faith) don’t works of the law follow by Jesus’ power, not my intention of repentance, causing them in me?”

- Rm 7:15-23: I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is

good. . . . I can will what is right, **but I cannot do it**. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. . . . I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members (the flesh).

- Ga 5:17: For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from **doing what you would**.

[Comment: But if even sincere good intentions are insufficient, what is the solution? Romans continues:]

- Rm 7:24-25: Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

[Comment: Paul answers his question about who will deliver him, not with a declarative sentence meant to teach doctrine catechetically, but with a personal expression of thanks. In effect he answers with a personal testimony about the results of putting faith in the person of Jesus, a testimony meant to call his readers to put faith in Jesus likewise. Three verses later, he states the doctrine implied by this personal proclamation in the following declarative sentence:]

- Rm 8:3-4: For God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do: sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us.

[Comment: If Romans' alternative to *by faith alone* is *by faith and repentance*, why do we so often here that the alternative is *by faith and works* (that is, works other than repenting and believing themselves)? This is a good illustration of why learning doctrine is insufficient for learning how to pastor. Theologically, it is perfectly true that faith without works is not enough. But Paul is writing a pastoral document, not a theological one. He knows the *theological* truth that works are necessary. But that leaves the *pastoral* question: How do we accomplish the good works we need, how are they produced from the point of view of human spiritual psychology? By our good will? No, they are accomplished by and only by our repenting and believing, sincerely wanting to do good works and asking Jesus to do them in us, having faith that he will do it.

If we needed to do more than that, God would not be God. If God knows we are asking sincerely and with faith, he cannot refuse us. Of course, when we repent and believe, we are just allowing actual grace God has already given us to produce those effects. And when we pray sincerely for the grace of repentance or faith, we are cooperating with the grace of repentance and faith God has already given us, whether we realize it or not.

When God gives us sufficient grace to say yes to X (where X can be the doing of some good work or the avoiding of some evil work), merely consciously refraining from saying yes is

the moral equivalent of saying no to God. (“There is no need to seek *a cause* of this [the absence, the lack that is the root of moral evil] because the liberty of the will itself, thanks to which it can act *or not act*, suffices for this.” [Aquinas, *De Malo*, I, 3; emphasis supplied.]) By not consciously refraining from the good “works” of repenting and believing, we are ipso facto giving God’s sufficient grace permission to create repentance and faith in us. If we consciously refrain, we are responsible for the absence of what should be there. If we give him permission by not consciously refraining when we could have, he is primarily responsible for the presence of what should be there, and we are secondarily responsible, but only because we could have refrained and did not. (See Jacques Maritain, *Existence and the Existent*, Ch. IV, and *God and the Permission of Evil*, which has modifications to the former.)

Since God is God, giving him permission, in this way, to act in us as he wishes is all we can do and all we need to do. “I will . . . *cause you* to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances,” (Ezk. 36:27) if we just give him permission to do it by not consciously refraining from repenting and believing when he gives us sufficient grace.]

8. “Salvific repentance and faith are first a relation to an historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, and secondly to the Church and its sacraments. The sacraments’ power is unleashed by our relation to Jesus of Nazareth and what he did for us.”
 - See the quotations for statements 4 and 5 in this section.
9. “Most priests are among the minority, today, whose family evangelizing and catechesis worked. Such priests may not see that our **greatest pastoral need** is the personal conversion to Jesus of already sacramentalized and catechized adults.”
 - See the first and third bullets on p. 1 of the study guide on why family evangelizing and catechesis no longer work as they once did.
 - See Catechism 1072 which is the second bullet under statement 5 in this section.
10. “We can learn much about conscious personal conversion to Jesus from our Evangelical brothers and sisters, who are succeeding at it.”
 - See the fourth bullet under statement 2 of the Introduction in this document.

Pastoral Truth IV. Balance in Our Pastoral Priorities: Putting First Things First

Evidence for statements on pp. 10-11 of the study guide:

1. “... **in reverse order, of course: from Truth III, to II, to I.**”
 - All should re-read the last paragraph of the Introduction on p. 3 of the study guide.
 - *Catechism* 1072 is the second bullet for statement 5 under Truth III in this document.
2. “Shouldn’t pastors be taught to regularly reinforce these truths?”
 - Each of the quotations referenced in the study guide for this statement have been included earlier in the study guide or in this document.
3. “That is the ‘one thing necessary,’ ‘the pearl of great price.’”
 - Lk 11:42: Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things: one thing only is required.
 - Mt 13:46: The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.
4. “Popes have repeatedly said”
 - The full texts of Popes John XXIII and John Paul II are cited in the second bullet on p. 3 of the study guide.
5. “Just as the greatest sacrament is not the most important, it is not the real presence of greatest importance to Jesus and to us. Isn’t preserving and perfecting Jesus’ real presence in us by grace the Eucharist’s sole purpose?”

[Comment: Metaphysically, Jesus’ way of being present in the Eucharist is the greatest *as a way of being present*, as one *mode* of that person’s real presence in comparison to a different mode of the same person’s real presence. For Jesus’ way being present in the Eucharist allows us to say that the Eucharist *is* God and to *worship* that host and liquid. Still grace is his way of being present that is most important, not just to us, but to Jesus. Being really present in us through grace is infinitely more important to him than being in the Eucharist, as the first quotation on p. 11 of the study guide , from St. Therese of Lisieux, a doctor of the Church, states. And though grace does not allow us to say *we* are God, it does allow us to say Christians are *other Christs* in a way more intimate and important than the way a presbyter is an *alter Christus*; see the following three statements, 6-8.]
6. “Since grace is the Trinity itself living its life in us, doesn’t your royal priesthood infinitely transcend your presbyterate—and everything else—in dignity, glory and importance.”

- *Catechism*, 1547: While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace . . . , the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church.

[Comment: Baptismal grace, the real presence of the Trinity in us, is “that greater than which nothing (created) can be conceived.” Also, the *means*, here the ministerial priesthood, is always less important than the *end*, here life in grace, the *royal* priesthood.]

7. “Those in grace act *in persona Christi* in the greatest way by sharing in the Son’s personal life of worshipping the Father.”

- *Catechism*, 1361: The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of praise by which the Church sings the glory of God in the name of all creation. This sacrifice of praise is possible only through Christ: he unites the faithful **to his person**, to his praise, and to his intercession, so that the sacrifice of praise to the Father is offered *through* Christ and *with* him, to be accepted *in* him. (emphasis in bold added.)

[Comment: So “*in persona Christi Capitis*” does *not* imply, as at least one theologian was led to conclude, that presbyters alone are united to the person of Christ, and the laity only share in some of his divine power(s). It means almost the opposite. A presbyter does have an additional way of being united to the person of Christ, but since that additional way is sacramental, its value is functional and instrumental. See the comment for the next statement, 8.]

8. “*In persona Christi Capitis*’ refers to Jesus’ functional role as head of his community. But doesn’t being living members of his community give us immeasurably greater dignity than our function in it?”

- *Evangelii Gaudium*, 104: It must be remembered that when we speak of sacramental power “we are in the realm of function, not that of dignity or holiness”. The ministerial priesthood is one means employed by Jesus for the service of his people, yet our great dignity derives from baptism, which is accessible to all. The configuration of the priest to Christ the head – namely, as the principal source of grace – does not imply an exaltation which would set him above others. In the Church, functions “do not favour the superiority of some vis-à-vis the others”.

[Comment: In this text, Pope Francis is quoting Pope John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, [*Christifideles Laici*](#) (30 December 1988), 51: *AAS* 81 (1989), 413. John Paul II was a personalist philosopher. Personalist philosophers distinguish the value we have because of the *functions* we can perform from the value we have as *persons*. (See Gabriel Marcel, *On the Ontological Mystery*). If I am comatose and unable to perform any social functions, I still have the immensely greater value of being a person.

The reason no one else in Jesus' salvific community could have the *function* of headship (*Capitis*) while he was with them was who he is as a *person*. In becoming fully human, the Second Person of the Trinity freely assumed the moral role of subordination to headship that God had designed for children in the human family. But while on earth, a divine person could not have ceded his authority in the work of salvation, including the headship of his salvific community, to anyone else, even Mary or Joseph. Since those who now exercise earthly headship in his salvific community have a function derived from who Jesus is as a person, they act *in PERSONA Christi capitis*.

But that way of being associated with Jesus' person remains infinitely less important and glorious than the way anyone in the state of grace has. One difference between the priest's specific way of being identified with Christ and everyone in grace's way is that the priest's specific way is *functional and instrumental*, rather than "personal," in the primary sense of that word. The priest is an instrumental source of grace as all the sacraments are. To be an instrumental cause of something, the instrument must be united somehow to the principal cause. So to be an instrumental source of grace, the priest must be united to the principal source, Jesus, as this text from *Evangelium Gaudii* states.

But an instrumental cause as such, that is, to the extent that it is an instrument, does not take on the nature of the principal cause, A painter's brush does not acquire the nature of the painter except in a secondary sense (by a form of *intentional* existence, to use the technical terminology). In the case of a particular sacrament, the presbyterate, there is importantly and essentially an additional relation to the principal cause not shared by all the sacraments as such. But a priest in mortal sin acts *in persona Christi Capitis* as much as any priest does, while the least virtuous person in the state of grace, who therefore shares the divine nature, is infinitely more intimately united to the person of Christ than a priest in mortal sin is.

It is demonstrable (see the evidence in Ch. I under "Theological Background" at the web site), however, that many ministerial priests today *cannot* pastor as the apostles did because the culture they have innocently acquired puts their focus much more on Jesus' *sacramental*, and so instrumental, real presence in the presbyter than on Jesus' *personal* real presence in each Christian and in his communal body. (On the current priestly culture, see Fr. James Mallon, *Divine Renovation*.)

To pastor as the apostles did, they must be trained to stress Christianity's invisible *essence*, the Trinity living its life in and between Christians, rather than the visible but instrumental life of the institutional Church and its sacramental system. If they don't sufficiently stress that invisible essence, human nature will obviously take the easier path and focus on the visible aspects of Christianity, which do not rank as high in the HCT. Today's

pastoring proves how easy that shift of attention is.

A little reflection will show that the potential — though only the potential — for this kind of imbalance in priestly culture is inherent in seminary education. It is an avoidable danger but one that seminaries must work, and so must be aware of, to avoid. Any intense and communal “professional” training will unconsciously create a professional culture along with communicating academic knowledge. Just think of military academies and medical schools. And all cultures will have both good and bad elements.

Seminaries influence their students not just by the curriculum but by the environment they create. During the years that are most formative for people’s professional identities, future priests are in an environment where they cannot avoid having their attention focused on the dignity and importance that are specific to their exalted vocation; for they share an intense communal experience with other men who expectantly look forward to the same incomparable service.

In such an environment won’t the mere *omission* of adequate teaching about the glory of *the* Gift of God be enough to produce an unbalanced view of the place of the sacerdotal sacraments, the sacraments that require ordination, especially the Eucharist, in Christianity. Nature abhors the vacuum. If balancing elements are absent from their formation, won’t presbyters tend, consciously or unconsciously, to understand the Church’s life from the viewpoint of the genuine spiritual glory specific to their sacramental ministry rather than understanding the meaning of that ministry from the viewpoint of Christianity’s essence? And won’t that misunderstanding diminish the de facto fruits of their glorious pastoral ministry?

The principal author of this document has several times heard homilies remind us that the ministerial priest acts *in persona Christi Capitis*. He has NEVER heard a homily remind us that Christians all act *in persona Christi* in an infinitely more important way. That latter way seems to hardly impinge on presbyters’ pastoral consciousness. From the Church’s normal pastoral life, we must conclude that the Eucharist’s being a real presence of Jesus is much higher in their pastoral consciousness than grace’s being the real presence of the Trinity through which individual Christians and the whole Christian community (the communal *alter Christus*) live the Trinity’s own infinite life.

This is a pastorally devastating result of the Tridentine seminary’s need to stress distinctively Catholic/Orthodox truths, rather than the HCT’s foundational truths, against the Protestant Reformation. (It has been claimed that the application of the phrase “*the* real presence” to the Eucharist was a 17th-century development. If so, that use of the definite article, implying “the one and only,” was a distortion resulting from the Church’s reaction to the Refor-

mation.) After Vatican II, that situation was exacerbated by misinterpretations of “the font and summit of the Christian life” and “*in persona Christi Capitis*.” (See the texts and comments for statements 5-7 in this section.)

Those misinterpretations were themselves made possible by the Tridentine seminary’s need to put unbalanced stress on distinctively Catholic/Orthodox truths rather than the HCT. (In the first bullet on p. 2 of the study guide, a document of the Magisterium cites the creeds as examples of the HCT. Neither the Nicene or the Apostles’ Creeds mentions the Church’s hierarchical structure or the sacerdotal sacraments, including the Eucharist.)

Ministerial priests might be able to pass a catechism test on all of this. But what is their personal appreciation of these truths in the background consciousness that informs their lives, as compared to their conscious appreciation of the Eucharist as the *sacramental*, and so instrumental, “font and summit,” and of their specific way of acting *in persona Christi*? For their own spirituality, not just for their pastoral ministry, presbyters need to have their relative conscious appreciations of ministerial and royal priesthoods reversed. To be able to fully cooperate with grace, all Catholics need to appreciate that when “whatever you do, whether in speech or in action,” is done “in the name (that is, the person) of the Lord Jesus” (Col 3:17), they are high priests “offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pt 2:5).

Again, the unbalanced stress on the ministerial priesthood is a by-product of the Tridentine seminary’s need to react to the Protestant Reformation. The authors of the epistles clearly wanted Christians to be more conscious of their participation in Jesus’ priesthood than the presbyters’, just as the authors were more concerned that Christians be conscious of the real presence of Christ in them than in the Eucharist. “*Hiereus*” is the Scriptural word for “priest” in the sense of a performer of sacred acts. The New Testament never uses “*hiereus*” when it wants to refer only to presbyters as opposed to Jesus, to all royal priests, or to the high priests of the old covenant (the role only a few had then but is now performed by all God’s people).

The epistle to the Hebrews describes the characteristics that are unique to Jesus as compared to Jewish high priests. Those in Jesus’ communal body share in the high priesthood of Jesus primarily and most importantly through their royal priesthood. It’s not just that presbyters have to first be royal priests in order to be ordained. Every *operantis* effect of the presbyter’s sacramental ministry in individual A comes to A through the prayers, sacrifices and sufferings of all the royal priests, including presbyters themselves, in Jesus’ communal body. (See Truth V in the study guide.)]

Evidence for statements on pages 12-13 of the study guide:

1. “We must evangelize since the grace saving nonChristians comes *from Jesus through the prayer, sacrifice, example and testimony of Jesus living in us*. That mission requires all the Christians we can get.”
 - 1 Tim 2:1-4: First of all I urge that prayers be made for all people. . . . For God wants all people to be saved..

[Comment: At a minimum, this text means that Jesus’ praying through his disciples is important for God’s goal of saving *all* people.]
 - Col. 1:24: I make up what is lacking in Christ’s sufferings for the sake of the Church.

[Comment: This text cannot mean that Paul is offering his sufferings *only* for the sake of those who are already members of the Church and not for all those God will bring into his Church. For in the next quoted text, Paul is yearning for the Church to attain its full stature in both the spiritual and numerical senses. The word for “fullness” there has the same root as in “the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:22-23).]
 - Eph 4:12-16: . . . for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and up builds itself in love.
2. “Grace comes to others mainly from our holiness.”
 - Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, 36: All sons of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility to the world; they should foster in themselves a truly catholic spirit; they should spend their forces in the work of evangelization. And yet, let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the Faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life.
3. “Apostolic work does not excuse serious sin.”
 - Mt 7:22-23: On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me you evildoers.’

[Comment: Since the proclamation of the Great News has a power that is independent of the sacraments (see the texts and comment for statement 4 of Truth III in this document), an evangelist in mortal sin's use of her charism can be just as successful as a priest in mortal sin's use of his sacramental powers. But in both cases the *gratia gratum faciens* fruit of the *gratia gratis datum* depends on the prayers, works and sacrifices of others in Christ's communal body who are *not* in mortal sin.]"

4. "Not all have the *ministry* of evangelist."

- Ep 4:11: And his gifts were that some should be . . . evangelists.
- Ac 21:8: We entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven.

5. "But aren't all called to explain their Faith when the opportunity arises?"

- 1 Pt 3:15: Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.

[Comment: Note that the epistle expects us to be asked about the *hope*, not the fear, that is in us. (And isn't the phrase "Catholic guilt," rather than "joyful Catholic expectation of glory," still proverbial in our society?)]

6. "Before we undergo acute suffering, shouldn't pastors have regularly reinforced our call to offer it up, and explained its purpose *the following way*:"

[Comment: Christianity *is* the solution to the problem of suffering, and all Christians *deserve* to know why and how it is. So seminaries should give pastors an adequate, clear and brief explanation of suffering's purpose to share with their flocks. We strongly recommend the following explanation:

God is our father. Parents don't permit their children to suffer unless the suffering will result in avoidance of a greater evil. Christian revelation tells us that absolutely everything God does or permits to happen is for one purpose only: *to help save us from eternal suffering*. So God must know that all the finite, temporal suffering he permits to happen gives us the best chance of avoiding infinite, eternal suffering.

Add up all the finite suffering from the beginning to the end of time. It does not even begin to compare to the infinite evil of eternal suffering. For the same reason, if there were no sins that could merit hell and all the suffering in the afterlife was finite, that suffering would not provide an adequate motive for avoiding the suffering in the afterlife. For if the finite suffering of purgatory were the only fate we had to worry about, we would know that all of purgatory's finite suffering wouldn't even begin to compare to the infinite eternal happiness that would come after it. So some people would not find fear of purgatory a sufficient reason for avoiding the sins we can now justly call "mortal."

It follows that the existence of temporal suffering in God's creation is *proof* of the existence of hell, something many of today's Catholics doubt. The only evil whose avoidance would justify our heavenly parent's permission of finite, temporal suffering is infinite, eternal suffering.

This does not mean that fear of damnation is our main motivator after the Holy Spirit causes us to appreciate God's love by making us aware of how great a gift, eternal life in Christ Jesus, God has given us. The amount of temporal suffering God permits, however, must make it possible for us to have, before we even hear of Jesus, an idea of how great an evil eternal suffering would be that is adequate to motivate repentance when the time comes. And our Christian love for all other people moves us to desire their salvation from eternal suffering above all other things, just as God does.

This does not explain the exact purpose of every instance of suffering. For example, the suffering of an innocent baby need not have the purpose of that baby's own eternal salvation. But by faith we can know that the baby's suffering is somehow contributing to God's plan of saving all of us from eternal suffering.

A fuller development of this explanation of suffering is at the web site. There, click on *Theological Background*. Then click on "Fourth Secret: The Shareable Gift of God," and see pp. 8-20. And/or click on *Retreat Outlines with Commentaries*. Then click on the highlighted link under "Session K, Ninth Talk." There, see outline sections IV and V, pp. 7-13, and the corresponding explanations, pp. 18-27.]

7. "If not, we cannot be as joyful in hostile secular environments as we need, and those environments need us, to be"

- Ph 2:18: Rejoice and be glad.
- Ph 3:1: Rejoice in the Lord.
- Ph. 4:4-7: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. . . . Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
- 1 Thes 5:16-18: Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances.
- 2 Co 13:11: Rejoice!

[Comment: Paul had to remind those he pastored to rejoice and so remind them of why they should rejoice. Can today's pastors expect to do that successfully? Not if they expect mere words in homilies to make us joyful. But since the purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit is to give us a conscious appreciation of the indwelling of the Trinity (see the texts and comments for statement 8 under Truth II in this document), pastors can count on the Holy Spirit to backup their proclamation of the greatness of the Great News. For after giving the early

Christians their Pentecostal appreciation of the Trinity's real presence in them, the Holy Spirit continued that work through the pastoral charisms he gave to Christ's communal body at the same time. See the final comment for statement 9 under Truth II in this document.]

Conclusion: Sound Doctrine is Not Enough for Pastoral Wisdom

Evidence for statements on pages 14-17 in the study guide:

1. “We are social beings; so grace produces its *operantis* effects by first empowering the kind of pastoring the sacrament’s goals need.”
 - Ezk 3:17-21, 33:1-9: See this document for the first two bullets and the accompanying comments for “The Introduction.”
 - I Co 1:17; 3:10: See this document for the quotations and comments for statements 4 and 5 of Truth III.
 - 1 Co 12:28-30 and Ep 4:11-16: see this document for the third and fourth bullets and the comments for “The Introduction.”

2. “Pastoring can unleash the sacraments’ power or stifle it.”
 - 1 Th 5:19-20: Do not stifle the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything.
 - I Co 11:17: When you come together (for the Lord’s Supper) it is not for the better but for the worse.

[Comment: See the quotation and comment in the second bullet for statement 3 under Truth I in this document.]

3. “Has it led some priests to see the Church’s life in terms of their service, not their service in terms of the priesthood that all Christians share? If so, it has diminished the clergy’s true glory: restoring and perfecting God’s surpassing, inexpressible (2 Co 9:14-15) Gift.”
 - See this document for the quotations and comments for Truths II and IV.

4. “Pastoring concerns the *operantis*. Baptism is the most important sacrament, but St. Paul says he was not sent to baptize but to do the more basic pastoral work its *operantis* fruits require: evangelism.”
 - 1 Co 1:17; 3:10: See this document for the quotations and comments for statements 4 and 5 of Truth III.

[Comment: The *operato* effects of the sacraments take care of themselves with no additional work on our part. Pastoring is about what does not take care of itself.]

5. “We need religious activities where Catholics not in grace and nonCatholics can feel entirely welcome. Healing services attract all kinds of people; either do not have a Liturgy at them, or politely discourage improper communion.”

- 1 Co 11:27-30: 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. Let a man examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. **That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.**
6. “Normally, the sacrament’s *operantis* fruits come from the sacraments first empowering charisms by which all in Christ’s body . . .”
- 1 Co 12:28-30 and Ep 4:11-16: See this document for the third and fourth bullets, and the comment, for statement 1 of the Introduction.
 - I Co 1:17; 3:10: See this document for the quotations and comments for statements 4 and 5 of Truth III.
7. “As visible, the Church’s structure and sacramental system are easier to focus on than its invisible essence, the Trinity’s indwelling; so that must be regularly reinforced.”
- 2 Pt 1:3-13: See this document for the quotation and comments for statement 7 of Truth II.