

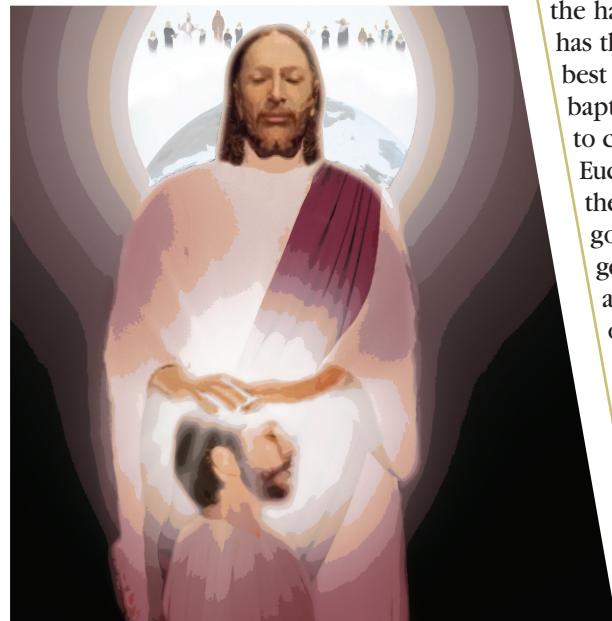
Shepherds of Christ

2007 ISSUE NO. 4 A SPIRITUALITY NEWSLETTER FOR PRIESTS BY REV. JOHN J. PASQUINI

CHIEF SHEPHERD OF THE FLOCK

Jn. 10: 1-15

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and runs away, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; he runs away because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep”
(New Jerusalem Bible, Doubleday).



FOUNDATION AND MISSION

Lumen Gentium, 17

“As he had been sent by the Father, the Son himself sent the apostles (cf. Jn. 20:21) saying, ‘go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all the days even unto the consummation of the world’ (Mt. 28:18-20). The Church has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles, and she must fulfill it to the very ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). Therefore, she makes the words of the apostles her own, ‘Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel’ (1 Cor. 9:16),

and accordingly never ceases to send heralds of the Gospel until such time as the infant [churches] are fully established, and can themselves continue the work of evangelization. For the Church is driven by the Holy Spirit to do her part for the full realization of the plan of God, who has constituted Christ as the source of salvation for the whole world. By her proclamation of the Gospel, she draws her hearers to receive and profess the faith, she prepares them for baptism, snatches them from the slavery of error, and she incorporates them into Christ so that in love for him they grow to full maturity. The effect of her works is that whatever good is found sown in the minds and hearts of men or in the rites and customs of peoples, these not only are preserved from destruction, but are purified, raised up, and perfected for the glory of God, the confusion of the devil, and the happiness of man. Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability. However, while anyone can baptize those who believe, it is for the priests to complete the building up of the body in the Eucharistic sacrifice, thus fulfilling the words of the prophet, ‘From the rising of the sun, even to going down, my name is great among the gentiles. And in every place there is a sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean offering’ (Mal. 1:11). Thus the Church prays and likewise labors so that into the People of God, the Body of the Lord and the Temple of the Holy Spirit, may pass the fullness of the whole world, and that in Christ, the head of all things, all honor and glory may be rendered to the Creator, the Father of the universe.”

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FR. EDWARD CARTER
Founder, Shepherds of Christ

This newsletter is for priests
and those who are interested
in the spiritual life.

PRIESTHOOD

By Charles De Foucauld

To a Friend Preparing for Ordination

“The priest... is something transcendent; through baptism he brings souls to birth, through the sacrament of penance he purifies them, through communion he gives them our Lord’s Body as He Himself did at the Last Supper, and at their death He helps them to appear before the Beloved by giving them their final forgiveness and the supreme strength... Every single day of his life, a priest does what Jesus did during his three years of ministry—He teaches men to know, love and serve their good Master. What a vocation!”



THE EUCHARIST, CAUSAL PRINCIPLE OF THE CHURCH

By Pope Benedict XVI

“14. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist Jesus draws the faithful into his ‘hour;’ he shows us the bond that he willed to establish between himself and us, between his own person and the Church. Indeed, in the sacrifice of the Cross, Christ gave birth to the Church as his Bride and his Body. The Fathers of the Church often meditated on the relationship between Eve’s coming forth from the side of Adam as he slept (cf. *Gen* 2:21-23) and the coming forth of the new Eve, the Church, from the open side of Christ sleeping in death: from Christ’s pierced side, John recounts, there came forth blood and water (cf. *Jn* 19:34), the symbol of the sacraments. A contemplative gaze ‘upon him whom they have pierced’ (*Jn* 19:37) leads us to reflect on the causal connection between Christ’s sacrifice, the Eucharist and the Church. The Church ‘draws her life from the Eucharist.’ Since the Eucharist makes present Christ’s redeeming sacrifice, we must start by acknowledging that ‘there is a causal influence of the Eucharist at the Church’s very origins.’ The Eucharist is Christ who gives himself to us and continually builds us up as his body. Hence, in the striking interplay between the Eucharist which builds up the Church, and the Church herself which ‘makes’ the Eucharist, the primary causality is expressed in the first formula: the Church is able to celebrate and adore the mystery of Christ present in the Eucharist precisely because Christ first gave himself to her in the sacrifice of the Cross. The Church’s ability to ‘make’

the Eucharist is completely rooted in Christ’s self-gift to her. Here we can see more clearly the meaning of Saint John’s words: ‘he first loved us’ (*1 Jn* 4:19). We too, at every celebration of the Eucharist, confess the primacy of Christ’s gift. The causal influence of the Eucharist at the Church’s origins definitively discloses both the chronological and ontological priority of the fact that it was Christ who loved us ‘first.’ For all eternity he remains the one who loves us first.”

“15. The Eucharist is thus constitutive of the Church’s being and activity. This is why Christian antiquity used the same words, *Corpus Christi*, to designate Christ’s body born of the Virgin Mary, his eucharistic body and his ecclesial body. This clear datum of the tradition helps us to appreciate the inseparability of Christ and the Church. The Lord Jesus, by offering himself in sacrifice for us, in his gift effectively pointed to the mystery of the Church. It is significant that the Second Eucharistic Prayer, invoking the Paraclete, formulates its prayer for the unity of the Church as follows: ‘may all of us who share in the body and blood of Christ be brought together in unity by the Holy Spirit.’ These words help us to see clearly how the *res* of the sacrament of the Eucharist is the unity of the faithful within ecclesial communion. The Eucharist is thus found at the root of the Church as a mystery of communion.”
(POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS, 2007).



They as yet cannot open themselves out in complete love to the Triune God in the beatific vision. They must undergo a further purification, a purification which could have been achieved [on this earthly journey]. The pain of this purification is mixed with the certain expectation of achieving the vision of God. We can hasten the advent of this vision for this people by the offering of prayers and other good works....

The members of the heavenly Church are those in whom the life of grace has taken full possession and has reached its completion in the life of glory. Faith now is unnecessary, as the light of glory gives the human intellect a new strength and capacity for seeing God face-to-face.... [Seeing the Father through Jesus, those in heaven] give themselves to [the Triune God] in a profound union far surpassing that of the indwelling of the Trinity experienced [on earth by the pilgrim Church]....

The heavenly Church...is the [full expression of the] Church. The Church of this earth and the Church of purgatory are, each in its own way, reaching out in loving hope for the heavenly Jerusalem....

The members of the heavenly Church can help us in living our life of grace until we too share its fullness with them. Their power of intercession on our behalf is but another ramification of the communal aspect of Christianity. We are meant to help others grow in Christ. We, in turn, are intended by God to receive aid from others—yes, from members of the heavenly Church, as well as from those with whom we dwell here below. [And we can help the members in purgatory by our prayers, sacrifices, and holy works.]” [There is but one true Church of Christ. Yet this one Church has three different states of existence].

(Response in Christ [Dayton: Pflaum Press, 1969], 55-58).

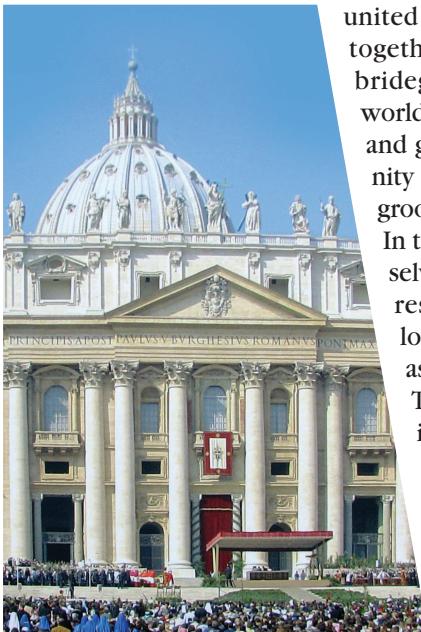
THREE STATES OF CHURCH

By Fr. Edward Carter

“There is but one true Church of Christ. Yet this one Church has three different states of existence. There is the pilgrim Church, the Church of this world, composed of members who have received the grace of Christ and strive for its development. They have not yet obtained the goal of their efforts, as have the members of the heavenly Church, who enjoy God in eternal happiness. The Church suffering is an intermediate state of existence necessary for those who had not achieved the required purification as members of the pilgrim Church. Although there are these three phases of the Church’s existence, there is a profound union existing between all the members....

The members of the Church suffering are those who have departed from this life in an incomplete state of Christian development. Their development is incomplete in the sense that grace has not fully taken possession of them, and, as a result they are...closed in upon themselves to a greater or lesser degree.





united in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass pray together. And through the love of bride and bridegroom grace is released, engulfing the world. Bride and bridegroom tap the font of life and grace for us. And as a Eucharistic community the bride lays down her life with the bridegroom for love of the world.

In this union of spouses, the spouses give themselves completely, fully, without doubt, without reservation to each other. The bridegroom loves his bride perfectly, for he died, rose, and ascended into heaven for her.

The Church militant, the bride militant, grows in the life of self-donation and self-communicating as her spouse calls her to him. The Church suffering, the bride in suffering, awaits her bridegroom to rescue her. The Church triumphant, the bride in heaven, lives the perfect spousal commitment of life and love. The Church is the bride of Christ!

PATTERN OF LIFE

By Fr. Edward Carter

“Christ has structured the Christian life by the way he lived, died, and rose from the dead. It is obvious, then, that the pattern of death-resurrection must be at the heart of the Church’s life. Individually and collectively, we continually die with Christ so that we may continually rise with him. Thus, we pass over in a process of continued religious transition to a greater participation in Jesus’ resurrection. It is true that our participation in Christ’s resurrection will reach its completion only in eternity. Nevertheless, we begin the life of the resurrection here upon this earth, in the here and now of human life, in the midst of joy and pain, in the experience of success and failure, in the sweat of our brow, in the enjoyment of God’s gifts. As Christians, we should have a sense of growth concerning our here-and-now life of resurrection....

We cannot maintain the life of resurrection or grow in it without a willingness to suffer.... Whether the sufferings of Christians are either the ordinary variety or the rare and extreme type, Christians must nevertheless convince themselves that to properly relate to the cross is to grow in resurrection—and for an individual Christian to grow in resurrection means that he or she will also have an increased capacity to help give resurrection to others.” (*Response to God’s Love* [Chicago: Loyola, 1984], 30-31).

BRIDE OF CHRIST

By Rita Ring & Fr. Pasquini

The Church is the bride of Christ. As the bride of Christ, the Church partakes in offering her sacrifice to the Father with her bridegroom at the Mass. Bride and bridegroom

Christ has endowed his body the church with the abiding gift of the Holy Spirit.

The first reason of these reasons involves our belief in the infinite value of the sacrifice which Christ offered to the Father on our behalf, and the definitive, ‘eschatological’ nature of the victory which he won over the powers of evil by his death and resurrection. It was because of this definitive victory that Christ could say with absolute assurance that the ‘gates of hell’ would never prevail over his church. For [if] the church [were] ever to cease being a holy people, a people of faith formed by charity, [that] would mean that the powers of evil had prevailed over it.

The second reason, that the church is Christ’s bride, assures us that he will never permit his church to become so unworthy of such an intimate relationship with him as to require his repudiation of her as an unfaithful wife. To put it another way, Christ, having won a definitive victory over sin, cannot fail to share the fruits of this victory with his spouse....

Third, indefectible holiness is guaranteed to the church by the abiding presence in her of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Christ to his church. It is unthinkable that the Holy Spirit, the gift of the risen Christ to his church, could either abandon the church or abide in her without actually causing the church to be a holy people. Admittedly, individuals can resist the Holy Spirit and remain in unrepented grave sin. In such people the Spirit no longer dwells. But the Spirit cannot fail to dwell in Christ’s church, or fail to make her the holy people God intends her to be. And the church cannot be such a holy people without holy members, and that means

ONE UNDER ONE CHAIR

By St. Cyprian of Carthage

“The blessed apostle Paul teaches us that the Church is one, for it has ‘one body, one spirit, one hope, one faith, one baptism, and one God.’ Furthermore, it is on Peter that Jesus built his Church, and to him he gives the command to feed the sheep; and although he assigns like power to all the apostles, yet he founded a single chair, and he established by his own authority a source and an intrinsic reason for that unity. Indeed, the others were that also which Peter was; but a primacy is given to Peter, whereby it is made clear that there is but one Church and one Chair—the Chair of Peter. So too, all are shepherds, and the flock is shown to be one, fed by all the apostles in single-minded accord. If someone does not hold fast to this unity of Peter, can he imagine that he still holds the faith? If he deserts the chair of Peter upon whom the Church was built, can he still be confident that he is in the Church⁽¹⁾?

...There is one God and one Christ, and one Church, and one Chair founded on Peter by the word of the Lord. It is not possible to set up another altar or for there to be another priesthood besides that one altar and that one priesthood. Whoever has gathered elsewhere is scattering”⁽²⁾. (1) *De Ecclesiae Unitate* (2-7); (2) *Letter to all his People* [43 (40) 5].

CHURCH IS HOLY

By Fr. Francis A. Sullivan

“...[We] can distinguish at least three reasons for our confidence that Christ’s church can never cease to be a holy people: 1) because its holiness is the fruit of Christ’s sacrifice; 2) because Christ has united the church indissolubly to himself as his bride; 3) because



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that the Spirit will always bring it about that there is in the church a decisive proportion of people whose faith is formed by charity.⁹ (*The Church We Believe In* [Mahwah: Paulist, 1988], 78-79).

CHURCH'S VOCATION OF LOVE

By Therese of Lisieux

“To be your spouse, to be a Carmelite, and by my union with you to be the Mother of souls, should not this suffice me? And yet it is not so.... I feel the vocation of the warrior, the priest, the apostle, the doctor, the martyr.... I feel within my soul the courage of the Crusader, the Papal Guard, and I would want to die on the field of battle in defense of the Church.

I feel within me the vocation of the priest. With what love, O Jesus, I would carry You in my hands, when, at my voice, You would come down from heaven. And with what love would I give you to souls. [But alas, this cannot be for me].

Ah, in spite of my littleness, I would like to enlighten souls as did the prophets and doctors. I have the vocation of the apostle. I would like to travel over the whole earth to preach Your Name and to plant Your glorious Cross on infidel soil....

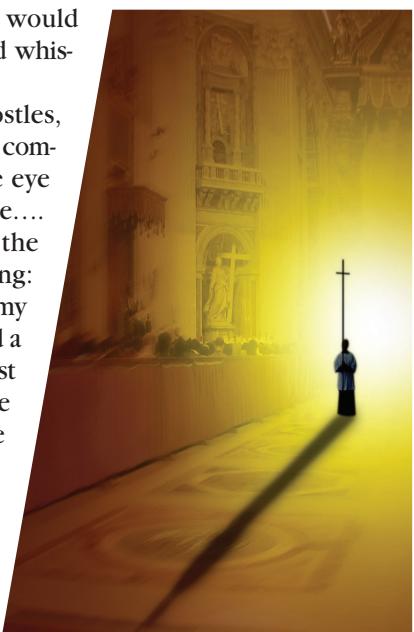
I would want to preach the Gospel on all the five continents simultaneously and even to the most remote isles.... O my Beloved Savior, I would shed my blood for You even to the very last drop.... Like You, my Adorable Spouse, I would be scourged and crucified. I would die flayed...I

would be plunged into boiling oil...I would present my neck to the sword...I would whisper at the stake Your Name, O Jesus....

[I recognized] that all cannot be apostles, prophets, doctors, etc., that the Church is composed of different members, and that the eye cannot be the hand at one and the same time....

[In reading St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (12:31) I found my true calling: LOVE]. Charity, [love], gave me the key to my vocation. I understood that if the Church had a body composed of different members, the most necessary and most noble of all could not be lacking to it, and so I understood that the Church had a Heart and that this Heart was burning with love. I understood it was love alone that made the Church members act, and that if love ever became extinct, apostles would not preach the Gospel and martyrs would not shed their blood. I understood that love comprised all vocations, that love was everything, that it embraced all times and places....

My vocation, at last I have found it....my vocation is love! Yes, I have found my place in the Church and it is You, O my God, who have given me this place; in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be love. Thus I shall be everything, and thus my dream will be realized....¹⁰ (*Story of a Soul* [Washington: ICS, 1976], 192f).



received perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those who [were properly chosen], and afterwards added the codicil that if they should fall asleep [that is, die], other approved men should succeed to their ministry¹¹.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 177-203)

“It is necessary to seek among others the truth which is easily obtained from the Church.... If there should be a dispute over some kind of question, ought we not have recourse to the most ancient churches [i.e., communities, dioceses] in which the apostles were familiar, and draw from them what is clear and certain in regard to that question? What if the apostles had not in fact left writings to us? Would it not be necessary to follow the order of Tradition, which was handed down to those to whom they entrusted the churches¹².

Tertullian (ca. 193-220)

“All doctrine which agrees with the apostolic churches [i.e., communities], those nurseries and original depositories of the Faith, must be regarded as truth, as undoubtedly constituting what the churches received from the apostles, what the apostles received from Christ, and what Christ received from God.... We communicate with the apostolic churches because there is no diversity of doctrine: this is the witness of the truth¹³.... Moreover, if there be any [heresies] bold enough to plant themselves in the midst of the apostolic age, so that they might seem to have been handed down by the apostles because they were from the time of the apostles, we can say to them: let them show the origins of their churches, let them unroll the order of their bishops, running down in succession from the beginning, so that their first bishop shall have for author and predecessor some one of the apostles¹⁴. (1) *Letter to the Corinthians*, 44, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. Lake, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998; (2) *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, vol. 1, trans. William Jurgens, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1970; (3) Ibid.; (4) ibid.



CHURCH IS CATHOLIC

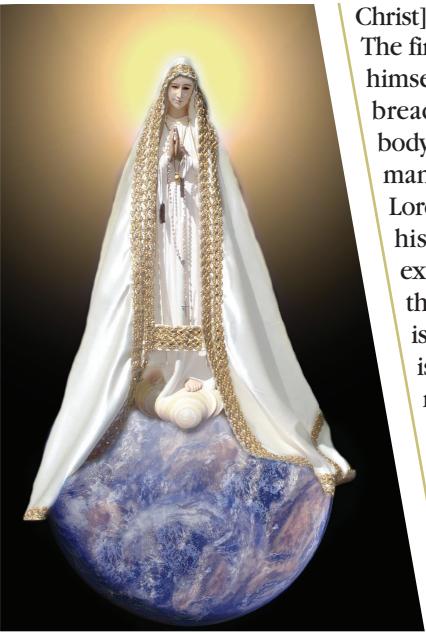
St. Cyril of Jerusalem

“The Church is called Catholic or universal because it has spread throughout the entire world, from one end of the earth to the other. Again, it is called Catholic because it teaches fully and unfailingly all the doctrines which ought to be brought to men's knowledge, whether they are concerned with visible or invisible things, with the realities of heaven or the things of the earth. Another reason for the name Catholic is that the Church brings under religious obedience all classes of men, rulers and subjects, learned and unlettered. Finally, it deserves the title Catholic because it heals and cures unrestrictedly every type of sin that can be committed in soul or in body, and because it possesses within itself every kind of virtue that can be named, whether exercised in actions or in words or in some kind of spiritual charism.” (*Catechetical Instructions*, 18: 23-25: PG 33, 1043-1047).

CHURCH IS TRUE & APOSTOLIC

St. Clement of Rome (88-97)

“Our apostles knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife for the title of bishop. For this cause, therefore, since they had



MARY — ICON OF THE CHURCH

By Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar

“Where the church is ‘holy and blameless,’ according to its original election (Eph. 1:4), where it is the ‘bride in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,’ ‘holy and without blemish’ (Eph. 5:27), there it professes itself, in full accord with the Son’s law of incarnation, as ‘handmaid of the Lord’ (Lk. 1:38). [Mary therefore is the perfect model, the perfect exemplar of the Church!]. This mother’s body, which was already (in the overshadowing of the Spirit) a bride’s body, is proleptically the church body from which and for which everything will be formed unto Christ, which will later be called the church.... [Mary] is ‘blessed’ because her existence is filled with ‘hearing the word of God and keeping it’ (Lk. 11:28; 2:19-51).... [Mary] as the ‘lowly handmaid’ is struck by the glance of ‘his mercy,’ of the God who ‘exalts those of lowly degree, fills the hungry with good things, and sends the rich away empty’ (Lk. 1:48-53). [Mary’s life exemplifies] that God’s saving action singles out and redeems especially...the powerless and those deprived of rights...”

[Mary truly is the exemplar of the Church.]” (Kehl and Löser, eds., *The Von Balthasar Reader* [New York: Crossroad, 1997], 219-220).

PAULINE NOTION OF BODY OF CHRIST

By Pope Benedict XVI

“[There are three sources for the Pauline notion of the Body of Christ.] In the first place, the Semitic conception of the ‘corporate personality’ stands in the background; this conception is expressed...in the idea that we are all Adam, a single man writ large.... [The Pauline notion of Body of

Christ] has in addition two more concrete roots. The first lies in the Eucharist, by which the Lord himself virtually invited this conception. ‘The bread we break, is it not participation in the body of Christ? Because it is one bread, we, the many, are one body’ ... (1 Cor. 10:16f). [The] Lord becomes our bread, our food. He gives us his body.... Communion means a fusion of existences; just as in the taking of nourishment the body assimilates foreign matter to itself, and is thereby enabled to live, in the same way my ‘I’ is ‘assimilated’ to that of Jesus.... [All who communicate] are all assimilated to this ‘bread’ and thus are made one among themselves—one body. It is in the event of ‘gathering’ [of deep communion that] the Lord joins us to one another. The formula ‘the Church is the Body of Christ’ thus states that the Eucharist, in which the Lord gives us his body and makes us one body, forever remains the place where the Church is generated, where the Lord himself never ceases to found her anew; in the Eucharist the Church is most compactly herself—in all places, yet one only, just as he is only one. [The third notion of the Body of Christ finds its origins in] the idea of nuptiality, or the biblical philosophy of love, which is inseparable from Eucharistic theology: ‘for this reason the man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to the woman, and they shall become one flesh’ (Gen. 2:24). One flesh—hence, a single new existence.... [In the sacrament of Eucharist], which is an act of love, two subjects are fused in such a way as to overcome their separation and to be made one. Hence, the Eucharistic mystery, precisely in being transformed by the idea of nuptiality, remains the heart of the concept of the church as described by the term ‘Body of Christ....’ [The] church is the Body of Christ in the way in which the woman is one body, or rather one flesh, with the man.... Christ and the Church are one body in the sense in which man and woman are one flesh, that is, in such a way that in their indissoluble spiritual-bodily union, they nonetheless remain unconfused and unmixed. The Church does not simply become Christ, she is ever the handmaid whom he lovingly raises to be his Bride and who seeks his face....” (*Called to Communion* [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996], 36-39).

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK INTO THE FUTURE

By Avery Cardinal Dulles

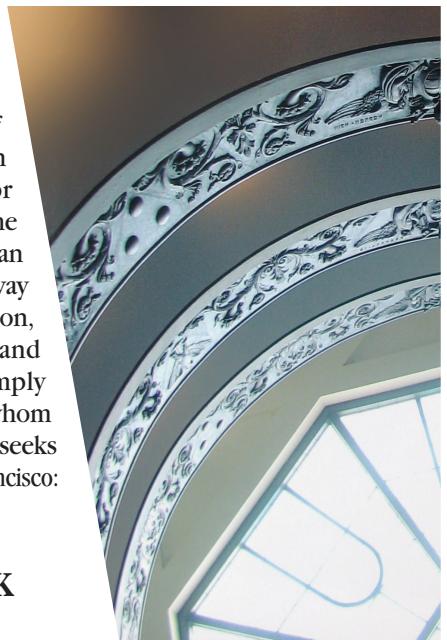
“The Church is never more Church...than when it gathers for instruction and worship. On such occasions it becomes most palpably the ‘sacrament of Christ’.... But it would not be completely Church unless it went forth from its assemblies to carry on Christ’s work in the world. The Church’s existence is a

continual alternation between two phases. Like systole and diastole in the movement of the heart, like inhalation and exhalation in the process of breathing, assembly and mission succeed each other in the life of the Church. Discipleship would be stunted unless it included both the centripetal phase of worship and the centrifugal phase of mission. Mission, in turn, implies both evangelization and service....

Since Easter, the disciples have new motivation to spread the good news to all corners of the earth. For they know that the world has been redeemed and that eternal life can be enjoyed, both now and hereafter, through the transforming gift of the Spirit of the risen Christ.

As the community of disciples, the Church must carry on, with appropriate adaptations, the forms of mission enjoined by Jesus upon his original followers. Besides proclaiming the good news, the Church must replicate the works of Jesus. Just as he healed the illnesses and cast out demons, the Church must combat poverty and disease, show compassion for the sick and dying, and give assistance to those in need....

Although the obligation of every disciple to show mercy and compassion has been recognized throughout the ages, the social dimensions of discipleship have come increasingly to the fore in the present century. The Catholic Church in our time officially recognizes a close link between evangelization and the struggle for justice, development,



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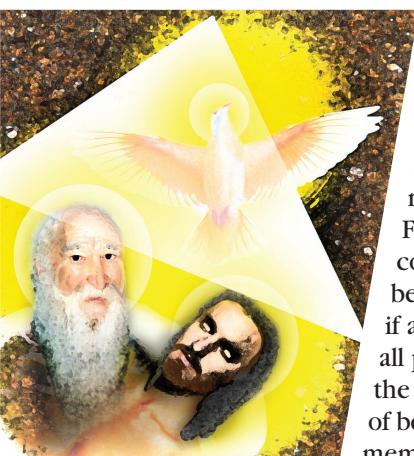
peace, and liberation in the world.... Although the Church cannot be reduced to the level of a political coalition, its commitment to Christ and its eschatological hope have a proper and necessary impact upon political and economic life and consequently on the transformation of human society.

The external mission of the Church can never be separated from its inner life. In the early centuries, the Church expanded not so much because of concerted missionary efforts as through its power of attraction as a contrast society. Seeing the mutual love and support of Christians, and the high moral standards they observed, the pagans sought entrance into the Church. If the same is not happening today, this is largely because the Church no longer appears conspicuously as the community of disciples, transformed by its participation in the new creation.¹⁹ (*Models of the Church* [New York: Doubleday, 1987], 220-222).

CHURCH AND THE “NON-CHRISTIANS”

Fr. John J. Pasquini

The Christian is called to believe in the triune God who through Christ established his Church, without which no salvation is possible for the world, and in particular or more specifically for the individual. Faith in Christ and faith in his Church are necessary elements for salvation as proclaimed by the Gospel⁽¹⁾. Scripture (i.e., Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:44-47, 12; Heb. 11:6; Eph. 4: 11,12), the Fathers of the Church (from the time of the Apostolic Fathers, i.e., St. Ignatius of Antioch, to the end of the Patristic age, i.e., St. John Damascene)⁽²⁾, and the Church Councils (i.e., Trent, Fourth Lateran, etc.)⁽³⁾ all point out the



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Karl Rahner's theory of the anonymous Christian or as he later termed it, the implicit Christian, is the key to salvation for others who on the exterior appear to be non-Christians and yet appear to be people of great holiness. These people in fact can be very much great mystics, albeit with great difficulty.

Because of the possibility of an experience of God at the very core of one's innermost being, salvation is a possibility for a vast number of “non-Christians” who have “through no fault of their own,” never heard the explicit expression of Christianity.

Rahner explains that Scripture shows us that God wills all to be saved and reach the summit of truth (1 Tim. 2:4). Christ came for all, to save all.

We are faced with two realities when dealing with the Church's infallible teaching. On the one hand the Christian faith as expressed by Christ and his Church is necessary for salvation, and on the other hand, one recognizes that God desires all to be saved. From these two realities one must come to the conclusion that somehow all people are able to become members, in some sense, of the Church if all are to have the opportunity to be saved. If all people are capable of becoming members of the Church, this implies that there are degrees of becoming members of the Church, degrees of membership. In becoming a Christian one is baptized, accepts the fullness of the faith, and embraces the Church's liturgical life in holiness.

Even before the presentation of the explicit Church's preaching of the Gospel message by a missionary effort, one must recognize the movement of grace that allows the person to accept and embrace the message and give it life and light. Likewise, in the case of someone who has

necessity of Christ and his Church for salvation. But what about the people who lived before Christ? What about the people who never heard the explicit Gospel message or even heard the word Christ? What about those who believe in God yet have not grasped the explicit presentation of the Gospel message? Are all who *through no fault of their own* who profess a different belief condemned to hell? What about the person who is swayed by other philosophies? What about the person who seems “turned off” by so-called “Christians”? Reflection and perception warn us that such a profession of condemnation is problematic: How can we condemn such a massive number of people, especially if no sign of subjective guilt can be found in them?⁽⁴⁾ If Christ is who Christians claim him to be, then the Christ-event must have meaning in the living experiences of all people, whether they are aware of it or not.

Otherwise, Christ would simply be a “nice guy” or solely a good example as opposed to “the Savior.”

never been presented with the Church's preaching, that grace—which is the grace of Christ—is active in the individual and is seeking the fulfillment of its nature to become Christian in all its dimensions even though the preaching of the message may not be present explicitly⁽⁵⁾.

Grace is a gratuitous gift of God's self-communicating love to humanity. This grace offered to humanity presupposes an ability to accept and respond to this free gift of love, of presence. The grace presupposes a “being of unlimited openness for the limitless being of God....”⁽⁶⁾ It is an openness to a God of mystery who is beyond the limits of all reality, of all that is comprehensible, yet it is an openness to a providential God who is the source and sustainer of all existence, of all reality. The person in his or her whole being has an innate attraction or tendency toward God. This tendency is capable of being open to hearing the absolute, mysterious, often hidden God who transcends all of reality⁽⁷⁾.

Failure to be open to God's gratuitous gift of self leads one to self-contradiction. One inevitably contradicts what one was meant to be. By being radically open, by experiencing transcendence, one is experiencing grace's content. The revelation of the Word, of the Christ, is the expression and explication of what one already is by virtue of grace, by virtue of one's radical openness, one's transcendence⁽⁸⁾. It is a revelation that speaks to a person's being whenever the person completely accepts himself or herself⁽⁹⁾.

When one accepts one's being for what one truly is or was intended to be, one is accepting the reality of Christ as the perfection and guarantee of one's grace-filled movement toward God, a grace-filled movement of the permanent and visible presence of Christ's Body, the Church⁽¹⁰⁾. The anonymous or implicit Christian is one who accepts one's being ordered to God, and who is in harmony—





(3) (Neuner, Joseph & Dupuis, Jacques, *The Christian Faith*, 5th ed. [New York: Alba House, 1992]); (4-7) (*Investigations*, vol. 6, 391-392); (8-11) (*Investigations*, vol. 14, 394).

WHAT KEEPS ME HERE

By St. Augustine of Hippo

“[What keeps me here as a Catholic?]. The unanimity of peoples and nations keeps me here. Her authority, inaugurated with miracles, nourished with hope, augmented by love, and confirmed by her age, keeps me here. The succession of priests, from the very see of the Apostle Peter, to whom our Lord, after His resurrection, gave the charge of feeding His sheep, up to the present episcopate, keeps me here. And at last, the very name of Catholic, which, not without reason, belongs to this Church alone...[keeps me here].”
(cf. Migne, PL 42:173f).

possibly even confusedly—with one’s own being giving glory to God. From here the person’s being seeks to be actualized, fulfilled. The person seeks to move from an implicit Christian experience to an explicit Christian experience. Given historical circumstances, the explicitness of the Christian expression may not be able to be actualized without the explicit presentation of Christianity; hence, the person’s nature will seek its fulfillment, *in grace*, in an authentically loving and humane spirit. If, however, a higher state of explicitness is offered or presented to an individual, a person’s nature will most likely embrace this explicit expression of the faith—an explicit, conscious profession of Church membership. It is in this actualization in God, in grace, that happiness, peace, contentment, and the mystical experience can be found. It is in this mystery-experience of the triune God that one finds the fulfillment of what one is intended to be⁽¹¹⁾.

For the Christian, salvation and mysticism are inescapably linked to Christ the sanctifier and redeemer. In Christianity, the precondition for salvation and holiness, there is an entrance into the life, death and resurrection of Christ and his body the Church. For the Christian, one’s salvation, one’s holiness, one’s mysticism is *in Christ, through Christ, and with Christ*.

Therefore, one may argue that the theory of the anonymous Christian or implicit Christian is the only plausible way to express the reality of Christ as the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life* in people of other *explicit* faiths. It is the only way to express the reality of mysticism outside the sphere of *explicit* Christianity. It is perhaps the only plausible way to understand that there is no salvation without the Church!

(1) (Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6, *Concerning Vatican II*, trans. Karl and Boniface Kruger [Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1969], 391); (2) (William A. Jurgens, ed., *The Faith of the Early Fathers* [Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1979], vols. 1-3.

this worldwide network of prayer. Currently the prayers are in six languages with the Church’s *Imprimatur*. Fr. Carter had the approval of his Jesuit provincial for this movement, writing the Newsletter every 2 months for 6 1/2 years. After his death, and with his direction, we in the Shepherds of Christ circulated the *Priestly Newsletter Book II* to 95,000 priests with other writings.

We have prayed daily for the priests, the Church, and the world since 1994. Associates are called to join prayer Chapters and help us circulate this newsletter centered on spreading devotion to the Sacred Heart and Immaculate Heart and helping to renew the Church through greater holiness. Fr. John J. Pasquini is a tremendous gift on this 13th anniversary year of the newsletter. Form a Prayer Chapter & order a Prayer Manual.

Titles to the sections of the newsletter have been given by Fr. John Pasquini.

EDITOR’S CORNER

Fr. John J. Pasquini is a columnist, author of more than a dozen books, guest speaker, lecturer on topics of systematic, moral and spiritual theology, a retreat leader, and a parish priest in the Diocese of Palm Beach, Florida. He feels blessed to serve the Shepherds of Christ as the editor of their newsletter. The newsletter is dedicated to renewal, fraternity, and the building of the Kingdom of God. It is a spirituality newsletter particularly dedicated to priests, religious, and all interested in the spiritual life. Comments and insights are always welcome.

“I give my heart to Jesus and Mary with you in love.”

— Shepherds of Christ



HOW TO BECOME A SHEPHERD OF CHRIST ASSOCIATE

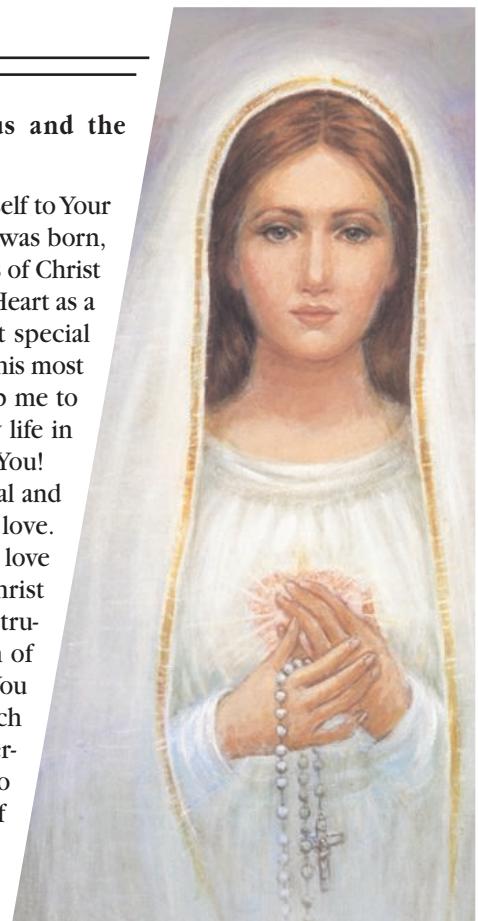
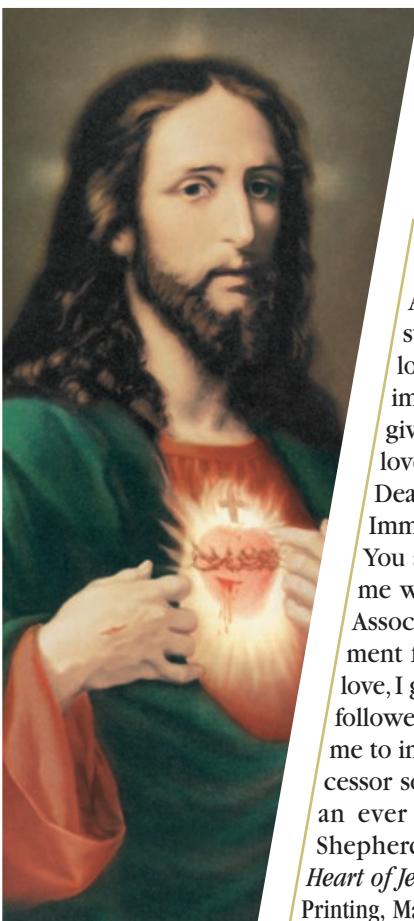
The Shepherds of Christ has prayer chapters all over the world praying for the priests, the Church and the world. These prayers that Father Carter compiled in the summer of 1994 began

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ACT OF CONSECRATION

Act of Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

“Lord Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock, I consecrate myself to Your most Sacred Heart. From Your pierced Heart the Church was born, the Church You have called me, as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, to serve in a most special way. You reveal Your Heart as a symbol of Your love in all its aspects, including Your most special love for me, whom You have chosen as Your companion in this most important work. Help me to always love You in return. Help me to give myself entirely to You. Help me always to pour out my life in love of God and neighbor! Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in You! Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, I consecrate myself to your maternal and Immaculate Heart, this heart which is symbol of your life of love. You are the Mother of my Savior. You are also my Mother. You love me with a most special love as a member of Shepherds of Christ Associates, a movement created by your Son as a powerful instrument for the renewal of the Church and the world. In a return of love, I give myself entirely to your motherly love and protection. You followed Jesus perfectly. You are His first and perfect disciple. Teach me to imitate you in the putting on of Christ. Be my motherly intercessor so that, through your Immaculate Heart, I may be guided to an ever closer union with the pierced Heart of Jesus, Chief Shepherd of the flock”⁹ (Rita Ring, *Mass Book: A Journey Into the Heart of Jesus*, El Paso, Texas: [Shepherds of Christ Publications, Second Printing, May 2000], pp. 204f).



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Email info@sofc.org
Internet www.sofc.org
Fax 812-273-3182
Telephone (toll free USA) 1-888-211-3041
Telephone (international) 812-273-8405
P.O. Box 627, China, Indiana 47250 USA
Shepherds of Christ Ministries
Non-Profit Organization
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