



Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites

COMPANION TO THE OCDS CONSTITUTIONS

TEXT OF CITED REFERENCES

[1] Lumen Gentium 31-35 - (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) Vatican II

No. 31 The term “laity” is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church. That is, the faithful who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the People of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world.

Their secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity. Although those in Holy Orders may sometimes be engaged in secular activities, or even practice a secular profession, yet by reason of their particular vocation, they are principally and expressly ordained to the sacred ministry. At the same time, religious give outstanding and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes. But by reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporary affairs and directing them according to God’s will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit to the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope and charity they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.

No. 32. By divine institution holy Church is ordered and governed with a wonderful Diversity. “For just as in one body we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, so we the many, are one body in Christ, but severally members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-5).

There is, therefore, one chosen People of God: “one Lord, one faith, one baptism: (Eph. 4:5); there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ, a common grace as sons, a common vocation to perfection, one salvation, one hope and undivided charity. In Christ and in the Church there is, then, no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex, for “there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all ‘one’ in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 Greek; cf. Col. 3:11).

In the Church not everyone marches along the same path, yet all are called to sanctity and have obtained an equal privilege of faith through the justice of God (cf. 2 Pet. 1:1). Although by Christ’s will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for the others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the

faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ. The distinction which the Lord has made between the sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God involves union, for the pastors and the other faithful are joined together by a close relationship: the pastors of the Church-following the example of the Lord-should minister to each other and to the rest of the faithful; the latter should eagerly collaborate with the pastors and teachers. And so amid variety all will bear witness to the wonderful unity in the Body of Christ: this very diversity of graces, of ministries and of works gathers the sons of God into one, for “all these things are the work of the one and the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:11).

As the laity through the divine choice have Christ as their brother, who, though Lord of all, came not to be served but to serve (cf. Mt. 20:28), they also have as brothers those in the sacred ministry who by teaching, by sanctifying and by ruling with the authority of Christ so nourish the family of God that the new commandment of love may be fulfilled by all. As St. Augustine very beautifully puts it: “When I am frightened by what I am to you, then I am consoled by what I am with you. To you I am the bishop, with you I am a Christian. The first is an office, the second a grace; the first a danger, the second salvation.

No. 33. Gathered together in the People of God and established in the one Body of Christ under one head, the laity-no matter who they are-have, as living members, the vocation of applying to the building up of the Church and to its continual sanctification all the powers which they have received from the goodness of the Creator and from the grace of the Redeemer.

The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself. Moreover, by the sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist, that love of God and man, which is the soul of the apostolate is communicated and nourished. The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth. Thus, every layperson, through those gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself ”according to the measure of Christ’s bestowal.

Besides this apostolate which belongs to absolutely every Christian, the laity can be called in different way to more immediate cooperation in the apostolate of the hierarchy, like those men and women who helped the apostle Paul in the Gospel, laboring much in the Lord (cf. Phil. 4-3; Rom. 16:3 ff). They have, moreover, the capacity of being appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices with a view to a spiritual end.

All the laity, then, has the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all men, of every epoch and all over the earth. Therefore may the way be clear for them to share diligently in the salvific work of the Church according to their ability and the needs of the times.

No. 34. Since he wishes to continue his witness and his service through the laity also, the supreme and eternal priest, Christ Jesus, vivifies them with his spirit and ceaselessly impels them to accomplish every good and perfect work.

To those whom he intimately joins to his life and mission he also gives a share in his priestly office, to offer spiritual worship for the glory of the Father and the salvation of man. Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit-indeed even the hardship of life if patiently borne-all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (cf. Pet 2:5). In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered

to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrates the world itself to God.

No. 35. Christ is the great prophet who proclaimed the kingdom of the Father both by the testimony of his life and by the power of his word. Until the full manifestation of his glory, he fulfills this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy who teach in his name and by his power, but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the appreciation of the faith and the grace of the word (cf. Acts 2:17-18; Apoc. 19:10) so that the power of the Gospel may shine out in daily family and social life. They show themselves to be the children of the promise if, strong in faith and hope, they make the most of the present time (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), and with patience await the future glory (cf. Rom. 8:25). Let them not hide this their hope then, in the depths of their hearts, but rather express it through the structure of their secular lives in continual conversion and in wrestling “against the world ruler of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of iniquity” (Eph. 6:12).

As the sacraments of the New Law, which nourish the life and the apostolate of the faithful, prefigure the new heaven and the new earth (cf. Apoc. 21:1), so too the laity become powerful heralds of the faith in things to be hoped for (cf. Heb. 11:1) if they join unhesitating profession of faith to the life of faith. This evangelization, that is, the proclamation of Christ by word and the testimony of life, acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world.

The state of life that is sanctified by a special sacrament, namely married and family life, has a special importance in this prophetic office. Where the Christian religion pervades the whole structure of life with a continuous and ever more profound transformation, there is both the practice and an outstanding school of the lay apostolate. In it the married partners have their own proper vocation; they must be witnesses of faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family proclaims aloud both the present power of the kingdom of God and the hope of the blessed life. Hence, by example and by their testimony, they convict the world of sin and give light to those who seek the truth.

Therefore, even when occupied by temporal affairs, the laity can, and must, do valuable work for the evangelization of the world. But if, when there are no sacred ministers or when these are impeded under persecution, some lay people supply sacred functions to the best of their ability, or if, indeed, many of them expend all their energies in apostolic work, nevertheless the whole laity must cooperate in spreading and in building up the kingdom of Christ. Let the laity, therefore, diligently apply themselves to a more profound knowledge of revealed truth and earnestly beg of God the gift of wisdom.

[2] Lumen Gentium 31- (See Reference 1)

Christifideles Laici 9 - (The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People – Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II)

Who are the Lay Faithful?

No. 9. The Synod Fathers have rightly pointed to the need for a definition of the lay faithful vocation and mission in *positive terms* through an in-depth study of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council in light of both recent documentation from the Magisterium and the lived experience of the Church, guided as she is by the Holy Spirit.

In giving a response to the question “Who are the lay faithful?” the Council went beyond previous interpretations which were predominantly negative. Instead it opened itself to a decidedly positive vision and displayed a basic intention of asserting *the full belonging of the lay faithful to the Church and to its mystery. At the same time it insisted on the unique character of their vocation* which is, in a special way, to “seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of

God.” The term ‘lay faithful’-we read in the Constitution on the Church, **Lumen Gentium**-“is here understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state sanctioned by the Church. Through Baptism the lay faithful are made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world.”

Pius XII once stated: “The Faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front lines of the Church’s life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness *not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church*, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the Bishops in communion with him. *These are the Church...*”

According to the biblical image of the vineyard, the lay faithful, together with all the other members of the Church, are branches engrafted to Christ the true vine, and from him derive their life and fruitfulness.

Incorporation into Christ through faith and Baptism is the source of being a Christian in the mystery of the Church. This mystery constitutes the Christian’s most basic “features” and serves as the basis for all the vocations and dynamism of the Christian life of the lay faithful (cf. Jn 3:5). In Christ who died and rose from the dead, the baptized become a “new creation” (Gal. 6:15; 2 Cor 5:17), washed clean from sin and brought to life through grace.

Therefore, only through accepting the richness in mystery that God gives to the Christian in Baptism is it possible to come to a basic description of the lay faithful.

[3] Canon Law 204-205 (Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church)

Canon 204. §1. The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ’s priestly, prophetic, and royal function, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.

§2. This Church, constituted and organized in this world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him.

Canon 205. Those baptized are fully in the communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance.

[4] Rule 2 – (Rule of St. Albert)

Many and varied are the ways in which our saintly forefathers laid down how everyone, whatever his station or the kind of religious observance he has chosen, should live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ-how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, he must be unswerving in the service of his Master.

[5] L 8:5 – (Life of St. Teresa)

For mental prayer in my opinion is nothing else than an intimate sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.

[6] Cf. Luke 2:51 - (Gospel of St. Luke)

Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

[7] Cf. Jn 2:5 - (Gospel of St. John)

His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

[8] Cf. Ac 1:14 - (Acts of the Apostles)

All were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

[9] Cf. 1 Kings Chapters 17-19 - (Old Testament)

CHAPTER 17 *Draught Predicted by Elijah*

1 Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab: "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, during these years there shall be no dew or rain except at my word."

2 The LORD then said to Elijah:

3 "Leave here, go east and hide in the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan

4 You shall drink of the stream, and I have commanded ravens to feed you there."

5 So he left and did as the LORD had commanded. He went and remained by the Wadi Cherith, east of the Jordan.

6 Ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the stream.

Elijah and the Widow

7 After some time, however, the brook ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land.

8 So the LORD said to him:

9 "Move on to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have designated a widow there to provide for you."

10 He left and went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was gathering sticks there; he called out to her, "Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink."

11 She left to get it, and he called out after her, "Please bring along a bit of bread."

12 "As the LORD, your God, lives," she answered, "I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a couple of sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die."

13 "Do not be afraid," Elijah said to her. "Go and do as you propose. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Then you can prepare something for yourself and your son.

14 For the LORD, the God of Israel, says, "The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth."

15 She left and did as Elijah had said. She was able to eat for a year, and he and her son as well;

16 The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, as the LORD had foretold through Elijah.

17 Some time later the son of the mistress of the house fell sick, and his sickness grew more severe until he stopped breathing.

18 So she said to Elijah, "Why have you done this to me, O man of God? Have you come to me to call attention to my guilt and to kill my son?"

19 "Give me your son," Elijah said to her. Taking him from her lap, he carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed.

20 He called out to the LORD: "O LORD, my God, will you afflict even the widow with whom I am staying by killing her son?"

21 Then he stretched himself out upon the child three times and called out to the LORD: "O LORD, my God, let the life breath return to the body of this child."

22 The LORD heard the prayer of Elijah; the life breath returned to the child's body and he revived.

23 Taking the child, Elijah brought him down into the house from the upper room and gave him to his mother. "See!" Elijah said to her, "your son is alive."

24 "Now indeed I know that you are a man of God," the woman replied to Elijah. "The word of the LORD comes truly from your mouth."

CHAPTER 18 *Elijah and the Prophets of Baal*

1 Long afterward, in the third year, the LORD spoke to Elijah, "Go, present yourself to Ahab," he said, "that I may send rain upon the earth."

2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

3 Now the famine in Samaria was bitter,

4 and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his vizier, who was a zealous follower of the LORD. When Jezebel was murdering the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets, hid them away fifty each in two caves, and supplied them with food and drink.

5 Ahab said to Obadiah, "Come, let us go through the land to all sources of water and to all the streams. We may find grass and save the horses and mules, so that we shall not have to slaughter any of the beasts."

6 Dividing the land to explore between them, Ahab went one way by himself, Obadiah another way by himself.

7 As Obadiah was on his way, Elijah met him. Recognizing him, Obadiah fell prostrate and asked, "Is it you, my lord Elijah?"

8 "Yes," he answered. "Go tell your master, 'Elijah is here!'"

9 But Obadiah said, "What sin have I committed, that you are handing me over to Ahab to have me killed?"

10 As the LORD, your God, lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent in search of you. When they replied, 'He is not here,' he made each kingdom and nation swear they could not find you.

11 And now you say, 'Go tell your master: Elijah is here!'

12 After I leave you, the spirit of the LORD will carry you to some place I do not know, and when I go to inform Ahab and he does not find you, he will kill me. Your servant has revered the LORD from his youth.

13 Have you not been told, my lord, what I did when Jezebel was murdering the prophets of the LORD--that I hid a hundred of the prophets of the LORD, fifty each in two caves, and supplied them with food and drink?

14 And now you say, 'Go tell your master: Elijah is here!' He will kill me!"

15 Elijah answered, "As the LORD of hosts lives, whom I serve, I will present myself to him today."

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and informed him. Ahab came to meet Elijah,

17 and when he saw Elijah, said to him, "Is it you, you disturber of Israel?"

18 "It is not I who disturb Israel," he answered, "but you and your family, by forsaking the commands of the LORD and following the Baals.

19 Now summon all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, as well as the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

20 So Ahab sent to all the Israelites and had the prophets assemble on Mount Carmel.

21 Elijah appealed to all the people and said, "How long will you straddle the issue? If the LORD is God, follow him; if Baal, follow him." The people, however, did not answer him.

22 So Elijah said to the people, "I am the only surviving prophet of the LORD, and there are four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

23 Give us two young bulls. Let them choose one, cut it into pieces, and place it on the wood, but start no fire. I shall prepare the other and place it on the wood, but shall start no fire.

24 You shall call on your gods, and I will call on the LORD. The God who answers with fire is God." All the people answered, "Agreed!"

25 Elijah then said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one young bull and prepare it first, for there are more of you. Call upon your gods, but do not start the fire."

26 Taking the young bull that was turned over to them, they prepared it and called on Baal from morning to noon, saying, "Answer us, Baal!" But there was no sound, and no one answering. And they hopped around the altar they had prepared.

27 When it was noon, Elijah taunted them: "Call louder, for he is a god and may be meditating, or may have retired, or may be on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."

28 They called out louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears, as was their custom, until blood gushed over them.

29 Noon passed and they remained in a prophetic state until the time for offering sacrifice. But there was not a sound; no one answered, and no one was listening.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." When they had done so, he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been destroyed.

31 He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the LORD had said, "Your name shall be Israel."

32 He built an altar in honor of the LORD with the stones, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two seahs of grain.

33 When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood.

34 "Fill four jars with water," he said, "and pour it over the holocaust and over the wood." "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he said, and they did it a third time.

35 The water flowed around the altar, and the trench was filled with the water.

36 At the time for offering sacrifice, the prophet Elijah came forward and said, "LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things by your command.

37 Answer me, LORD! Answer me, that this people may know that you, LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to their senses."

38 The LORD'S fire came down and consumed the holocaust, wood, stones, and dust, and it lapped up the water in the trench.

39 Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, "The LORD is God! The LORD is God!"

40 Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Let none of them escape!" They were seized, and Elijah had them brought down to the brook Kishon and there he slit their throats.

41 Elijah then said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain."

42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink, while Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, crouched down to the earth, and put his head between his knees.

43 "Climb up and look out to sea," he directed his servant, who went up and looked, but reported, "There is nothing." Seven times he said, "Go look again!"

44 And the seventh time the youth reported, "There is a cloud as small as a man's hand rising from the sea." Elijah said, "Go and say to Ahab, 'Harness up and leave the mountain before the rain stops you.'"

45 In a trice, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and a heavy rain fell. Ahab mounted his chariot and made for Jezreel.

46 But the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, who girded up his clothing and ran before Ahab as far as the approaches to Jezreel.

CHAPTER 19 *Flight to Horeb*

- 1 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done--that he had put all the prophets to the sword.
- 2 Jezebel then sent a messenger to Elijah and said, "May the gods do thus and so to me if by this time tomorrow I have not done with your life what was done to each of them."
- 3 Elijah was afraid and fled for his life, going to Beer-sheba of Judah. He left his servant there
- 4 and went a day's journey into the desert, until he came to a broom tree and sat beneath it. He prayed for death: "This is enough, O LORD! Take my life, for I am no better than my fathers."
- 5 He lay down and fell asleep under the broom tree, but then an angel touched him and ordered him to get up and eat.
- 6 He looked and there at his head was a hearth cake and a jug of water. After he ate and drank, he lay down again,
- 7 but the angel of the LORD came back a second time, touched him, and ordered, "Get up and eat, else the journey will be too long for you!"
- 8 He got up, ate and drank; then strengthened by that food, he walked forty days and forty nights to the mountain of God, Horeb.
- 9 There he came to a cave, where he took shelter. But the word of the LORD came to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?"
- 10 He answered: "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts, but the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life."
- 11 Then the LORD said, "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the LORD; the LORD will be passing by." A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the LORD--but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake--but the LORD was not in the earthquake.
- 12 After the earthquake there was fire--but the LORD was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound.
- 13 When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?"
- 14 He replied, "I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. But the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they seek to take my life."
- 15 "Go, take the road back to the desert near Damascus," the LORD said to him. "When you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king of Aram.
- 16 Then you shall anoint Jehu, son of Nimshi, as king of Israel, and Elisha, son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah, as prophet to succeed you.
- 17 If anyone escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill him. If he escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill him.
- 18 Yet I will leave seven thousand men in Israel--all those who have not knelt to Baal or kissed him."

Call of Elisha

- 19 Elijah set out, and came upon Elisha, son of Shaphat, as he was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; he was following the twelfth. Elijah went over to him and threw his cloak over him.
- 20 Elisha left the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said, "Please, let me kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will follow you." "Go back!" Elijah answered. "Have I done anything to you?"
- 21 Elisha left him and, taking the yoke of oxen, slaughtered them; he used the plowing equipment for fuel to boil their flesh, and gave it to his people to eat. Then he left and followed Elijah as his attendant.

[10] L 7:18 - (Life of St. Teresa)

Oh, help me God, if I should have to tell about the occasions God freed me from in these years and how I returned and placed myself in them again and of the dangers of losing my reputation completely from which He liberated me! I was doing deeds that uncovered what I was, and the Lord was covering my evils and uncovering some little virtue, if I had it, and making it great in the eyes of others so that they always esteemed me highly. For although sometimes my vanities leaked out, they were not recognized since other things that appeared good were what were noticed.

And the reason was that the Knower of all things already saw that this was necessary in order that those to whom I would afterward speak of His service would give me some credibility, and in His sovereign largess He looked not at my great sins but at the desires I often had to serve Him and at the sorrow I felt for not having the strength in me to put these desires into practice.

L 38:16 - (Life of St. Teresa)

One night while I was in prayer the Lord began to speak some words by which he made me remember how bad my life had been, and these words filled me with shame and grief. Although they were not severe, they caused consuming sorry and pain. More improvement in self-knowledge is felt from one of these words than would be got from many days of recollection on our wretchedness, or it engraves on us an undeniable truth. He brought before me the extremely vain friendships I had had and told me I should esteem highly the fact that a will that had been as badly occupied as mine should desire to be fixed on Him, and that He would accept it.

At other times He told me I should recall the time when, it seems, I considered it an honor to go against His will. Again, that I should remember what I owed Him, that when I was giving Him the hardest blow, He was granting me favors. If I have some faults, which are not few, His Majesty gives me an understanding of them that, it seems, reduces me to nothing; and since I have many, this happens often. It happened to me that, after having been reprimanded by my confessor, I desired to find consolation in prayer; and found there the true reprimand.

[11] WP 21:2 - (The Way of Perfection)

Now returning to those who want to journey on this road and continue until they reach the end, which is to drink from this water of life, I say that how they are to begin is very important – in fact, all important. They must have a great and very resolute determination to persevere until reaching the end, some what may, happen what may, whatever work is involved, whatever criticism arises, whether they arrive or whether they die on the road, or even if they don't have courage for the trials that are met, or if the whole world collapses. You will hear some persons frequently making objections: "there are dangers" "so-and-so went astray by such means"; "this other was deceived"; "another who prayed a great deal fell away"; "it's harmful to virtue" "it's not for women, for they will be susceptible to illusions"; "it's better they stick to their sewing" "they don't need these delicacies"; "the Our Father and the Hail Mary are sufficient."

[12] IC V:3:11 - (The Interior Castle)

When I see souls very earnest in trying to understand the prayer they have and very sullen when they are in it – for it seems they don't dare let their minds move or stir lest a bit of their spiritual delight and devotion be lost – it makes me realize how little they understand of the way by which union is attained; they think the whole matter lies in these things. No, Sisters, absolutely not; works are what the Lord want! He desires that if you see a Sister who is sick to whom you can bring some relief, you have

compassion on her and not worry about losing this devotion; and that if she is suffering pain, you also feel it; and that, if necessary, you fast so that she might eat – not so much for her sake as because you know it is your Lord’s desire. This is true union with His will, and if you see a person praised, the Lord wants you to be much happier than if you yourself were being praised. This, indeed, is easy, for if you have humility you will feel sorry to see yourself praised. But this happiness that comes when the virtues of the Sisters are known is a very good thing; and when we see some fault in them, it is also a very good thing to be sorry and hide the fault as though it were our own.

IC VII:4:6 - (The Interior Castle)

O my Sisters! How forgetful this soul, in which the Lord dwells in so particular a way, should be of its own rest, how little it should care for its honor, and how far it should be from wanting esteem in anything! For if it is with Him very much, as is right, it should think little about itself. All its concern is taken up with how to please Him more and how or where it will show Him the love it bears Him. This is the reason for prayer, my daughters, the purpose of this spiritual marriage; the birth always of good works, good works.

[13] Cf. Sayings 46 - (Sayings of Light and Love by St. John of the Cross)

If you purify your soul of attachment to and desire for things, you will understand them spiritually. If you deny your appetite for them, you will enjoy their truth, understanding what is certain in them.

LF 3:78 - (The Living Flame of Love)

Having been made one with God, the soul is somehow God through participation. Although it is not God as perfectly as it will be in the next life, it is like the shadow of God. Being the shadow of God through this substantial transformation, it performs in this measure in God and through God what He through Himself does in it. For the will of the two is one will, and thus God’s operation and the soul’s is one. Since God gives Himself with a free and gracious will, so too the soul (possessing a will the more generous and free the more it is united with God) gives to God, God Himself in God; and this is a true and complete gift of the soul to God.

II A Chapter 6, – (The Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II)

We must lead the faculties of the soul to these three virtues (faith, hope, and love), and inform each faculty with one of them by stripping and darkening it of everything which is not conformable to these virtues.

We termed this above the active spiritual night, because a person does what lies in his own power to enter this night. As we outlined for the sensory night a method of emptying the sense faculties of desire for their objects that the soul might leave the point of departure for the mean, which is faith, so for this spiritual night we will present, with the divine help, a method of emptying and purifying the spiritual faculties of all that is not God. By this method these faculties can abide in the darkness of these three virtues, which are the means and preparation for the soul’s union with God.

II A Chapter 29:6 – (The Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book II)

The purer and more refined a soul is in faith, the more infused charity it possesses, and the more charity it has the more the Holy Spirit illumines it and communicates His gifts, because charity is the means by which they are communicated.

Collect of the Votive Mass of St. John of the Cross – (Carmelite Missal)

Let us pray

{that St. John of the Cross may help us
to unite ourselves with Christ}

Lord,

you endowed [our Father] St. John of the Cross

with a spirit of self-denial

and a love of the cross.

By following his example

may we come to the eternal vision of your glory.

[14] Maxims & Counsels 40 (St. John of the Cross)

There are three signs of inner recollection: first, lack of satisfaction in passing things; second, a liking for solitude and silence and an attentiveness to all that is more perfect; third, the considerations, meditations, and acts which formerly helped the soul now hinder it, and it brings to prayer no other support than faith, hope, and love.

Letter 12/X/1589: 19 - (Letter by St. John of the Cross to Dona Juana de Pedraza Dated October 12, 1589)

What do you think serving God involves other than avoiding evil, keeping His commandments, and being occupied with the things of God as best we can? When this is had, what need is there of other apprehensions or other lights and satisfactions from this source or that. In these there is hardly ever a lack of stumbling blocks and dangers for the soul, which by its understanding and appetites is deceived and charmed; and its own faculties cause it to err. And thus it is a great favor from God when He darkens them and impoverishes the soul in such a way that it cannot err with them. And if one does not err in this, what need is there in order to be right other than to walk along the level road of the law of God and of the Church and **live only in dark and true faith and certain hope and complete charity**, expecting all our blessings in heaven, living here below like pilgrims, the poor, the exiled, orphans, the thirsty, without a road and without anything, hoping for everything in heaven?

[15] Cf. III A 23:1 – (The Ascent of Mount Carmel, Book III)

In remaining unattached to everyone in spite of these apparent and deceptive natural goods, a person is unencumbered and free to love all rationally and spiritually, which is the way God wants him to love.....as the love of neighbor increases the love of God increases and vice versa.

[16] Prec 1 and 6 - (The Precautions by St. John of the Cross)

Precaution 1 - The religious must practice the following instructions if he wishes to attain in a short time holy recollection and spiritual silence, nakedness, and poverty, where one enjoys the peaceful comfort of the Holy Spirit, reaches union with God, is freed of all obstacles incurred from the creatures of this world, defended against the wiles and deceits of the devil, and liberated from one's own self.

Precaution 6 - Regard all as strangers, and you will better fulfill your duty toward them than by giving them the affection you owe God.

Do not love one person more than another, for you will err; he is worthy of more love whom God loves more, and you do not know who this is. But forgetting everyone alike, as is necessary for holy recollection, you will free yourself from this error of loving one person more or less than another.

Do not think about others, neither good things nor bad. Flee them inasmuch as possible...or deliver yourself from the imperfections that thinking of other involves. And if you should wish to allow yourself some freedom in this matter, the devil will deceive you in one way or another, or you will deceive yourself under some color of good or of evil.

[17] Rule 2 and 6 – (Rule of St. Albert)

No. 2 (See Reference 4)

No. 10 Each one of you is to stay in his own cell or nearby, pondering the Lord's Law day and night and keeping watch at his prayers unless attending to some other duty.

[18] DV 25 – (Dei Verbum – Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation) Vatican II

Likewise, the sacred Synod forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful, especially those who live the religious life, to learn “the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”. Therefore, let them go gladly to the sacred text itself, whether in the sacred liturgy, which is full of the divine words, or in devout reading, or in such suitable exercises and various other helps which, with the approval and guidance of the pastors of the Church are happily spreading everywhere in our day. Let him remember, however, that prayer should accompany the reading of sacred Scripture, so that a dialogue takes place between God and man. For, “we speak to him when we pray; we listen to him when we read the divine oracles.”

WP 21:4 – (THE WAY OF PERFECTION)

I don't way that I'm going to write a commentary on these divine prayers, for I wouldn't dare. Many commentaries have been written; and even if they hadn't been, it would be absurd for me to write one. But I will mention some thoughts on the words of the Our Father. For sometimes, with regard to many books, it seems we lose devotion in the very exercise in which it is so important for us to have devotion. Clearly, when a master teaches something he gets to love his disciple and is pleased if that which he teaches satisfies his pupil, and he helps him a great deal to learn the material. The heavenly Master will do the same with us.

M 1: 6 – (Meditation on the Song of Songs)

I know someone who for a number of years had many fears, and nothing gave her assurance, but the Lord was pleased that she hear some words from the Song of Songs, and through them she understood that her soul was being well guided. As I have said, she understood that it was possible for a soul in love with its Spouse to experience all these favors, swoons, deaths, afflictions, delights, and joys in relation to Him. It does so after it has left all the world's joys out of love for Him and is completely given over and abandoned into His hands, and when it has done this not just in words, as happens with some, but in all truth, confirmed with works.

M 1: 11 - (Meditation on the Song of Songs).

Before I go any further, and so as not to forget, I want to say one thing-very important in my opinion-although the matter would fit better at another time. I hold as certain that there are many persons who approach the most Blessed Sacrament (and please the Lord I be lying) with serious mortal sins. Yet, if such persons were to hear a soul dying with love of its God say these words, they would be surprised and consider it great boldness. At least I am sure they themselves would not say them, for these words and other similar ones in the Song of Songs are said by love. Since such persons have no love, they can easily read the Song of Songs every day and not themselves become involved with the words; nor would they even dare take the words on their lips. For truly even hearing them makes one fear, for these words bear in themselves great majesty. How much majesty you bear, my Lord, in the most Blessed Sacrament. But since these persons do not have a living faith but a dead one, You do not speak to them when they see You so humble under the species of bread. They do not deserve to hear-and thus they are not so daring.

**[19] AA 4 – (Apostolicam Actuositatem – Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People)
Vatican II**

...Only the light of faith and meditation on the Word of God can enable us to find everywhere and always the God “in whom we live and exist” (Acts 17:28); only thus can we seek his will in everything, see Christ in all men, acquaintance or stranger, make sound judgments on the true meaning and value of temporal realities both in themselves and in relation to man’s end....

[20] WP 4:2 – (The Way of Perfection)

For you already know that if prayer is to be genuine, it must be helped by these other things; prayer and comfortable living are incompatible.

[21] CL 33 – (Christifideles Laici – The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People – Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II)

The lay faithful, precisely because they are members of the Church, have the vocation and mission of proclaiming the Gospel: they are prepared for this work by the sacraments of Christian initiation and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**[22] AA 4 and 10 - (Apostolicam Actuositatem – Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People) -
Vatican II**

No. 4. Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church’s whole apostolate. Clearly then, the fruitfulness of the apostolate of lay people depends on their living union with Christ; as the Lord said himself: “Whoever dwells in me and I in him bears much fruit, for separated from me you can do nothing: (Jn 15:5). This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps common to all the faithful, chiefly by active participation in the liturgy. Laymen should make such a use of these helps that, while meeting their human obligations in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from their ordinary life, but through the very performance of their tasks, which are God’s will for them, actually promote the growth of their union with him. This is the path along which laymen must advance, fervently, joyfully, overcoming difficulties with prudent patient efforts. Family care should not be foreign to their spirituality, nor any other temporal interest; in the words of the apostle: “Whatever you are doing, whether speaking or acting, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:17).

A life like this calls for a continuous exercise of faith, hope and charity.

Only the light of faith and meditation on the Word of God can enable us to find everywhere and always the God “in whom we live and exist” (Acts 17:28); only thus can we seek his will in everything, see Christ in all men, acquaintance or stranger, make sound judgments on the true meaning and value of temporal realities both in themselves and in relation to man’s end.

Those with such a faith live in the hope of the revelation of the sons of God, keeping in mind the cross and resurrection of the Lord.

On life’s pilgrimage they are hidden with Christ in God, are free from the slavery of riches, are in search of the goods that last forever. Generously they exert all their energies in extending God’s kingdom, in making the Christian spirit a vital energizing force in the temporal sphere. In life’s trials they draw courage from hope, “convinced that present sufferings are no measure of the future glory to be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

With the love that comes from God prompting them, they do good to all, especially to their brothers in the faith (cf. Gal 6:10), putting aside “all ill will and deceit, all hypocrisy, envy and slander” (1Pet 2:1), in this way attracting men to Christ. Divine love, “poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5), enables lay people to express concretely in their lives the spirit of the Beatitudes. Following in his poverty, Jesus, they feel no depression in want, no pride in plenty; imitating the humble Christ, they are not greedy for vain show (cf. Gal 5:26). They strive instead to please God rather than men, always ready to abandon everything for Christ (cf. Lk. 14:26) and to endure persecution in the cause of right (cf. Mt. 5:10), having in mind the Lord’s saying: “If any man wants to come my way let him renounce self and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt. 16:24). Preserving a Christian friendship with one another, they afford mutual support in all needs.

This lay spirituality will take its particular character from the circumstances of one’s state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood), from one’s state of health and from one’s professional and social activity. Whatever the circumstances, each one has received suitable talents and these should be cultivated, as should also the personal gifts he has from the Holy Spirit.

Similarly laymen who have followed their particular vocation and become members of any of the associations or institutions approved by the Church, aim sincerely at making their own the forms of spirituality proper to these bodies.

They should also hold in high esteem professional competence, family and civic sense, and the virtues related to social behavior such as honesty, sense of justice, sincerity, courtesy, moral courage; without them there is no true Christian life.

Perfect model of this apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles. While on earth her life was like that of any other, filled with labors and the cares of the home; always, however, she remained intimately united to her Son and cooperated in an entirely unique way in the Saviour’s work. And now, assumed into heaven, “her motherly love keeps her attentive to her Son’s brothers, still on pilgrimage amid the dangers and difficulties of life, until they arrive at the happiness of the fatherland.” Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her and entrust his life to her motherly care.

No. 10. As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Their activity is so necessary within the Church communities that without it the apostolate of the pastors is often unable to achieve its full effectiveness. In the manner

of the men and women who helped Paul in spreading the Gospel (cf. Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3) the laity with the right apostolic attitude supply what is lacking to their brethren and refresh the spirit of pastors and of the rest of the faithful (cf. 1 Cor. 16:17-18). Strengthened by active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they are eager to do their share of the apostolic works of that community. They bring to the Church people who perhaps are far removed from it, earnestly cooperate in presenting the word of God especially by means of catechetical instruction, and offer their special skills to make the care of souls and the administration of the temporalities of the church more efficient and effective.

The parish offers an obvious example of the apostolate on the community level inasmuch as it brings together the many human differences within its boundaries and merges them into the universality of the Church. The laity should accustom themselves to working in the parish in union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which they should examine and resolve by deliberating in common. As far as possible the laity ought to provide helpful collaboration for every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their local parish.

They should develop an ever-increasing appreciation of their own diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell, ever ready at their pastor's invitation to participate in diocesan projects. Indeed, to fulfill the needs of cities and rural areas, they should not limit their cooperation to the parochial or diocesan boundaries but strive to extend it to interparochial, interdiocesan, national, and international fields. This is constantly becoming all the more necessary because the daily increase in mobility of populations, reciprocal relationships, and means of communication no longer allow any sector of society to remain closed in upon itself. Thus they should be concerned about the needs of the people of God dispersed throughout the world. They should especially make missionary activity their own by giving material or even personal assistance. It is a duty and honor for Christians to return to God a part of the good things that they receive from Him.

**CL 16-17, 25, 28-29 (Christifideles Laici – The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People) –
Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II**

Called to holiness

No. 16. We come to a full sense of the dignity of the lay faithful if we consider *the prime and fundamental vocation* that the Father assigns to each of them in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit: the vocation to holiness, that is, the perfection of charity. Holiness is the greatest testimony of dignity conferred on a disciple of Christ.

The Second Vatican Council has significantly spoken on the universal call to holiness. It is possible to say that this call to holiness is precisely the basic charge entrusted to all the sons and daughters of the Church by a Council which intended to bring a renewal of Christian life based on the Gospel. This charge is not a simple moral exhortation but an *undeniable requirement arising from the mystery of the Church: she is the choice vine* whose branches live and grow with the same holy and life-giving energies that come from Christ; she is the Mystical Body whose members share in the same life of holiness of the Head who is Christ; she is the Beloved Spouse of the Lord Jesus who delivered himself up for her sanctification (cf. Eph 5:25ff.). The Spirit that sanctified the human nature of Jesus in Mary's virginal womb (cf. Lk. 1:35) is the same Spirit that is abiding and working in the Church to communicate to her the holiness of the Son of God made man.

It is ever more urgent that today all Christians take up again the way of the gospel renewal, welcoming in a spirit of generosity the invitation expressed by the Apostle Peter "to be holy in all conduct" (1 Pt 1:15).

The 1985 Extraordinary Synod, twenty years after the Council, opportunely insisted on this urgency: “Since the Church in Christ is a mystery, she ought to be considered the sign and instrument of holiness.... Men and women saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult circumstances in the Church’s history. Today we have the greatest need of saints whom we must assiduously beg God to raise up.”

Everyone in the Church, precisely because they are members, receives and thereby shares in the common vocation to holiness. In the fullness of this title and on equal par with all other members of the Church, the lay faithful are called to holiness: “All the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity”; “All of Christ’s followers are invited and bound to pursue holiness and the perfect fulfillment of their own state of life.”

The call to holiness is *rooted in Baptism* and proposed anew in the other Sacraments, principally in the *Eucharist*. Since Christians are re clothed in Christ Jesus and refreshed by his Spirit, they are “holy.” They therefore have the ability to manifest this holiness and the responsibility to bear witness to it in all that they do. The Apostle Paul never tires of admonishing all Christians to live “as is fitting among saints” (Eph. 5:3).

Life according to the Spirit, whose fruit is holiness (cf. Rom 6:22; Gal 5:22), stirs up every baptized person and requires each to *follow and imitate Jesus Christ* in embracing the Beatitudes; in listening and meditation on the Word of God; in conscious and active participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church; in personal prayer; in family or in community; in the hunger and thirst for justice; in the practice of the commandment of love in all circumstances of life and service to the brethren, especially the least, the poor and the suffering.

The Life of Holiness in the World

No. 17. The vocation of the lay faithful to holiness implies that life according to the Spirit expresses itself in a particular way in their *involvement in temporal affairs* and their *participation in earthly activities*. Once again the Apostle admonishes us: “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him: (1 Col 3:17). Applying the Apostle’s words to the lay faithful, the Council categorically affirms: “Neither family concerns nor other secular affairs should be excluded from their religious program of life.” Likewise the Synod Fathers have said: “The unity of life of the lay faithful is of the greatest importance: indeed they must be sanctified in everyday professional and social life. Therefore, to respond to their vocation, the lay faithful must see their daily activities as an occasion to join themselves to God, fulfill his will, serve other people and lead them to communion with God in Christ.”

The vocation to holiness must be recognized and lived by the lay faithful, first of all as an undeniable and demanding obligation and as a shining example of the infinite love of the Father that has regenerated them in his own life of holiness. Such a vocation, then, ought to be called an *essential and inseparable element of the new life of Baptism*, and therefore an element which determines their dignity. At the same time the vocation to holiness is *intimately connected to mission* and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church and in the world. In fact, that same holiness which is derived simply from their participation in the Church’s holiness, represents their first and fundamental contribution to the building of the church herself, who is the “Communion of Saints.” The eyes of the faith behold a wonderful scene: that of a countless number of lay people, both women and men, busy at work in their daily life and activity, oftentimes far from view and quite unacclaimed by the world, unknown to the world’s great personages but nonetheless looked upon in love by the Father, untiring laborers who work in the Lord’s

vineyard. Confident and steadfast through the power of God's grace, these are the humble yet great builders of the Kingdom of God in history.

Holiness, then, must be called a fundamental presupposition and in irreplaceable condition for everyone in fulfilling the mission of salvation within the church. The Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate and of the missionary effort. Only in the measure that the Church, Christ's Spouse, is loved by him and she, in turn, loves him, does she become a mother fruitful in the Spirit.

Again we take up the image from the Gospel: the fruitfulness and the growth of the branches depends on their remaining united to the vine. "As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:4-05).

It is appropriate to recall here the solemn proclamation of beatification and canonization of lay men and women which took place during the month of the Synod. The entire People of God, and the lay faithful in particular, can find at this moment new models of holiness and new witnesses of heroic virtue lived in the ordinary everyday circumstances of human existence. The Synod of Fathers have said: "Particular Churches especially should be attentive to recognizing among their members the younger men and women of those churches who have given witness to holiness in such conditions (everyday secular conditions and the conjugal state) and who can be an example for others, so that, if the case calls for it, they (the Churches) might propose them to be beatified and canonized."

At the end of these reflections intended to define the lay faithful's position in the church, the celebrated admonition of St. Leo the Great comes to mind: "Acknowledge, O Christian, your dignity!" St. Maximus, Bishop of Turin, in addressing those who had received the holy anointing of Baptism, repeats the same sentiments: "Ponder the honor that has made you sharers in this mystery!" All the baptized are invited to hear once again the words of St. Augustine: "Let us rejoice and give thanks; we have not only become Christians, but Christ himself...Stand in awe and rejoice, we have become Christ."

The dignity as a Christian, the source of equality for all members of the Church, guarantees and fosters the spirit of *communion* and fellowship, and, at the same time, becomes the hidden dynamic force in the lay faithful's apostolate and mission. It is a *dignity*, however, *which brings demands*, the dignity of laborers called by the Lord to work in his vineyard: "Upon all the lay faithful, then, rests the exalted duty of working to assure that each day the divine plan of salvation is further extended to every person, of every era, in every part of the earth."

25. The Lay Faithful's Participation in the Life of the Church

The lay faithful participate in the life of the Church not only in exercising their tasks and charisms, but also in many other ways.

Such participation finds its first and necessary expression in the life and mission of the *particular Church*, in the diocese in which "the Church of Christ, one, holy, catholic and apostolic, is truly present and at work."

The Particular Churches and the Universal Church

For an adequate participation in ecclesial life the lay faithful absolutely need to have a clear and precise vision of the *particular Church with its primordial bond to the universal Church*. The particular Church

does not come about from a kind of fragmentation of the universal Church, nor does the universal Church come about by a simple amalgamation of particular Churches. Rather, there is a real, essential and constant bond uniting each of them and this is why the universal Church exists and is manifested in the particular Churches. For this reason the Council says that the particular Churches “are constituted after the model of the universal Church; it is in and from these particular Churches that there come into being the one and unique Catholic Church.

The same Council strongly encourages the lay faithful to live out actively their belonging to the particular Church, while at the same time assuming an ever-increasing “catholic” spirit: “Let the lay faithful constantly foster”—we read in the Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People—“a feeling for their own diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell, and be always ready at their bishops’ invitation to participate in diocesan projects. Indeed, if the needs of cities and rural areas are to be met, lay people should not limit their cooperation to the parochial or diocesan boundaries, but strive to extend it to interparochial, interdiocesan, national and international fields—more so because the daily increase in population mobility, the growth of mutual bonds, and the ease of communication no longer allow any sector of society to remain closed in upon itself. Thus they should be concerned about the needs of the People of God scattered throughout the world.”

In this sense, the recent Synod has favored the creation of *Diocesan Pastoral Councils* as a recourse at opportune times. In fact, on a diocesan level this structure could be the principle form of collaboration, dialogue, and discernment as well. The participation of the lay faithful in these Councils can broaden resources in consultation and the principle of collaboration—and in certain instances also in decision making if applied in a broad and determined manner.

The participation of the lay faithful in *Diocesan Synods* and in *Local Councils*, whether provincial or plenary, is envisioned by the Code of Canon Law. These structures could contribute to Church communion and the mission of the particular Church, both in its own surroundings and in relation to the other particular Churches of the ecclesiastical province or Episcopal Conference.

Episcopal Conferences are called to evaluate the most opportune way of development the consultation and the collaboration of the lay faithful, women and men, at a national or regional level, so that they may consider well the problems they share and manifest better the communion of the whole Church.

The Forms of Participation in the Life of the Church

No. 28. The lay faithful, together with the clergy and women and men religious, make up the one People of God and the Body of Christ.

Being “members” of the church takes nothing away from the fact that each Christian as an individual is “unique and irrepeatable.” On the contrary, this belonging guarantees and fosters the profound sense of that uniqueness and irrepeatability insofar as these very qualities are the source of variety and richness for the whole Church. Therefore, God calls the individual in Jesus Christ, each one personally by name. In this sense the Lord’s words “You too go into my vineyard,” directed to the Church as a whole, come specially addressed to each member individually.

Because of each member’s unique and irrepeatable character—that is, one’s identity and actions as a person—each individual is placed at the service of the growth of the ecclesial community while, at the same time, singularly receiving and sharing in the common richness of all the church. This is the “Communion of Saints” which we profess in the Creed. *The good of all becomes the good of each one and the good of*

each one becomes the good of all. “In the Holy Church,” writes St. Gregory the Great, “all are nourished by each one and each one is nourished by all.”

Individual Forms of Participation

Above all, each member of the lay faithful should always be *fully aware of being a “member of the Church”* yet entrusted with a unique task which cannot be done by another and which is to be fulfilled for the good of all. From this perspective the Council’s insistence on the *absolute necessity of an apostolate exercised by the individual* takes on its full meaning; “The apostolate exercised by the individual—which flows abundantly from a truly Christian life (cf. Jn 4:11)—is the origin and condition of the whole lay apostolate, even in its organized expression, and admits no substitute. Regardless of circumstance, all laypersons (including those who have no opportunity or possibility for collaboration in associations) are called to this type of apostolate and obliged to engage in it. Such an apostolate is useful at all times and places, but in certain circumstances it is the only one available and feasible.”

In the apostolate exercised by the individual, great riches are waiting to be discovered through an intensification of the missionary effort of each of the lay faithful. Such an individual form of apostolate can contribute greatly to a *more extensive* spreading of the Gospel, indeed it can reach as many places as there are daily lives of individual members of the lay faithful. Furthermore, the spread of the Gospel will be *continual*, since a person’s life and faith will be one. Likewise the spread of the Gospel will be particularly *incisive*, because in sharing fully in the unique conditions of the life, work, difficulties and hopes of their sisters and brothers, the lay faithful will be able to reach the hearts of their neighbors, friends, and colleagues, opening them to a full sense of human existence, that is, to communion with God and with all people.

Group Forms of Participation

No. 29. Church communion, already present and at work in the activities of the individual, finds its specific expression in the lay faithful’s working together in groups, that is, in activities done with others in the course of their responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church.

In recent days the phenomenon of lay people associating among themselves has taken on a character of particular variety and vitality. In some ways lay associations have always been present throughout the Church’s history as various confraternities, third orders and sodalities testify even today. However, in modern times such lay groups have received a special stimulus, resulting in the birth and spread of a multiplicity of group forms: associations, groups, communities, movements. We can speak of *a new era of group endeavors* of the lay faithful. In fact, “alongside the traditional forming of associations, and at times coming from their very roots, movements and new sodalities have sprouted with a specific feature and purpose, so great is the richness and the versatility of resources that the Holy Spirit nourishes in the ecclesial community, and so great is the capacity of initiative and the generosity of our lay people.”

Oftentimes these lay groups show themselves to be *very diverse* from one another in various aspects, in their external structures, in their procedures and training methods, and in the fields in which they work. However, they all come together in an all-inclusive and *profound convergence* when viewed from the perspective of their common purpose, that is, the responsible participation of all of them in the church’s mission of carrying forth the Gospel of Christ—the source of hope for humanity and the renewal of society.

The actual formation of groups of the lay faithful for spiritual purposes or for apostolic work comes from various sources and corresponds to different demands. In fact, their formation itself expresses the social nature of the person and for this reason leads to a more extensive and incisive effectiveness in work. In

reality, a “cultural” effect can be accomplished through work done not so much by an individual alone but by an individual group, of a community, of an association or of a movement. Such work is, then, the source and stimulus leading to the transformation of the surroundings and society as well as the fruit and sign of every other transformation in this regard. This is particularly true in the context of a pluralistic and fragmented society-the case in so many parts of the world today-and in light of the problems which have become greatly complex and difficult. On the other hand, in a secularized world, above all, the various group forms of the apostolate can represent for many a precious help for the Christian life in remaining faithful to the demands of the Gospel and to the commitment to the Church’s mission and the apostolate.

Beyond this, the profound reason that justifies and demands the lay faithful’s forming of lay groups comes from a theology *based on ecclesiology*, as the Second Vatican Council clearly acknowledged in referring to the group apostolate as a “sign of communion and of unity of the Church of Christ.”

It is a “sign” that must be manifested in relation to “communion” both in the internal and external aspects of the various group forms and in the wider context of the Christian community. As mentioned, this reason based on ecclesiology explains, on one hand, the “right” of lay associations to form, and on the other, the necessity of “criteria” for discerning the authenticity of the forms which such groups take in the church.

First of all, the *freedom for lay people in the Church to form such groups* is to be acknowledged. Such liberty is a true and proper right that is not derived from any kind of “concession” by authority, but flows from the Sacrament of Baptism which calls the lay faithful to participate actively in the Church’s communion and mission. In this regard the Council is quite clear: “As long as the proper relationship is kept to Church authority, the lay faithful have the right to found and run such associations and to join those already existing.” A citation from the recently published Code of Canon Law affirms it as well: “The Christian faithful are at liberty to found and govern associations for charitable and religious purposes or for the promotion of the Christian vocation in the world; they are free to hold meetings to pursue these purposes in common.”

It is a question of a freedom that is to be acknowledged and guaranteed by ecclesial authority and always and only to be exercised in Church communion. Consequently, the right of the lay faithful to form groups is essentially in relation to the Church’s life of communion and to her mission.

[23] IC V:3:11; cf. VII:3 – (The Interior Castle)

V:3:11 (See Reference 12)

Cf. VII:3

Deals with the wonderful effects of this prayer that was mentioned. It is necessary to pay attention and heed to these effects, for the difference between them and the previous ones is remarkable.

Now, then, we are saying that this little butterfly has already died, with supreme happiness for having found repose and because Christ lives in it. Let us see what life it lives, or how this life differs from the life it was living. For from the effects, we shall see if what was said is true. By what I can understand these effects are the following.

2. The first effect is a forgetfulness of self, for truly the soul, seemingly, no longer is, as was said. Everything is such that this soul doesn't know or recall that there will be heaven or life or honor for it, because it employed all it has in procuring the honor of God. It seems the words His Majesty spoke to her

produced the deed in her. They were that she look after what is His and He would look after what is hers. Thus, the soul doesn't worry about all that can happen. It experiences strange forgetfulness, for, as I say, seemingly the soul no longer is or would want to be anything in anything, except when it understands that there can come from itself something by which the glory and honor of God may increase even one degree. For this purpose the soul would very willingly lay down its life.

3. Don't think by this, daughters, that a person fails to remember to eat and sleep-doing so is no small torment-and to do all that he is obliged to in conformity with his state in life. We are speaking of interior matters, for there is little to say about exterior works. Rather, the soul's pain lies in seeing that what it can now do by its own efforts amounts to nothing. For no earthly thing would it fail to do all it can and understands to be for the service of our Lord.

4. The second effect is that the soul has a great desire to suffer, but no the kind of desire that disturbs it as previously. For the desire left in these souls that the will of God be done in them reaches such an extreme that they think everything His Majesty does is good. If He desires the soul to suffer, well and good; if not, it doesn't kill itself as it used to.

5. These souls also have a deep interior joy when they are persecuted, with much more peace than that mentioned, and without any hostile feelings toward those who do, or desire to do, them evil. On the contrary, such a soul gains a particular love for its persecutors, in such a way that if it sees these latter in some trial it feels compassion and would take on any burden to free them from their trial, and eagerly recommends them to God and would rejoice to lose the favors His Majesty grants it if He would bestow these same gift on those others so that they wouldn't offend our Lord.

6. You have already seen the trials and afflictions these souls have experienced in order to die so as to enjoy our Lord. What surprises me most of all now is that they have just as great a desire to serve Him and that through them He be praised and that they may benefit some soul if they can. For not only do they not desire to die but they desire to live very many years suffering the greatest trials if through these they can help that the Lord be praised, even though in something very small. If they knew for certain that in leaving the body the soul would enjoy God, they wouldn't pay attention to that; nor do they think of the glory of the saints. They do not desire at that time to be in glory. Their glory lies in being able some way to help the Crucified, especially when they see He is so offended and that few there are who, detached from everything else, really look after His honor.

7. It is true that sometimes these things are forgotten, and the loving desires to enjoy God and leave this exile return, especially when the soul sees how little it serves Him. But soon it turns and looks within itself and at how continually it experiences His presence, and with that it is content and offers His Majesty the desire to live as the most costly offering it can give Him.

It has no more fear of death than it would of a gentle rapture. The fact is that He who gave those desires that were so excessive a torment, now gives these others. May He be always blessed and praised.

8. The desires these souls have are no longer for consolations or spiritual delight, since the Lord Himself is present with these souls and it is His Majesty who now lives. Clearly, His life was nothing but a continue torment, and He makes ours the same; at least with the desires, for in other things He leads us as the weak, although souls share much in His fortitude when He sees they have need of it.

There is a great detachment from everything and a desire to be always either alone or occupied in something that will benefit some soul. There are no interior trials or feelings of dryness, but the soul lives with a remembrance and tender love of our Lord. It would never want to go without praising Him. When

it becomes distracted the Lord Himself awakens it in the manner mentioned, for one sees most clearly that that impulse, or I don't know what to call the feeling, proceeds from the interior depths of the soul, as was said of the impulses in the previous dwelling place. Here, in this dwelling place, these impulses are experienced most gently, but they do not proceed from the mind or the memory, nor do they come from anything that would make one think the soul did something on its own. This experience is an ordinary and frequent one, for it has been observed carefully. Just as a fire does not shoot its flames downward but upward, however great a fire is enkindled, so one experiences here that this interior movement proceeds from the center of the soul and awakens the faculties.

9. Certainly, if there were no other gain in this way of prayer except to understand the particular care God has in communicating with us and beseeching us to remain with Him-for this experience doesn't seem to be anything else-it seems to me that all the trials endured for the sake of enjoying these touches of His love, so gentle and penetrating, would be well worthwhile.

This you will have experienced, Sisters. For I think that when one has reached the prayer of union, the Lord goes about with this concern if we do not grow negligent in keeping His commandments. When this impulse comes to you, remember that it comes from this interior dwelling place where God is in our soul, and praise Him very much. For certainly that note or letter is His, written with intense love and in such a way that He wants you alone to understand it and what He asks of you in it. By no means should you fail to respond to His Majesty, even though you may be externally occupied or in conversation with some persons. For it will often happen that our Lord will want to grant you this secret favor in public, and it is very easy-since the response is interior-to do what I'm saying and make an act of love, or say what St. Paul said: *Lord what will you have me do?* In many ways He will teach you there what will be pleasing to Him and the acceptable time. I think it is understood that He hears us, and this touch, which is so delicate, almost always disposes the soul to be able to do what was said with a resolute will.

10. The difference in this dwelling place is the one mentioned. There are almost never any experiences of dryness or interior disturbance of the kind that were present at times in all the other dwelling places, but the soul is almost always in quiet. There is no fear that this sublime favor can be counterfeited by the devil, but the soul is wholly sure that the favor comes from God; for, as I have said, the faculties and senses have nothing to do with what goes on in this dwelling place. His Majesty reveals Himself to the soul and brings it to Himself in that place where, in my opinion, the devil will not dare enter, nor will the Lord allow him to enter. Nor does the Lord in all the favors He grants the soul here, as I have said, receive any assistance from the soul itself, except what it has already done in surrendering itself totally to God.

11. Every way in which the Lord helps the soul here, and all He teaches it, takes place with such quiet and so noiselessly that, seemingly to me, the work resembles the building of Solomon's temple where no sound was heard. So in this temple of God, in this His dwelling place, He alone and the soul rejoice together in the deepest silence. There is no reason for the intellect to stir or seek anything, for the Lord who created it wishes to give it repose here and that through a small crevice it might observe what is taking place. At times this sight is lost and the other faculties do not allow the intellect to look, but this happens for only a very short time. In my opinion, the faculties are not lost here; they do not work, but remain as though in amazement.

12. I am amazed as well to see that when the soul arrives here all raptures are taken away. Only once in a while are they experienced and then without those transports and that flight of the spirit. They happen very rarely and almost never in public as they very often did before. Nor do the great occasions of devotion cause the soul concern as previously. Nor, if souls in this dwelling place see a devout image or hear a sermon-previously it was almost as though they didn't hear it-or music, are they worried as was the

poor little butterfly that went about so apprehensive that everything frightened it and made it fly. Now the reason could be that in this dwelling place either the soul has found its repose, or has seen so much that nothing frightens it, or that it doesn't feel that solitude it did before since it enjoys such company. In sum, Sisters, I don't know what the cause may be. For when the Lord begins to show what there is in this dwelling place and to bring the soul there, this great weakness is taken away. The weakness was a severe trial for the soul and previously was not taken away. Perhaps the reason is that the Lord has not fortified, enlarged, and made the soul capable. Or it could be that His Majesty wished to make known publicly that which He did with these souls in secret for certain reasons He knows, for His judgments are beyond all that we can imagine here below.

13. These effects, along with all the other good ones from the degrees of prayer we mentioned, are given by God when He brings the soul to Himself with this kiss sought by the bride, for I think this petition is here granted. Here an abundance of water is given to this deer that was wounded. Here one delight in God's tabernacle. Here the dove Noah sent out to see if the storm was over find the olive branch as a sign of firm ground discovered amid the floods and tempests of this world. O Jesus! Who would know the many things there must be in Scripture to explain this peace of soul! My God, since you see how important it is for us, grant that Christians will seek it; and in Your mercy do not take it away from those to whom you have given it. For, in the end, people must always live with fear until You give them true peace and bring them there where that peace will be unending. I say "true peace," not because this peace is not true but because the first war could return if we were to withdraw from God.

14. But what will these souls feel on seeing that they could lack so great a blessing? Seeing this makes them proceed more carefully and seek to draw strength from their weakness so as not to abandon through their own fault any opportunity to please God more. The more favored they are by His Majesty the more they are afraid and fearful of themselves. And since through His grandeurs they have come to a greater knowledge of their own miseries, and their sins become more serious to them, they often go about like the publican not daring to raise their eyes. At other times they go about desiring to die so as to be safe; although, with the love they have, soon they again want to live in order to serve Him, as was said. And in everything concerning themselves they trust in His mercy. Sometimes the many favors make them feel more annihilated, for they fear that just as a ship too heavily laden sinks to the bottom they will do down too.

15. I tell you, Sisters, that the cross is not wanting but it doesn't disquiet or make them lose peace. For the storms, like a wave, pass quickly. And the fair weather returns, because the presence of the Lord they experience makes them soon forget everything. May He be ever blessed and praised by all His creatures, amen.

**[24] Cf. AA 2-3 - (Apostolicam Actuositatum – Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People) –
Vatican II**

No. 2 The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all men to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed

to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body; so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, “the whole body...in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development (Eph. 4:16).

Indeed, the organic union in this body and the structure of the members are so compact that the member who fails to make his proper contribution to the development of the Church must be said to be useful neither to the Church nor to himself.

In the Church there is a diversity of ministry but a oneness in mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.

They exercise the apostolate in fact by their activity directed to the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetrating and perfecting of the temporal order through the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.

No. 3 The laity derive the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ’s Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood and the holy people (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-10) not only that they may offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do but also that they may witness to Christ through the world. The sacraments, however, especially the most holy Eucharist, communicate and nourish that charity which is the soul of the entire apostolate.

One engages in the apostolate through the faith, hope, and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. Indeed, by the precept of charity, which is the Lord’s greatest commandment, all the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men—that they may know the only true God and Him whom He sent, Jesus Christ (cf. John 17:3). On all Christians therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world.

For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit Who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts also (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7), “allotting them to everyone according as He wills” (1 Cor. 12:11) in order that individuals, administering grace to other just as they have received it, may also be ‘good stewards of the manifold grace of God’ (1 Peter 4:10), to build up the whole body in charity (cf. Eph. 4:16). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church, in the freedom of the Holy Spirit who “breathes where He wills” (John 3:8). This should be done by the laity in community with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these gifts not to extinguish the Spirit but to test all things and hold for what is good (cf. 1 Thess. 5:12, 19, 21).

**[25] Cf. *Cristus Dominus 11* – (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church) –
Vatican II**

Chapter II – Bishops in Relation to Their Own Churches or Dioceses

No. 11. A diocese is a section of the People of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal to its pastor and formed by him into one community in the Holy

Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active.

Cf. *Apostolicam Actuositatem 26* – (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) – Vatican II

26. In dioceses, insofar as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the charitable, social, or other sphere, and here it is fitting that the clergy and Religious should cooperate with the laity. While preserving the proper character and autonomy of each organization, these councils will be able to promote the mutual coordination of various lay associations and enterprises.

Councils of this type should be established as far as possible also on the parochial, interparochial, and interdiocesan level as well as in the national and international sphere.

A special secretariat, moreover, should be established at the Holy See for the service and promotion of the lay apostolate. It can serve as a well-equipped center for communicating information about the various apostolic programs of the laity, promoting research into modern problems arising in this field, and assisting the hierarchy and laity in their apostolic works with its advice. The various movements and projects of the apostolate of the laity throughout the world should also be represented in this secretariat, and here clergy and Religious also are to cooperate with the laity.

Cf. *Christifideles Laici 25* – (See Reference 22)

**[26] VC 55 – (*Vita Consecrata – Consecrated Life*) Apostolic Exhortation of
Pope John Paul II**

For a Renewed Spiritual and Apostolic Dynamism

No. 55. These new experiences of communion and cooperation should be encouraged for various reasons. They can in fact give rise to the spread of a fruitful spirituality beyond the confines of the institute, which will then be in a position to ensure the continuity in the Church of the services typical of the institute. Another positive consequence will be to facilitate more intense cooperation between consecrated persons and the laity in view of the institute's mission. Moved by the examples of holiness of the consecrated members, lay men and women will experience at first hand the spirit of the evangelical counsels, and will thus be encouraged to live and bear witness to the spirit of the Beatitudes, in order to transform the world according to God's design.

The participation of the laity often brings unexpected and rich insights into certain aspects of the charism, leading to a more spiritual interpretation of it and helping to draw from it directions for new activities in the apostolate. In whatever activity or ministry they are involved, consecrated persons should remember that before all else they must be expert guides in the spiritual life, and in this perspective they should

cultivate “the most precious gift: the spirit.” For their part, the laity should offer religious families the invaluable contribution of their “being in the world” and their specific service.

[27] OCDS Rule of Life (1979) Article 8

Prayer and the apostolate, when they are genuine, are inseparable, and each profits the other. The Secular Carmelites are therefore bound to the fervent practice of fraternal charity and must take their share of apostolic responsibility in the Church and in the World.

With this object, the Secular Carmelites will first of all seek to intensify their personal union with God, and to bear witness to Christ by their life of prayer. They are also free to engage in any type of apostolic activity. They will dedicate themselves especially to the promotion of priestly and religious vocations, and collaborate in the Order’s activities and undertakings. All these activities will be evaluated and made more precise by local statutes according to the various geographical regions.

[28] MC 37 – (Marialis Cultus – For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary) – Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI

No. 37. Finally, we wish to point out that our own time, no less than former times, is called upon to verify its knowledge of reality with the word of God, and keeping to the matter at present under consideration, to compare its anthropological ideas and the problems springing there from with the figure of the Virgin Mary as presented by the Gospel. The reading of the divine Scriptures, carried out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the discoveries of the human sciences and the different situations in the world today being taken into account, will help us to see how Mary can be considered a mirror of the expectations of the men and women of our time. Thus, the modern woman, anxious to participate with decision-making power in the affairs of the community, will contemplate with intimate joy Mary who, taken into dialogue with God, gives her active and responsible consent, not to the solution of a contingent problem, but to that “event of world importance,” as the Incarnation of the Word has been rightly called. The modern woman will appreciate that Mary’s choice of the state of virginity, which in God’s plan prepared her for the mystery of the Incarnation, was not a rejection of any of the values of the married state but a courageous choice which she made in order to consecrate herself totally to the love of God. The modern woman will note with pleasant surprise that Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one who piety was repellent to others; on the contrary, she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes the powerful people of this world from their privileged positions (cf. LK. 1:51-53). The modern woman will recognize in Mary, who “stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord,” a woman of strength, who experienced poverty and suffering, flight and exile (cf. MT 2:13-23). These are situations that cannot escape the attention of those who wish to support, with the Gospel spirit, the liberating energies of man and of society. And Mary will appear not as a Mother exclusively concerned with her own divine Son, but rather as a woman whose action helped to strengthen the apostolic community’s faith in Christ (cf. Jn 2:1-12), and whose maternal role was extended and became universal on Calvary. These are but examples, but examples which show clearly that the figure of the Blessed Virgin does not disillusion any of the profound expectations of the men and women of our time but offers them **the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord**; the disciple who builds up the earthly and temporal city while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city; the disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy; but above all, the disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people’s hearts.

[29] RM 37 – (Redemptoris Mater - Mother of the Redeemer) – Encyclical Letter of Pope John Paul II

No. 37. The Church, which from the beginning has modeled her earthly journey on that of the Mother of God, constantly repeats after her the words of the Magnificat. From the depths of the Virgin's faith at the Annunciation and the Visitation, the Church derives the truth about the God of the Covenant: the God who is Almighty and does "great things" for man: "holy is his name." In the Magnificat the Church sees uprooted that sin which is found at the outset of the earthly history of man and woman, the sin of disbelief and of "little faith" in God. In contrast with the "suspicion" which the "father of lies" sowed in the heart of Eve the first woman, Mary, whom tradition is wont to call the "new Eve" and the true "Mother of the living," boldly proclaims the undimmed truth about God: the holy and almighty God, who from the beginning is *the source of all gifts*, he who "has done great things" in her, as well as in the whole universe. In the act of creation God gives existence to all that is. In creating man, God gives him the dignity of the image and likeness of himself in a special way as compared with all earthly creatures. Moreover, in his desire to give, *God gives himself in the Son*, notwithstanding man's sin: "He so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). Mary is the first witness of this marvelous truth, which will be fully accomplished through "the works and words" (cf. Acts 1:1) of her Son and definitively through his Cross and Resurrection.

The Church, which even "amid trials and tribulations" does not cease repeating with Mary the words of the Magnificat, is sustained by the power of God's truth, proclaimed on that occasion with such extraordinary simplicity. At the same time, by means of this truth about God, the Church desires to shed light upon the difficult and sometimes tangled paths of man's earthly existence. The church's journey, therefore, the second Christian Millennium, involves a renewed commitment to her mission. Following him who said of himself: "(God) has anointed me to *preach good news to the poor*" (cf. Lk. 4:18), the Church has sought from generation to generation and still seeks today to accomplish that same mission.

The Church's *love of preference for the poor* is wonderfully inscribed in Mary's Magnificat. The God of the Covenant, celebrated in the exultation of her spirit by the Virgin of Nazareth, is also he who "has cast down the might from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly, ...filled the hungry with good things, sent the rich away empty, ...scattered the proud-hearted...and his mercy is from age to age on those who fear him." Mary is deeply imbued with the spirit of the "poor of Yahweh," who in the prayer of the Psalms awaited from God their salvation, placing all their trust in him (cf. Pss. 25: 31; 35; 55). Mary truly proclaims the coming of the "Messiah of the poor" (cf. Is 11:4; 61:1). Drawing from Mary's heart, from the depth of her faith expressed in the words of the Magnificat, the Church renews ever more effectively in herself the awareness that *the truth about God who saves*, the truth about God who is the source of every gift, *cannot be separated from the manifestation of his love of preference for the poor and humble*, that love which, celebrated in the Magnificat, is later expressed in the words and works of Jesus.

The Church is thus, aware-and at the present time this awareness is particularly vivid-not only that these two elements of the message contained in the *Magnificat* cannot be separated, but also that there is a duty to safeguard carefully the importance of "the poor" and of "the option in favor of the poor" in the word of the living God. These are matters and questions intimately connected with the *Christian meaning of freedom and liberation*. "Mary is totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him, and, at the side of her Son, she is *the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation* of humanity and of the universe. It is to her as Mother and Model that the Church must look in order to understand in its completeness the meaning of her own mission."

**[30] AA 28-29 – (Apostolicam Actuositatem – Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) –
Vatican II**

No. 28. The apostolate can attain its maximum effectiveness only through a diversified and thorough formation. This is demanded not only by the continuous spiritual and doctrinal progress of the lay person himself but also by the accommodation of his activity to circumstances varying according to the affairs, persons, and duties involved. This formation for the apostolate should rest upon those bases which have been stated and proclaimed by the most holy council in other documents. In addition to the formation which is common for all Christians, many forms of the apostolate demand also a specific and particular formation because of the variety of persons and circumstances.

No. 29. Since the laity share in their own way in the mission of the Church, their apostolic formation is specially characterized by the distinctively secular and particular quality of the lay state and by its own form of the spiritual life.

The formation for the apostolate presupposes a certain human and well-rounded formation adapted to the natural abilities and conditions of each lay person. Well-informed about the modern world, the lay person should be a member of his own community and adjusted to its culture.

However, the lay person should learn especially how to perform the mission of Christ and the Church by basing his life on belief in the divine mystery of creation and redemption and by being sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God and who urges all to love God the Father as well as the world and men in Him. This formation should be deemed the basis and condition for every successful apostolate.

In addition to spiritual formation, a solid doctrinal instruction in theology, ethics, and philosophy adjusted to differences of age, status, and natural talents, is required. The importance of general culture long with practical and technical formation should also be kept in mind.

To cultivate good human relations, truly human values must be fostered, especially the art of living fraternally and cooperating with others and of striking up friendly conversation with them.

Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves along with others through doing, thereby entering into active service to the Church. This formation, always in need of improvement because of the increasing maturity of the human person and the proliferation of problems, requires an ever deeper knowledge and planned activity. In the fulfillment of all the demands of formation, the unity and integrity of the human person must be kept in mind at all times so that his harmony and balance may be safeguarded and enhanced.

In this way the lay person engages himself wholly and actively in the reality of the temporal order and effectively assumes his role in conducting the affairs of this order. At the same time, as a living member and witness of the Church, he renders the Church present and active in the midst of temporal affairs.

[31] CIC 298, 301 – (Code of Canon Law)

298. In the Church there are associations distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life; in these associations the Christian faithful, whether clerics, lay persons, or clerics

and lay persons together, strive in a common endeavor to foster a more perfect life, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit.

301. §1. It is for the competent ecclesiastical authority alone to erect associations of the Christian faithful which propose to hand on Christian doctrine in the name of the Church or to promote public worship, or which intend other purposes whose pursuit is of its nature reserved to the same ecclesiastical authority.

§2. Competent ecclesiastical authority, if it has judged it expedient, can also erect associations of the Christian faithful to pursue directly or indirectly other spiritual purposes whose accomplishment has not been sufficiently provided for through the initiatives of private persons.

§3. Associations of the Christian faithful which are erected by competent ecclesiastical authority are called public associations.

[32] Ritual, Instruction: 9; 30-49 (Instruction of the Superior General (Fr. Philippus Sainz de Baranda, OCD), December 10, 1990)

Instruction 9 – The vows are intrinsically linked to the Eucharist as well as to Baptism, for the Eucharist is Christian prayer and worship ‘par excellence’. The vows of chastity and obedience associate the Secular Carmelite by a new title with the mystery of Christ in His prayer of oblation and thanksgiving. Furthermore in the face of human inconstancy, the vows aim at stability of purpose for the present and the future in conformity with Christ’s constancy in His obedient, sacrificial offering of self to the Father.

Ritual 30-49 (The Rite of Making the Promise and the Vows During the Celebration of the Eucharist)

PLEASE REFER TO THIS RITUAL CONTAINED IN YOUR COPY OF THE OCDS RULE (1979)

[33] CIC 301, 303-306, 313 (Code of Canon Law)

301 – (See Reference 31)

303 Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name.

304 §1. All public or private associations of the Christian faithful, by whatever title or name they are called, are to have their own statutes which define the purpose or social objective of the association, its seat, government, and conditions required for membership and which determine the manner of its acting, attentive, however, to the necessity or advantage of time and place.

§2. They are to choose a title or name for themselves adapted to the usage of time and place, selected above all with regard to their intended purpose.

305 §1. All associations of the Christian faithful are subject to the vigilance of competent ecclesiastical authority which is to take care that the integrity of faith and morals is preserved in them and is to watch so that abuse does not creep into ecclesiastical discipline. This authority therefore has the duty and right to inspect them according to the norm of law and the statutes. These associations are also subject to the governance of this same authority according to the prescripts of the canons which follow.

§2. Associations of any kind are subject to the vigilance of the Holy See; diocesan associations and other associations to the extent that they work in the diocese are subject to the vigilance of the local ordinary.

306 In order for a person to possess the rights and privileges of an association and the indulgences and other spiritual favors granted to the same association, it is necessary and sufficient that the person has been validly received into it and has not been legitimately dismissed from it according to the prescripts of law and the proper statutes of the association.

313 Through the same decree by which the competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of canon 312 erects it, a public association and even a confederation of public associations is constituted a juridic person and, to the extent it is required, receives a mission for the purposes which it proposes to pursue in the name of the Church.

[34] CIC 305, 311-315 – (Code of Canon Law)

305 (See Reference 33)

311 Members of institutes of consecrated life who preside over or assist associations in some way united to their institute are to take care that these associations give assistance to the works of the apostolate which already exist in a diocese, especially cooperating under the direction of the local ordinary, with associations which are ordered to the exercise of the apostolate in the diocese.

312 §1. The authority competent to erect public associations is:

1. the Holy See for universal and international associations;
2. the conference of bishops in its own territory for national associations, that is, those which from their founding are directed toward activity through the whole nation;
3. the diocesan bishop in his own territory, but not a diocesan administrator, for diocesan associations, except, however, for those association whose right of erection has been reserved to others by apostolic privilege.

§2. Written consent of the diocesan bishop is required for the valid erection of an association or section of an association in a diocese even if it is done by virtue of apostolic privilege. Nevertheless, the consent given by a diocesan bishop for the erection of a house of a religious institute is also valid for the erection in the same house or church attached to it of an association which is proper to that institute.

313 (See Reference 33)

314 The statutes of each public association and their revision or change need the approval of the ecclesiastical authority competent to erect the association according to the norm of canon 312, §1.

315 Public associations are able on their own initiative to undertake endeavors in keeping with their own character. These endeavors are governed according to the norm of the statutes, though under the higher direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in canon 312, §1.

[35] Regional refers to nations or geographical territory of more than one province of the friars.

[36] CIC 307.1; 314 - (Code of Canon Law)

307 §1. The reception of members is to be done according to the norm of law and the statutes of each association.

314 (See Reference 34)

[37] CIC 328-329 - (Code of Canon Law)

328 Those who preside over associations of the laity, even those which have been erected by virtue of apostolic privilege, are to take care that their associations cooperate with other associations of the Christian faithful where it is expedient and willingly assist various Christian works, especially those in the same territory.

329 Moderators of associations of the laity are to take care that the members of the association are duly formed to exercise the apostolate proper to the laity.

Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelite Friars 103, Norms 56

C 103. In accordance with our Holy Mother St. Teresa's express wish, our apostolic mission in the Church obliges us to be available for the spiritual guidance and formation of the nuns of the Order. This should be a prime concern to all, and superiors, especially Major Superiors, should make adequate provision for this in an organized way within their respective jurisdictions. **We have a similar fraternal duty towards the members of our Secular Order**, also towards those religious families who share in our life and spirit.

Norm 56. In order to promote the apostolate to our Secular Order:

- (a) a Secular Order should be set up in every house wherever possible;
- (b) our religious should support the Secular Order with prayer and the example of a fervent life; they should foster vocations to it and offer to take on the spiritual care of the members;
- (c) special care should be used in training those members who are put in charge of the Secular Order;
- (d) in regions where there are several provinces of the Order, coordination of Secular Order activities should be promoted by the Provincial Superiors.

The care of the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel must be counted among the apostolic works most consonant with the Order. Its members belong to one and the same family of the Blessed Mother as we do.

[38] CIC 317 – (Code of Canon Law)

317 §1. Unless the statutes provide otherwise, it is for the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in canon 312, §1 to confirm the moderator of a public association elected by the public association itself, install the one presented, or appoint the moderator in his own right. The same ecclesiastical authority also appoints the chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant, after having heard the major officials of the association, when it is expedient.

§2. The norm stated in §1 is also valid for associations which members of religious institutes erect outside their own churches or houses in virtue of apostolic privilege. In associations which members of religious institutes erect in their own church or house, however, the nomination or confirmation of the moderator and chaplain pertains to the superior of the institute, according to the norm of the statutes.

§3. In associations which are not clerical, lay persons are able to exercise the function of moderator. A chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant is not to assume that function unless the statutes provide otherwise.

§4. Those who exercise leadership in political parties are not to be moderators in public associations of the Christian faithful which are ordered directly to the exercise of the apostolate.

[39] CIC 318 – (Code of Canon Law)

318 §1. In special circumstances and where grave reasons require it, the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in canon 312, §1 can designate a trustee who is to direct the association for a time in its name.

§2. The person who appointed or confirmed the moderator of a public association can remove the moderator for a just cause, after the person has heard, however, the moderator and the major officials of the association according to the norm of the statutes. The person who appointed a chaplain can remove him according to the norm of canons 192-195.

[40] CIC 308 and 316 - (Code of Canon Law)

308 No one legitimately enrolled is to be dismissed from an association except for a just cause according to the norm of law and the statutes.

316 §1. A person who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith, has defected from ecclesiastical communion, or has been punished by an imposed or declared excommunication cannot be received validly into public associations.

§2. Those enrolled legitimately who fall into the situation mentioned in §1, after being warned, are to be dismissed from the association, with due regard for its statutes and without prejudice to the right of recourse to the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in canon 312, §1.

[41] CIC 312.2 - (Code of Canon Law)

312.2 (See reference 34)

[42] CIC 309 - (Code of Canon Law)

309 According to the norm of law and the statutes, legitimately established associations have the right to issue particular norms respecting the association itself, to hold meetings, and to designate moderators, officials, other officers, and administrators of goods.

[43] CIC 319 - (Code of Canon Law)

319 §1. Unless other provision has been made, a legitimately erected public association administers the good which it possesses according to the norm of the statutes under the higher direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in canon 312, §1, to which it must render an account of administration each year.

§2. It must also render to the same authority a faithful account of the expenditure of the offerings and alms which it has collected.

[44] CL 34 - (Christifideles Laici – The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People) – Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II

The Hour Has Come for a Re-evangelization

No. 34. Whole countries and nations where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and capable of fostering a viable and working community of faith are now put to a hard test, and in some cases are even undergoing a radical transformation as a result of a constant spreading of an indifference to religion, of secularism and atheism. This particularly concerns countries and nations of the so-called First World in which economic well-being and consumerism, even if coexistent with a tragic situation of poverty and misery, inspires and sustains a life lived “as if God did not exist.” This indifference to religion and the practice of religion devoid of true meaning in the face of life’s very serious problems are not less worrying and upsetting when compared with declared atheism. Sometimes the Christian faith as well, while maintaining some of the externals of its tradition and rituals, tends to be separated those moments of human existence which have the most significance, such as, birth, suffering and death. In such cases, the questions and formidable enigmas posed by these situations, if remaining without responses, expose contemporary people to an inconsolable delusion or to the temptation of eliminating the truly humanizing dimension of life implicit in these problems.

On the other hand, in other regions or nations many vital traditions of piety and popular forms of Christian religion are still conserved; but today this moral and spiritual patrimony runs the risk of being dispersed under the impact of a multiplicity of processes, including secularization and the spread of sects. Only a re-evangelization can assure the growth of a clear and deep faith, and serve to make these traditions a force for authentic freedom.

Without doubt a mending of the Christian fabric of society is urgently needed in all parts of the world. But for this to come about what is needed is to *first remake the Christian fabric of the ecclesial community itself* present in these countries and nations.

At this moment the lay faithful, in virtue of their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ, are fully part of this work of the Church. Their responsibility, in particular, is to testify how the Christian faith constitutes the only fully valid response—consciously perceived and stated by all in varying degrees—to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society. This will be possible if the lay faithful will know how to overcome in themselves the separation of the Gospel from life, to again take up in their daily activities in family, work and society, an integrated approach to life that is fully brought about by the inspiration and strength of the Gospel.

To all people of today, I once again repeat the impassioned cry with which I began my pastoral ministry: “*Do not be afraid! Open, indeed, open wide the doors to Christ!* Open to his saving power the confines of states, and systems political and economic, as well as the vast fields of culture, civilization, and development. Do not be afraid! Christ knows ‘what is inside a person.’ Only he knows! Today too often people do not know what they carry inside, in the deepest recesses of their soul, in their heart. Too often people are uncertain about a sense of life on earth. Invaded by doubts they are led into despair. Therefore—with humility and trust I beg and implore you—allow Christ to speak to the person in you. Only he has the words of life, yes, eternal life.”

Opening wide the doors to Christ, accepting him into humanity itself poses absolutely no threat to persons, indeed it is the only road to take to arrive at the total truth and the exalted value of the human individual.

The vital synthesis will be achieved, when the lay faithful know how to put the Gospel and their daily duties of life into a most shining and convincing testimony, where, not fear but the loving pursuit of Christ and adherence to him will be the factors determining how a person is to live and grow, and these will lead to new ways of living more in conformity with human dignity.

Humanity is loved by God! This very simple yet profound proclamation is owed to humanity by the Church. Each Christian's words and life must make this proclamation resound: God loves you, Christ came for you, Christ is for you "the Way, the Truth and the Life!" (Jn 14:6).

This re-evangelization is directed not only to individual persons but also to entire portions of populations in the variety of their situations, surroundings and cultures. Its purpose is the *formation of mature ecclesial communities* in which the faith might radiate and fulfill the basic meaning of adherence to the person of Christ and his Gospel, of an encounter and sacramental communion with him, and of an existence lived in charity and in service.

The lay faithful have their part to fulfill in the formation of these ecclesial communities, not only through an active and responsible participation in the life of the community, in other words, through a testimony that only they can give, but also through a missionary zeal and activity towards the many people who still do not believe and who no longer live the faith received at Baptism.

In the case of coming generations, the lay faithful must offer the very valuable contribution, more necessary than ever, of a *systematic work in catechesis*. The Synod Fathers have gratefully taken note of the work of catechists, acknowledging that they "have a task that carries great importance in animating ecclesial communities." It goes without saying that Christian parents are the primary and irreplaceable catechists of their children, a task for which they are given the grace by the Sacrament of Matrimony. At the same time, however, we all ought to be aware of the "rights" that each baptized person has to being instructed, educated and supported in the faith and the Christian life.

[45] CL 34 – (See Reference 44)

[46] LG 38 - (Lumen Gentium – Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) – Vatican II

No. 38. Each individual layman must be a witness before the world to the resurrection and life of the Lord Jesus, and a sign of the living God. All together, and each one to the best of his ability, must nourish the world with spiritual fruits (cf. Gal. 5:22). They must diffuse in the world the spirit which animates those poor, meek and peacemakers whom the Lord in the Gospel proclaimed blessed (cf. Mt. 5:3-9). In a word: 'what the soul is in the body, let Christians be in the world.'

[47] LG 38 – (See Reference 46)