

CARLOS MIGUEL BUELA

# YOUTH

## IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM



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Youth Series

IVE Press

CARLOS MIGUEL BUELA

***YOUTH***  
***IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM***

Revised and Updated



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# **Youth in the Third Millennium**

**Carlos Miguel Buela**

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1111 Plaza Drive, Suite 300

Schaumburg, IL 60173

Enquiries:

[info@ebooks2go.net](mailto:info@ebooks2go.net)

[www.ebooks2go.net](http://www.ebooks2go.net)

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113 East 117<sup>th</sup> Street

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Ph. (212) 534 5257

Fax (212) 534 5258

Email [ivepress@ive.org](mailto:ivepress@ive.org)

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## CHAPTER 1

### *The Meaning of Life*

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#### *You Have the Words of Eternal Life” (Jn 6:68)*

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*“I ask you, youth of Ecuador!*

*-Do you want to commit yourselves before the Pope to be living members of the Church of Christ?*

*-Do you wish to commit yourselves to surrender even your life for the good of others, especially the poor?*

*-Do you want to fight against sin, always carrying the love of Christ in your heart?*

*-Do you want to employ your youthful vigor in building a new society according to the will of God?*

*-Do you want to renounce violence, building up fraternity and not hatred?*

*-Do you want to be permanent powers of justice, truth, love, and peace?*

*-Do you want to bring Christ to other young people?*

*-Do you want to be faithful to Christ, even if others are not?*

*You have answered yes. If you are faithful, I say to you, with the Apostle St. John: ‘you have conquered the evil one.’”*

*John Paul II,*

*Address to Youth in Olympic Stadium in Quito, Ecuador,*

*January 30, 1985.*

# 1.

## *THE MEANING OF LIFE*

*“Life is a gift of a certain period of time in which each one of us faces a challenge which life itself brings: the challenge of having a purpose, a destiny, and of striving for it. The opposite is to spend our lives on the surface of things, to ‘lose’ our lives in futility (...)*

*Too many young people do not realize that they themselves are the ones who are mainly responsible for giving a worthwhile meaning to their lives. The mystery of human freedom is at the heart of the great adventure of living life well.”*

*John Paul II, Manila, Philippines.*

*January 14, 1995.<sup>2</sup>*

I could not begin these pages without first trying to answer a fundamental question: What is it that distinguishes a human being from the rest of Creation?

In other words: What is Man?

I find this question very important because many times in our daily language, as said by the great author Gilbert Keith Chesterton,<sup>3</sup> it seems that man is no more than a “strange animal.” For example, we might say, that Juanita talks like a parrot, that Peter is a beast in the soccer game, that Joseph is as dumb as an ox, etc. Either these terms are metaphors, or there is no difference between Juanita and the parrot, Peter and the beast, or Joseph and the ox.

Man has similar characteristics to animals in that he has a body with ears, legs, eyes, etc., like other animals. Though we may place man next to animals, we also know that man is superior to them. Man *thinks*, man is *able to sustain love forever*, able to *create works of art*, and able to *become a hero...* This, my young friends, does not occur because he has a body like the animals. Man can do these things because he has a soul, a spiritual and immortal soul that is the image of God.

The reality of the soul is something we count on every day. The soul is always present and, because of that, we sometimes fail to realize it. Every time we see an elderly person with energy and inner youthfulness, we reflect upon ourselves, on the “I,” which, like the air, we do not see but is there. Every time we recall our past, which by being *past* no longer exists; every time we consider our future, which by being *future* is not yet in

existence; every time we do something like this, we come into contact with the reality of the soul. The soul is spiritual, not bound to the corporal, and does not depend on time and space.

The soul, in Latin *anima*, is what animates the body, gives it life and movement, and what makes it *know* and *love*. Man is capable of knowing and loving because his soul has two capacities (or *faculties*) called *intelligence* and *will*. He knows with the intelligence and loves with the will. With the intelligence he *looks*, he *sees* what he can do, and with the will he *decides*, he *chooses* to do it. This is why man, unlike animals, is *free*. For example, a bird will never plan to make a nest with three floors; or a dog write a book on the one hundred ways of seasoning a bone; or a horse design aerobic exercise classes to stay in shape. Animals will always act in the same way, each one according to the impulse of its instinct, exactly as dictated by nature. Man—who possesses freedom (by having intelligence and will)—can progress or regress by personal decision.



This means that man is a being who is capable of setting for himself objectives and goals to reach. Man is a being who is intentional. Man is a being who will be either *good* or *bad* according to the ends he proposes for himself and the means he chooses to reach them. There are different types of ends, some are good and others are bad. If I intend to be a great scientist in order to create a bomb capable of destroying a large part of humanity, I will be proposing a goal that does not dignify me. If I intend to have a lot of money to give myself pleasures without worrying about others, I will be taking the wrong path. However, if I want to form a good family, marked by fecundity, so as to be an example for my future children, I am choosing an objective that will truly fulfill me as a person.

Certainly, all our actions have an end, but the most important end is the one that gives meaning to all of life, *the end of ends*, the *ultimate end*. In other words: happiness.

For this reason it is not enough to know *what* man is. It is also necessary to know what man is *for*, to know the meaning of his journey through this world.

If you were to conduct a survey on the street asking people why they do what they do, you may receive thousands of answers. But behind all of them will be only one desire: TO BE HAPPY.

What is happiness? This is the fundamental question of our existence and the personal answer each person will find with the unfolding of his own life. The answer is difficult but valuable.

Dear young people, throughout these pages we will try to offer a wide view so as to respond with full maturity and freedom. Nothing makes us as free as knowing. May the words of Eva Lavallière, the applauded actress from Paris, never be said by us: “I have gold and silver and all that one can have in this life, and I am the most unfortunate of all women.” Nevertheless, she was later able to re-orient her life... In Rosario (a city in

Argentina), a wealthy person once told me, “Father, I have everything and I lack everything.”

Fundamentally, there are two roads in the existence of man: one that is difficult and one that is easy; one that makes us happy and another that makes us unhappy. In order to reach true happiness it is crucial to choose the appropriate path; e.g., if I walk toward Antarctica, I will not arrive at the moon.

Unfortunately, many people choose the easy road. This road is chosen by those who live this life because the air is free; or govern their lives solely by what the majority says and does without caring whether it is good or bad. They live their lives without discernment or critical thinking, blown by any wind and influenced by any fashion because they don't know why they live, where they come from or where they are going. These are the men of the “masses,” who lack high ideals or desires for virtue and, consequently, find only emptiness in their lives.

Those who choose this road end up being resentful and mistreated by society. They are easily disgusted and their days are full of tedium and insipidness. **They get tired of life.** They seem to be poisoned and seek to poison others with their “depressions and pessimisms.” Maybe they do not possess the physical beauty they desire or sufficient money. Perhaps they have to study harder than others do or are unable to obtain a girlfriend, a boyfriend, a job, etc. Whatever the case, everyone else is blamed, including their parents, friends, siblings, society, and, most seriously of all, God.

This path has a key characteristic we should always keep in mind: It is a path marked by deceit and lies. This is a path that makes promises, but never keeps them, that presents imaginary and fictitious things as being real. What is actually ordinary is presented as exceptional and serves to distract us from more important things. Examples of this abound in TV soap operas that toy with the sentiments of those who follow them by creating fictional anxieties, happiness, sadness and other emotions that unbalance people's affectivity. In other words, soap operas present imaginary things as real, and ridicule reality or present it as utopian. Some examples of this include the idea that purity is impossible, i.e., virginity before marriage and mutual respect in a courtship are unattainable ideals; that the current state of society precludes the possibility of solutions; that there is no other life after this one, nor is there a final judgment where we will have to account for all our actions to God... In fact, what this “easy” path offers us is a life of total disregard for God, forgetting Him and covering our ears so that we do not even hear His name and His call to us. This is a path that denies God in order to justify the errors and defects no one wants to correct.

St. Paul the Apostle says, *it is full time now for you to wake from sleep.*<sup>4</sup> We should not allow ourselves to be deceived or to allow the lies that circulate in our society to make us feel fed up with life. Life is beautiful and deserves to be lived. What is real is possible. It is possible to live life in its plenitude. For instance, we know that thousands of young people live purity in its fullness as true Christians, and they are not abnormal, or physically or psychologically impaired. These young people are as happy and full of life as it is possible to be. They are willing to deny themselves for the good of others, to live

the great ideals and refuse to be carried away by what the majority does. There are more of them than you might think...

The path laid down for us by God is not publicized or advertized in our society and is not very popular at the present time. However, it has something that the other standard paths presented to us do not have. **This path will never deceive us and it will never leave us empty.**

Following Christ is a road that demands sacrifice and renunciation. It demands the soul of a hero and the strength of the youth. It is the path of those who, in the middle of everyday occupations, know how to raise their eyes and see the bigger and nobler things worthy enough that we should give our lives for them. Those who choose this difficult path can say "no" when the majority says "yes." Those who are on the right path do not try to escape reality or deceive themselves, but overcome obstacles like athletes full of energy. They do not cover their eyes like ostriches before the first difficulty. They become passionate about and fall in love with great things, and live and die for great things. This path is for those who have "the soul of a prince," those who live with firm principles and carry out the demands of these principles to their ultimate consequences. It is to these youths of noble souls, pure eyes and hearts enamored with goodness and truth, that the beautiful is made visible.

If I told you that obtaining happiness comes by being good professionals, I would be lying to you: there are many famous professionals who are unhappy and miserable.

If I told you that happiness can be obtained by not injuring anyone, I would be incorrect: there are many who do not injure anyone and are still unhappy.

If I told you that you will find happiness in alcohol, drugs, and unbridled living, I would be gravely lying to you.

Youth are made for greater and nobler things. Youth are not made for pleasure, but to fight to obtain arduous and difficult things... for heroism.

## 2.

### *THE HEROIC GENERATION*

*“A gift is, obviously, ‘for others’: this is the most important dimension of the civilization of love.”*

*Letter to Families Gratissimam Sane.*

*February 2, 1994.*

Not all youth are martyrs, nor are they young priests in the missions, or lay Catholic militants, or seminarians.

I plan to develop this topic in four points:

#### ***I***

What is meant by calling this generation insipid? We speak of insipid in the sense of tastelessness, dullness, blandness, as if to say, disgust, heaviness, displeasure. The nocturnal youth—at least nocturnal on Saturdays—according to studies of an Argentine sociologist, Mario Margulis, can be classified according to four kinds: those who attend night clubs, rock fans, those who identify themselves with *bailanta*, and the modern ones.

Margulis says that, “Each generation constructs signs of their own identity. The youth communicate among themselves, they form groups, and they display customs different from those of other times. Adults are not *native* to the nocturnal culture; we are separated by the generational gap. In order to speak with the *natives* we must make an effort to recognize their codes as legitimate. In the universal imagination, a person organizes his own party in order to free himself from dominating powers through laughter, through that which is grotesque, through masking... [On the other hand] the commercial party, which is sold to the youth, is organized by others. It is a *simulacrum*,<sup>5</sup> and the liberation is relative: those powers are present, notorious and oppressive.”<sup>6</sup>

**a- The night club scene:** “The night club is a prototype of the simulacrum of a party, an authoritarian place, full of norms and restrictions, with racial criteria. They are places of exclusion where prestige is proportional to their capacity to discriminate.”

This prototype has led to testimonies like that of a 22 year-old young man who sometimes goes to Pachá or Caix (two night clubs in Argentina). He does not feel comfortable in that atmosphere. He says: “I go with my girlfriend and in a group; going alone is anguish. The music is loud; communication, nil. It is a display case to look into and to be looked at, a hysterical, narcissistic game, where there is no contact. People attend in non-mixed groups, *each one in their own group*, like autistics. They resemble the mating rituals of animals shown in documentaries. But, in this case, it doesn’t go

anywhere and it ends up a pathetic spectacle.”

**b- The modern crowd:** They identify themselves with the *new avant-garde bohemia*. It is a Buenos Aires movement that began to acquire its identity beginning with the First Biennial of Youth Art in 1988. It includes young intellectuals and artists, who organize their own network of connections: exhibitions, bars, recitals, private parties (...). “Cultural identity is a necessity for adolescents, and *tribes* are figures proper to the modern city.”

**c- *Bailanta* (a mix of tropical and typical music from Argentina):** “It is mainly for the lower classes. Usually the clubs are located in the vicinities of rail stations. It is a social phenomenon that embraces other practices from that neighborhood. For them, tropical music is the way to distinguish them from the upper-classes.”

**d- Rock:** “Rock is itinerant, more democratic, popular and less selective than other genres. It is the most politicized, although its potential opponent has become a conditioned product by the media and the *star system*.”

A member of a rock band says: “I do not consider myself a rocker; that is a very limited vision of life and there are other things that interest me. *Rock no longer scares anybody*, it stopped being genuine when insult, transgression, rebellion became governed by the system. It is *no longer heroic*; it does not speak about a stance on life.” For these reasons he continues: “*there is insipidity among youth*; and today, more than ever, being seventeen years old is not easy.” *It is the insipid generation*, disgusted with everything or almost everything.

## II

***The depressed generation.*** In New Milford, Connecticut, a situation occurred that was similar to what happened in Villa Gobernador Gálvez, south of Rosario, Argentina. In a lapse of five days, as attested by the authorities, eight girls were taken to the hospital of New Milford due to suicidal attempts.

Some of the girls’ testimonies included statements like: “*I was simply fed up with everything, and also with life.*” This girl was only 12 or 13 years old...!

More seriously, according to a local journalist, “several of the girls maintained that they formed part of a suicidal pact.”

Many adolescents had the phrases “Life is disgusting” or “Long-live death” written on their arms. The majority of these girls “go to therapy sessions and list off brands of antidepressants like they can list brands of shampoo. A 14 year-old redhead said she took Zoloft for her depression, Ritalin to pay better attention—that is to say to be a little more attentive—and Trazadone in order to sleep.”

“Her 15 year-old friend commented that: ‘All the girls I know have been to 6 West (the psychiatric ward for adolescents at Danbury Hospital). We don’t belong to the generation X, *we are the depressed generation.*’”

“About her three friends who tried to commit suicide, Emily mentioned that one had family problems, the other was ‘upset that day’ and the third ‘was just against everything

that was happening.’

“A doctor said: “What is happening in New Milford is not a unique case. We have seen it happen in Argentina as well. This culture of desperation can be found anywhere. But, among adolescents the tendency to suicide can become a ‘contagious virus.’”

It is not the entire generation; but there are large numbers of youth who are on the brink of, or who have fallen into depression and we know that we cannot sit on our hands, because these things happen and we must, as far as we are able, look for a solution.

### ***III***

The so-called “***lost generation.***” This is the desperate generation. “Desperate, because they calm their anxiety by violence: 2000 aggressive attacks and killings in 1994 in Los Angeles.” That is five violent acts per day. What reasons or events provoked them?

“In the most deprived district in Chicago, thanks to drug-trafficking, a 15 year-old adolescent can have a brand new car of his own. Joseph, a 13 year-old, says: ‘Why should I work, when by selling dope in ten seconds I make three times the salary of a doctor?’ He says this in a hole of the stairwell of low-income housing, surrounded by needles. The same kid says: ‘At 6, we have fun whistling at police cars. At 9, we want to prove to the older ones that we can smoke like them, and can run and catch a handbag in the air—that is to say, mug people. At 12, we want weapons to defend ourselves.’”

This does not only happen with those who are marginalized. Evidently there are cases where this epidemic of irrational violence reaches youth belonging to well-formed families. “Eric Smith, eleven-and-a-half-years-old, lived with his family in a rich neighborhood of New York State. Last summer, for reasons unknown, he strangled his four-and-a-half-year-old neighbor, Derrick. In the televised trial, he clearly stated that he did not regret anything.”

In Louisiana’s high security prison, Mark, a 16-year-old, declares that he finally understood that what he was doing was wrong. “He explains that he no longer wants to have an ‘easy’ life. At eleven years of age, a drug dealer gave him his first revolver ‘to deliver to clients.’ Before being arrested for murder, he admitted he had shot at dozens of people. Now it seems that he converted because he said: ‘But now it is over.’”

In northern California, where 250,000 adolescents were imprisoned in 1994, a law prohibits teenagers from forming groups with more than two people or wearing a cap backwards because this indicates that they belong to a gang.

“In a culture where weapons symbolize power, psychiatrists agree that ‘kids want to resemble the heroes on TV,’ whom they see committing an average of 8,000 crimes and 100,000 acts of violence before they reach the age of ten. Every week this culture of violence produces a new martyr, like Twelve-year-old David Kareen, one of the best students in a school in the Bronx. He pursued an engineering career. After leaving school, one of his schoolmates approached him and asked him to hand over his leather jacket. He refused and they argued and quarreled. Kareen received a knife wound and died on the patio of his house. The murderer, a twelve-and-a-half-year-old, later explained that he

dreamed of having a jacket like that one.

A manager of a funeral home says: “This week is my third funeral involving youth killed by youth.” She appeared to be “resigned to see these coffins with youth inside.” Two months later, the day the trial began, the boy who killed David Kareen said: “I really wanted that leather jacket. Life... *what does it matter in today’s world?*”<sup>7</sup>

## ***IV***

***The Heroic Generation.*** Faced with the *pseudo* morale of the defeated, the mediocre, the losers, and the failures... we, **the heroic generation**, must **oppose** them with strength and courage, following the example of the Blessed Martyrs of Barbastro.<sup>8</sup>

Today, half-hearted efforts are not enough. It is not enough to give aspirins to a patient with cancer that has spread all over his body.

Today, the only thing that can provide a solution to such aberrations is **the young generation of heroism**.

We must raise the noble standard of Christian ideals. The incisive mandate of our Lord must again resonate in the hearts of the youth: *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*<sup>9</sup> If Jesus said it, it is because perfection and sanctity are possible.

We must transmit all the great ideals we have by the grace of God in a convincing manner with strength and courage, (not like false saints, who pretend to be righteous).

We must demonstrate what Paul Claudel said so beautifully: “*Youth has not been made for pleasure, but for heroism.*”

We must be convinced that we are **all** called to heroism in the position where God has placed us: whether as priests, religious, wives, husbands, lay consecrated or not consecrated, but always committed to apostolic labors. Heroism is not only lived in the maximum degree, as in the case of the Martyrs of Barbastro; it is also lived in the everyday heroism of the disposition of the soul to give life and not compromise faith. Our martyrs were killed because they refused to stop wearing the cassock; not just because of the material aspect, but because, in those circumstances, taking off the cassock meant an apostasy of faith.

We must also be prepared to give our lives rather than to renounce or cast doubt on our faith. But to do this we must possess the virtues to a heroic degree. It is not enough to be good more or less (more or less good ends up being bad, and later on, ends up being perverse).

We must live the virtues to a heroic degree. What does “to a heroic degree” mean? Four conditions required to achieve these heroic virtues are:

1. The matter—the object of the virtue—has to be arduous or difficult, beyond the ordinary strength of man;
2. Its actions must be prompt and easily accomplished;
3. It must be accomplished joyfully as a conscious offering of sacrifice to the Lord.

Youth must strive to live purity in this civilization. To live purity is mandated by the commandments of the law of God but, in the present age, it is something so arduous and difficult that it entails an offering, a sacrifice to the Lord.

4. It must be accomplished with a certain frequency, whenever the occasion presents itself.

We will be called crazy as Christ was crazy before us!

Some will say that it is too exigent... Christ was asked to come down from the cross but He did not!

They will shout that it is impossible... Christ tells us: "Do not be afraid," with my grace ***nothing is impossible!*** Let us look to our brothers, the Martyrs of Barbastro!

### 3.

## *THE IDEAL*

*“Men should understand that with adherence to Christ, not only have they nothing to lose, but they have everything to gain, since with Christ man becomes more man.”*

*Homily in Rome, March 15, 1981.<sup>10</sup>*

One of the characteristics of the present time in which we live is the general loss of ideals. Nowadays, many live a dragging, boring, unfulfilling life, without knowing why their lives have no savor.

What is an ideal? It is something that is *great, superior, worthy and valuable*.

1. An ideal is something **great** that is capable of filling a life. It is never a small, selfish, trivial pastime or *hobby*. It is something worthwhile, great in quality (not in quantity). The formation of an authentic Christian family, where the love of Christ reigns, and the spouses are mutually faithful, generous in transmitting life, while educating their children according to the school of Christ, is an ideal because it is great and worthwhile.

In August of 1995, journalist Graciela Römer,<sup>11</sup> asked 1,165 university students between 18 and 25 years of age, about their commitments regarding marriage with the following results:

- 10% plan to live together and then get married;
- 17% plan on getting married right away;
- 33% plan to live together and not get married (to cohabit);
- 40% responded as having no plans yet.

It is frightening to see only 17% want to get married. And the statistic would be graver if they were asked whether they planned on getting married in the Church, as God commands.

The increase of cohabitation and divorce reveals the fear youth have of commitment. Cohabitation has increased because youth see the spread of divorce. In the United States of America, two out of three couples divorce. However, by the evidence gathered, cohabitation does not prevent the rupture of a future marriage.

2. An ideal must be something **superior, excellent, and sublime**, and would include forming an authentic Christian family; being a good man or woman; a worthy professional, a businessman who employs many, or an honest worker. An ideal is evolving towards perfection (it is not an ideal for a man to be lazy or foolish, a thief or a vandal).

For this reason, our Lord teaches: *Be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect*,<sup>12</sup> which is to say, *be a saint*. As Leon Bloy would say, “there is only one error in life: not to be saints.” There is no ideal more excellent than to desire to be a saint, an imitator of Jesus Christ.

3. Striving toward an ideal *dignifies* the human being. It is a *prototype, model or exemplar of perfection* towards which all the strength of our soul must tend, without letting itself be diminished or be frightened by the difficulties that will certainly appear. Truth, goodness and virtue are the hallmarks of an ideal. To be a drug addict, an alcoholic, impure or a terrorist is not an ideal—it is to follow the “ideals” of the devil. The authentic ideals serve others and give joy, happiness, profound convictions, and security. They are for the edification of all and are harmful to no one.

4. Ideals are extremely **valuable**. The best definition I know is: “The ideal is that for which we live and that for which we are ready to die if it were necessary.” One only lives or is willing to die for something **valuable**.

And, who unites in himself these characteristics of being *great, superior, worthy and valuable*? Who unites them better than Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the summit of the highest and most sublime ideals that have ever been imagined by humanity, even when adding all the healthy ideals of all men from all time. He infinitely exceeds them.

Jesus is the great and insurmountable ideal towards whom we must tend with all our strength if we do not want to waste our time and err in the path of life and eternity. We must work for Christ to reign in our intellect by truth, in our will by goodness, in our sensibility by beauty, and in our nature by grace. He must reign in us individually, and in our families, schools, labor unions, universities and hospitals; across all political, economic and social spectrums, on national and international levels. Ninety percent of youth polled do not participate in politics, and this is not good for a nation. Lack of participation by youth can be explained by the corruption in politicians: 78% of youth reject corruption and 38% are not interested in politics because of rampant corruption in politics. The great endeavor is to form virtuous leaders, lay leaders, good men and women to take responsibility in the public arena. If we fail to do this, we pave the way for ongoing corruption, allowing delinquents to triumph. Youth must become passionate about great things and great causes and free themselves from the juvenile anesthesia provoked by the poor examples of their elders. “*The blood of the youth has become cold.*” Unfortunately, this may be true in many cases. Nevertheless, there are youth of clear purpose and ardent hearts who consecrate themselves to Jesus Christ and follow His commandments in virginity and the sacredness of marriage.

With all the strength of my voice and my wish to reach youth worldwide, I invite all youth to realize that there is no greater ideal than Jesus Christ who never fails and does not allow Himself to be outdone in generosity by anyone.

## CHAPTER 5

### *Deepening the Faith*

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***“There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved”  
(Acts 4:1)***

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*“My dear young people: only Jesus knows what is in your hearts and your deepest desires. Only He, who has loved you to the end (cf. Jn 13:1), can fulfill your aspirations. His are words of eternal life, words that give meaning to life. No one apart from Christ can give you true happiness.”*

*Message for the 18<sup>th</sup> World Youth Day, July 25, 2002.*

# 1.

## “AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US” (JN 1:14)

*“In the mystery of the Incarnation, the Son of God becomes visible in person: ‘When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman’ (Gal 4:4). God became man in Jesus Christ, who thus becomes ‘the central point of reference for an understanding of the enigma of human existence, the created world and God himself.’”*

*Letter to Artists, 5,  
April 4, 1999.*

In the Great Jubilee celebrating two thousand years of the Incarnation of the Word, the Church is remembering one of the central mysteries of our faith: the mystery of Jesus Christ.

There is nothing in the world greater than Jesus Christ. This is why I believe that the great experience all the young people of every time must have, and in particular the youth of the third millennium, is the experience of Jesus Christ. This experience is very personal, but because I am speaking to many people instead of one-on-one this will be somewhat impersonal.

The encounter with Jesus Christ is personal between Him and each person in the intimacy of the conscience and in the hidden places of the heart and the soul. No two encounters with Christ are alike. The encounter of each soul with Jesus has singular characteristics because we are people; we are not numbers or robots.

My encounter with Jesus Christ is unique. No one can take my place; I am the one who has to make the effort so that the encounter may be real, fruitful and unforgettable; an encounter that truly marks me for my whole life.

There are particular points that must be kept in mind in order for this encounter to be authentic.

### ***1. To unite yourself to His Person***

When we “know” someone, we know his exterior, his face, his countenance and his body. We don’t see his soul or “his person.” However, the most important thing is “his

person.” We get to know what this soul, or what this person is like from what he does, what he says, and what his virtues are. Only then can we say that we really know him. It happens in a similar way with Jesus Christ.

Lamentably, the knowledge people often have of Jesus Christ is superficial, from the outside, merely a shell or a skin. We think that we know Jesus Christ because when we were little we learned to recognize Him when we see a crucifix, but if we have not yet arrived at His soul, at His heart, “His person,” we don’t really know Him.

To know Christ means that we know that He is the Son of God made man and that He is the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. Therefore, to unite myself to His Person means to unite myself to the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity. To accomplish this I must be convinced of what Jesus did, His life and mission in this world, the chosen ones of His heart and, what He taught us.

In human acquaintance, when I know a person deeply, in mutuality, this person also knows me, because I have made the effort to know him. Similarly, when I know Jesus Christ, I become aware that He knows me deeply, in the deepest part of my consciousness. There is no one else who knows me as well as He does because He is more interior to me than I am to myself. And when this knowledge comes, it is necessarily followed by love: love Him, and love Him as only God can be loved, love Him; with an unrestrained heart, with all the strength of the soul and heart, and with all the strength of the mind. Love Him with an affective love, which means with acts of love from my will by which I love Him, I seek His love and I let myself fall in love with Him, and with an effective love, which means doing what He wants. And there I discover that not only does He know me intimately, He loves me intensely.

At the opening in Rome of the Jubilee of the Youth in the year 2000, the Pope said to the youth: “Don’t ever think then that you are unknown to him, as if you were just a number in an anonymous crowd. Each one of you is precious to Christ, He knows you personally, He loves you tenderly, even when you are not aware of it.”<sup>198</sup>

Saint Catherine of Ricci said, “He exhausts Himself in giving us His grace.”<sup>199</sup> In the case of our Lord we are in an order that is not merely the natural order, (His body...) but also supernatural (His divine nature, His divine person...); the knowledge we should have of Him is a supernatural knowledge by faith, hope and love. We must always ask for the grace to grow in faith and nourish our faith, and we must always ask, as one man asked in the Gospel: *I believe, Lord; help my unbelief!*<sup>200</sup>

The Pope, speaking to thousands of young people in Tor Vergata, outside of Rome, placed this question: “In the year 2000, is it difficult to believe?” And he answered: “Yes, it is difficult, we must not hide it.” There are so many impious attacks against the faith coming from the media that the Catholic faith is becoming ever more difficult to live. And so we must cultivate a faith that is alive, valiant and effective. Developing a fearless faith, a faith that can bring us, as it has brought many of our brothers over this past century, to give our very lives for our Lord, being martyrs and suffering a bloody martyrdom. The faith that our Lord teaches is a faith that is defined by various characteristics:

**a. Trust:** When one authentically believes, he can say with the apostle Saint Paul: *I can do all things in him who strengthens me,*<sup>201</sup> or *I know whom I have believed.*<sup>202</sup> Faith that is merely intellectual is not enough. We need faith that gives us life, in spite of the difficulties we must endure. We must always trust in Him, because we know in Whom we put our trust no matter how difficult the times in which we live are, or how difficult fidelity to Jesus Christ is. If we truly believe in Him, we must not be afraid: He has said in several places in the Gospel: *Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.*<sup>203</sup>

**b. Hope:** Which is the certainty that, if we do what we have to do, we will reach our reward. Hope is what must move us to act virtuously, so as to reach the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**c. Conviction:** As Luigi Orione said, that only charity will save the world. And so *the love of Christ urges us on.*<sup>204</sup>

We must live charity as it was lived by Saint Alberto Hurtado, who sought out the poor, the needy, and the elderly. He opened the *Hogar de Cristo* (the Home of Christ), which is still in operation today, and is a monument to Christian charity.

## ***2. Having His Spirit***

Exterior union or fulfillment of certain rites or works is not enough; we must also have the spirit of Christ. There are few words in the Sacred Scripture as serious as those of Saint Paul in his letter to the Romans: *Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*<sup>205</sup> I can come from a good Catholic family, I can be in a very Christian environment, from a truly Christian society, I can have received all of the sacraments just for the sake of receiving them, I can know the Gospel by heart, or even the whole Bible, but if I do not have the spirit of Christ, I am not of Christ. It is necessary to have His spirit, and so the apostle insists *be filled with the Holy Spirit.*<sup>206</sup>

And how do I know if I have the spirit of Christ? I know if I have the spirit of Christ in as far as the fruits of the Spirit can be seen in me.

And what are the fruits of the spirit?

Saint Paul tells us in the letter to the Galatians: *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*<sup>207</sup> This spirit is the very kingdom of God, as the Apostle also says in the letter to the Romans: *For the kingdom of God is...righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*<sup>208</sup> Those who are moved by the Holy Spirit are sons of God.

## ***3. Assimilate His doctrine***

The Word was made flesh. As the Word was made flesh in Jesus Christ, the Word was also seen in the letters of the Gospels, because He wanted to leave us written documents. These written documents are transmitted to us by the Apostles and the Church and, through them the truth about Jesus Christ is made known to us.

This truth obligates us to know Him and to defend His doctrines. John Paul I said:

“Today, only the faith that is defended survives.”<sup>209</sup> One night in Tor Vergata, John Paul II remembered this statement. He wanted to give the youth a present, so that they would be able to be Christians of the Third Millennium: the Gospel. He said to them: “The word which it contains is the word of Jesus. If you listen to it in silence, in prayer, seeking help in understanding what it means for your life from the wise counsel of your priests and teachers, then you will meet Christ and you will follow him, spending your lives day by day for him!”<sup>210</sup>

To assimilate the doctrine of Jesus Christ is to be able to understand what the heart of the Gospel is, that is, what the Beatitudes are. To understand the heart of the Gospel is to understand that which is diametrically opposed to what the world wants. For example:

-The world desires riches; Jesus says: *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*<sup>211</sup>

-The world seeks vengeance; Jesus says: *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*<sup>212</sup>

-The world is hungry and thirsty for material things; Jesus Christ says: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*<sup>213</sup>

-The world does not forgive; Jesus says: *Blessed are the merciful.*<sup>214</sup>

-The world lives in excess, in idolatry of the flesh and of sex; Jesus says: *Blessed are the pure in heart.*<sup>215</sup>

-The world believes that it will resolve conflicts with wars, battles and struggles; Jesus says: *Blessed are the peacemakers.*<sup>216</sup>

-The world is interested only in comfort and good times—what do others matter to me? Jesus says: *Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.*<sup>217</sup>

Christ is the only one who has *the words of eternal life.*<sup>218</sup>

I am getting up there in years and I have heard many lies! I hear them on the radio, television, in the newspapers and books, in conversations and election promises. I don't know how many elections I've lived through in my country, but they are lying to you! Jesus Christ does not lie. He is the only one who does not lie and He is the only one who has the words of eternal life: *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*<sup>219</sup>

Styles, customs and fashions change. We might get all our nutrition from pills, everything could be made out of plastic...we might know the things that are to come...but Jesus Christ will never change. His Word will not change. *I the Lord do not change.*<sup>220</sup>

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*<sup>221</sup> That is why He said: *I am the Truth.*<sup>222</sup>

We must discover the sublimity and beauty of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Jesus Christ is so extraordinary that still today, more than two thousand years after He taught it, it is extremely current. It is the only truly new doctrine because it is the

most perfect. The sublimity of the doctrine comes from several factors that reveal its extraordinary excellence.

**a. Its integrity:** The doctrine of Christ gives complete teaching about God, humanity and the world. It solves the problems that have most tortured humanity throughout the ages and in our current times: What is the origin of the world, of man, of evil? How do we fight against evil? How is there life after death in this world? What is man's end?

**b. Its holiness:** The doctrine provides norms that perfectly regulate the life of men. With respect to God, it gives norms of Christian worship, which is most perfect, the worship that the Incarnate Son of God Himself gives to the Father *in spirit and in truth*.<sup>223</sup> Through its teachings, we are taught to respect one another and love our enemies; to love sinners and the poor, i.e., the great signs of Christian love. We learn to respect ourselves as sons of God, and, as said by Saint Peter, to be by Baptism *participants of the divine nature*.<sup>224</sup> His doctrine gives us an effective means for fulfilling these norms through the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in His life and by grace that comes to us through the sacraments worthily received.

**c. By the perfect reward that it gives us in this life:** Peace of conscience and joy of the soul, even in the midst of crosses, constitute the greatest happiness to be had in this valley of tears.

**d. The harmonious unity of all the dogmas among themselves:** The unity of the Most Holy Trinity with the Incarnation of the Word; the mystery of Jesus Christ with the mystery of the Blessed Virgin; the mystery of the Church in the mystery of Christ; and harmony between faith and reason, and between the mysteries and the precepts of natural law.

**e. It is most fitting, because it accommodates to all people, of every kind and condition, because it is profound and simple.** The wise man, if he is truly wise, is as struck with admiration for this doctrine as an illiterate peasant, including men from every nation and region, across all time and in every place.

Many who should reach sanctity do not because their nations are apostates of Jesus Christ. They seek false gods: the state, money, sex, and they fall into idolatry.

Assimilation of Christ's doctrine is to know the entire Catholic faith which is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We should know it much better than we do. To assimilate His doctrine is also to be well-informed and to be able to refute modern attacks launched by New Age and other sects.

## ***4. Follow His commandments***

*They who have my commandments and keep them, he it is who loves me*<sup>225</sup>; *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*<sup>226</sup>

Today the commandments of the law of God are not followed. Years ago, at the Cathedral of San Rafael on the occasion of the patronal feast, Bishop León Kruk, who

presided at the Mass said at one point in his sermon: “Argentina’s problems would be solved with two things.” And I scratched my head and said to myself: “If the problems are so complicated, how are they going to be solved with just two things?” And he said: “With following two commandments: do not lie and do not steal.” And he was right. Imagine what would happen if the politicians were to stop lying and “scraping a little off the top.” That moment made me think of Alexander Solzhenitsyn who suffered in a Siberian concentration camp during the peak era of the soviet regime’s power. He denounced the regime, saying in one of his books: “What can we do when faced with an empire of evil, a political empire dominated by lies? We must commit ourselves to one thing: to not consent to lies.” Someone might respond: “What about the missiles and the atomic submarines they have?” But he was right. Once the people began to fight little by little against the lies, the regime fell like a castle made of sand.

When people no longer follow the commandments, they want to change them. Mr. Ted Turner, who owns CNN, has a lot of money and thinks he owns the world. He stated that we have to get rid of one of the commandments: “Do not commit adultery.” With that statement he defined himself, since what he wants is to commit adultery. Another example occurred at the world summit meeting in Río de Janeiro from March 13-21, 1997, in which the participants wrote the so-called “Letter from the World,” a horribly worldly letter in which they said the following: “We must fashion a new ethic for a new world, a new universal code of behavior: replace the ten commandments with the eighteen principles in this letter.” Look! Do they believe they are Moses? And even Moses didn’t invent the Ten Commandments, he received them from God. And what do they propose as the new commandments for the new world? One of the proposals is to insure the reproductive health of women and girls; another is to recognize the right of homosexuals and lesbians to legally marry and adopt children; another is the right to male and female sterilization, birth control and abortion, and post-coital birth contraception.<sup>227</sup>

How proud human beings are! This is the new ethic, the new rubbish that they want to impose: globalization, the new world order! They want to impose anti-commandments of the law of God! This also happens in our country, for example in the laws about reproductive health, the laws that forget that charity is the way to perfection or forget that, as Saint John says, *And this is love, that we follow his commandments; this is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you follow love.*<sup>228</sup>

## ***5. Frequent the sacraments***

**Baptism.** I want to emphasize the importance of the sacrament of Baptism and to urge that Baptism be sought for yourself and your children as soon as possible. In a case where there is a possibility of death, everyone has the responsibility and obligation to baptize. All we have to do is to pour a little water over the head of the person being baptized and say the words: “So and so, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” This baptized person will go to heaven.

**Confession.** There might be among those who read these pages some people who have not been to Confession for many years, either because they never made their First

Communion, or they did without going to Confession. Perhaps they confessed badly and since then have some scruple and don't want to try again. Maybe they had a negative experience and wish to avoid Confession. But it is Christ who said to us: *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.*<sup>229</sup> These are His words, and we have to receive the grace of forgiveness through the sacrament of Confession, Penance, or Reconciliation. Who the minister of the sacrament is doesn't matter; what matters is when the priest says: "I absolve you." It is Jesus Christ who forgives sins and gives us a clean slate.

We should frequent the sacraments. Saint John Bosco said: "Youth are formed by good Confessions and good Communions."

**Communion.** How can we not receive Jesus, who has desired to remain present under the appearances of bread and wine in order to be food for our souls? "Take and eat," "Take and drink." Take! Eat! Drink! He wanted to be our spiritual food and drink to give strength to our souls. If we fall into sin or if it is often very difficult for us to go against the grain, we have to draw near to the fount of grace that is Christ and worthily receive Communion. That is where we will receive the strength to do what we need to do, "even if they come slashin' at my throat,"<sup>230</sup> like Saint Maria Goretti or Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati. We must receive Communion and get into the habit of going to Mass every Sunday. There is a very beautiful Apostolic Letter from Pope John Paul II about the day of the Lord (*Dies Domini*), in which he reminds us of the Sunday obligation. When a person receives Jesus he becomes like Jesus and receives His light, His strength, and the consolation that he gives us. He gives us all this together with the increase of sanctifying grace, the proper graces of the Eucharist. *My flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.*<sup>231</sup>

## 6. *Imitate His example*

*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.*<sup>232</sup>

We must learn to love and serve as He does because that is what being a Christian means. Christians are asked to exemplify patience, meekness, humility and self-sacrifice as they willingly carry the cross of daily life. This means that following Christ involves enduring our defects and those of others, fulfilling the duties of state and striving to be just in our dealings. As Saint Paul the Apostle says: *For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.*<sup>233</sup>

In Tor Vergata, the Holy Father challenged the youth to embrace a martyrdom of living in a countercultural way. He beautifully added: "It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded

down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.”<sup>234</sup>

## ***7. Be in communion with His Church***

Jesus said: *You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*<sup>235</sup> If we are with Peter, with the Pope, we need not fear, even before all the combined powers of hell, because *the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*<sup>236</sup> Jesus said to the Apostles and to his priests: *Whoever listens to you listens to me.*<sup>237</sup>

The experience of the Church brings us to the knowledge of how this communion is possible: it is possible through Jesus Christ, because He gives us His Spirit and teaches us to be united with one other. He teaches us that we must be concerned about the things of the soul, the important things that do not fade and do not die.

To experience the Church is also to experience the evil that exists among the people of the Church. Jesus Himself said this: *there will be wheat and chaff.*<sup>238</sup> If we were all wheat, the whole world would be Catholic. But because we have free will, there is wheat and chaff, saints and sinners. If one were to see that all Christians were saints, he would be forced to follow Jesus Christ. For example, we see that Judas was included in the Apostolic College. Wheat and chaff! It will be this way until the end of the world, and whoever thinks otherwise is utopian. There is no Church where only the good exists. The Church is holy because its source, means, and end are holy. But the Church has sinners in her womb; we are these sinners. That is why we always pray the act of contrition at the beginning of every Mass. That is why we have to go to Confession often. We are not angels; we were born in original sin and we commit many sins every day, *the righteous fall seven times a day.*<sup>239</sup> But, seeing evil in the Church, which can be one of the greatest temptations a Christian can have, must bring us to greater faith in Jesus, because He already prophesized this evil, two thousand years ago when He said: *“There will be wheat and chaff.”*

And what is it that we must do? We must work so that we can be wheat. A reporter once said to me in a television interview: “I would be a Catholic, or, people say they would be Catholic, but in the end, those who go to Mass are bad, they are unjust, they don’t pay what they owe, don’t do what they should, etc.” I told him: “Look, among the twelve apostles there was one who betrayed Jesus Christ, which represents 8.33%. Statistically speaking, we are more than a billion Catholics in the world today and that means there will be at least 83 million false Catholics. You work so that you are not one of them.” Then he said: “Okay, let’s go to a commercial break...”

## ***8. Recognize Him in our brothers***

In order to look for Christ in our brothers we think first of the poor. We look at the homes and the care given to handicapped children. They are cared for because they are Jesus Himself. *I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.*<sup>240</sup> This is a great work! But we also must seek Christ in our husbands and wives, our children, students and all who surround us in our daily lives. *I was hungry*

*and you gave me to eat.* Look at the religious who labor in works of mercy or who care for the poor...do you see the love they show? They understand that they are attending to and cooking for Jesus. *I was hungry and you gave me to eat.* How can we care for so many, or give food to so many? When there are young people who have the interior spiritual disposition to do the best they can for the good of their brothers, we can nurture a great many people. This is the commandment that we have: *Those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.*<sup>241</sup>

## **9. See Him in His saints**

One of the splendid things about the Church is the saints. There is no one who is like Jesus, but a saint reveals one aspect of the face of Jesus. For example, we see poverty in Saint Francis of Assisi, confidence in the providence of God in Saint Luigi Orione, love of children and youth in Saint John Bosco, love of sacred doctrine in Saint Thomas Aquinas, and apostolic zeal in Saint Paul, who was willing to make himself an anathema in order to save his brothers.<sup>242</sup> There are the saints of this century, the martyrs, who were willing to give their lives before giving in. Thousands and thousands of them have poured out their blood giving testimony of Jesus Christ. How many have died crying out “Viva Cristo Rey!”<sup>243</sup>

Saints reveal to us the strength of Jesus Christ who was the first martyr and the prototype of all martyrs. The Apocalypse says, the saints are *true words of God.*<sup>244</sup> In revealing God to us, the saints are a concrete example of what we should be. For example, I had the privilege to meet Mother Teresa of Calcutta and to speak with her...she was an extraordinary little woman who, walked with energy in spite of her eighty years. She was worried because there were great floods and dead bodies were floating around in Bangladesh, and she, who was in Rome, had to do something. The next day she was meeting with Saddam Hussein because she was taking her Missionaries of Charity to Baghdad to care for the poor in an Islamic country, while she herself was really poor. Or consider John Paul II who lived an extraordinary life, working sixteen hours a day. When he arrived in Tor Vergata outside of Rome for the youth jubilee in 2000, there were millions of young people wanting to see him. He drove around for a long time in a jeep so that the youth could see him close up, even though there were huge screens. Then he walked with his cane, to the place where he would speak, and there he greeted everyone. Zenit says that he cried to see so many young people cheering. In the end he responded with these words: “Rome will never forget this sound.” It is the biggest pilgrimage that has ever happened in all the history of the Eternal City.

So, like the saints, today everyone must learn to say: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Like the Blessed Virgin: *Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*<sup>245</sup> “Lord, I want to listen to your word, I want to be faithful to your word, and to do what you want, even if it is something difficult, something very difficult.”

## **10. Love His Mother**

Whoever loves the Most Holy Virgin can be sure that she will contrive to bring him to

Jesus Christ. I also had the joy of meeting ninety-three year old, Sister Lucia, one of the visionaries of Fatima, on the occasion of the beatification of her cousins, Jacinta and Francisco. She was lucid, she radiated great happiness! To think that she had played with those cousins that the Pope beatified on that day! She is a holy woman, extremely devoted to the Blessed Virgin. The Blessed Virgin, our mother, appeared to her and gave her an urgent message for the people of this century: “Pray the rosary every day,” “offer sacrifices for sinners.” And in the third part of the secret, recently revealed, the angel says firmly: “Penance, penance, penance.”

Do we want to know Jesus? Let us love His mother. Let us listen to her, obey her requests and take her advice. Let us pray the rosary every day, do penance, and offer sacrifices for the salvation of sinners.

When he was at Fatima on that enormous field in front of a million people, the Pope remembered what the Virgin said: “Today, many souls are condemned because there is no one to pray for them.”



May no one, due to fear or for any other reason, fail to receive Jesus in Holy Communion and go to Confession frequently. May no one fail to aim at holy things or begin to better know the only Lord who merits being served, Jesus Christ!

“It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.”<sup>246</sup>

## 2.

# WHO ARE YOU LORD? (ACTS 9:5)

*“The Redeemer of the world! The good has its source in Wisdom and Love.  
In Jesus Christ the visible world which God created for man recovers again its original  
link with the divine source of Wisdom and Love.  
Indeed, “God so loved the world that he gave his only  
Son.”*

Redemptor Hominis,  
March 4, 1979.

“Who are You, Lord?”

*I am the Way and the Truth and the Life.*<sup>247</sup>

### **1. Who are you Lord?**

-I am the Way...

Why Lord, are You the Way?

*-Because... I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the  
sheep.*<sup>248</sup>

*-I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.*<sup>249</sup>

*-I am the gate for the sheep<sup>250</sup> ... whoever enters through me will be saved.*<sup>251</sup>

*-The Word became flesh,<sup>252</sup> I am the Son of God,<sup>253</sup> do you say of him..., ‘You are  
blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’?<sup>254</sup> ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the  
Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am,’<sup>255</sup> the Messiah, the Christ who was to come. I who speak  
to you am he,<sup>256</sup> It is you who say that I am king.<sup>257</sup>*

*-With Jesus there is no room for fear because He gives strength and confidence: Take  
heart, it is I; have no fear<sup>258</sup>; It is I; do not be afraid.*<sup>259</sup>

Youth of the third millennium, are you willing to walk along this Path with energy and  
courage, this Path that is Jesus Christ Himself, who is the same yesterday, today and  
forever?

### **2. Who are You, Lord?**

-I am the Truth

Why Lord, are You the Truth?

*-You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right for so I am.*<sup>260</sup>

*-Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully,*<sup>261</sup> the disciples of the Pharisees say to him.

*-Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart.*<sup>262</sup>

*-Again Jesus spoke to them, saying 'I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'*<sup>263</sup> *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*<sup>264</sup>

*-The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.*<sup>265</sup>

*-Saint Peter says to him: You have the words of eternal life.*<sup>266</sup>

*-What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me.*<sup>267</sup>

*-For this was I born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.*<sup>268</sup>

Youth of the third millennium, are you willing to undertake all of the sacrifices required to let the truth of Jesus Christ, who is full of grace and truth, reign in your hearts and your souls?

### **3. Who are You, Lord?**

-“I am...the Life”

Why Lord, are you Life?

*-Because I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*<sup>269</sup> He is the Eucharist. The Mass.

*-I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*<sup>270</sup>

*-I am the resurrection and the life.*<sup>271</sup> *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself,*<sup>272</sup> revealing Himself alive with the wounds from the nails.

*-I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser*<sup>273</sup>; *I am the vine, you are the branches.*<sup>274</sup>

*-He is the Savior. Whom do you seek?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I am He.'*<sup>275</sup> The angel had commanded Saint Joseph, *you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*<sup>276</sup>

*-And so, when Saint Paul asks Him: Who are you Lord? The Lord responds, I am Jesus...I am Jesus of Nazareth.*<sup>277</sup>

*-I am the first and the last, and the living one.*<sup>278</sup>

*-I am he who searches mind and heart,*<sup>279</sup> He who knows every man and woman to the depths of their conscience and their soul.

*-I am the root and the offspring of David.*<sup>280</sup>

-And the Apostles confess: *We have believed and come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.*<sup>281</sup>

Youth of the third millennium, John Paul II cried: “Dear young people, may it be your holy ambition to be holy, as He is holy...do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium!”<sup>282</sup> To do this, always be faithful to the *Way*, the *Truth* and the *Life*.

Our Lady Patroness of Youth will always protect you. In her womb *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*<sup>283</sup> and together with Him, the Head, she spiritually gave birth to us, His Body, the members of that Head, forming only one mystical Body, the Head and the members.

### 3.

## *YOU HAVE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE (JN 6:68)*

*“The Lord is calling you to choose between these two voices competing for your souls.*

*That decision is the substance and challenge of World Youth Day.*

*Why have you come together from all parts of the world?*

*To say in your hearts:*

*‘Lord, to whom shall we go’*

*Who has the words of eternal life?*

*‘You have the words of eternal life’ (Jn 6:68).*

*Jesus - the intimate friend of every young person - has  
the words of life.”*

*Toronto, July 28, 2002.*

In Capernaum, Our Lord teaches for the first time the reality of the Eucharist that He was going to institute on Holy Thursday by telling His disciples clearly that His flesh was going to be food and His blood was going to be drink, and that this flesh and this blood, would be *for the life of the world*.<sup>284</sup> Upon hearing this, many of them said: *This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?*<sup>285</sup>

And then our Lord, who knew their thoughts, gave them the key to interpreting the sermon of the bread of life. The key is not in a materialistic interpretation of the words, but in a supernatural interpretation that flows from faith. He told them: *It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail*.<sup>286</sup> Those present who were scandalized understood in a carnal way what should be understood in a supernatural way: *The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life. But there are some of you that do not believe*.<sup>287</sup> There will always be people in every community who are missing the essentials: living with fearless faith in our Lord. St. John makes a rather important annotation: *For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that would betray him*.<sup>288</sup> These two acts are related. He who does not believe is going to hand over Jesus because he has already handed Him over in his heart. By not believing, not having faith, he has already betrayed Him and for that reason he will hand Him over.

This crucial moment of our Lord’s preaching caused many of His disciples to fall away. It is this essential mystery, the Eucharist, that makes the Church what it is.

Jesus, like us, has experienced apostolic and pastoral failures. We often come up against hardness of heart, people who refuse to believe in spite of our best efforts. Or the hardness of consciences that don’t want to take a step toward conversion and keep

affirming themselves in their own judgment, even going against the words of Jesus Christ. And that is when Jesus asks the Apostles a question, a question that Peter will answer.

*Jesus said to the Twelve, 'Will you also go away?'*<sup>289</sup> Jesus does not take freedom away from anyone. He didn't take it away from the Apostles, nor does He take it from us. He doesn't take away our freedom when we decide on a vocation, entering the novitiate or the seminary, or becoming a priest. Jesus never takes away our freedom. He desires and hopes for our answer to be given in freedom, because He wants it to be a conscious, responsible answer that is made in love. If there is no freedom, there is no love.

And so Simon Peter responded: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.*<sup>290</sup> These are very beautiful words that express in a concise way the reality of Jesus, which must be the center of our faith.

Saint Peter addresses Christ personally, using “*You*,” a personal pronoun, as Christ addressed him in a personal way. Peter addresses Christ as a person, not as a theory, scientific explanation, or belief. And that “*You*” in that moment on the lips of Peter, has a particular resonance because a moment before that he had said to Him, *Lord, to whom shall we go?...* That “*You*” is the Lord! In Greek it is “*Kyrios*,” a word the Septuagint had used when the Bible was translated from Hebrew to Greek, which was the *lingua franca* a century before the coming of our Lord. Every time the sacred tetragram, *Yahweh* appeared in the Hebrew, the word “*Kyrios*” was used. *Kyrios* is the Lord. *Kyrios* is *Yahweh*. *Kyrios* is God. A few moments later, Saint Peter reinforces this when he says: *We have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.* The Holy One, “*Kadosh*” is God Himself. What is it that Jesus Christ has as something characteristic and substantial? He has *words of eternal life*. These words are not accidental, foreign or occasional, but constitutive, essential and characteristic. That is to say, these words give life and are life. And they don't give just any life, they give eternal life! These words do not pass away, fade or change, but endure and will continue to endure: *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*<sup>291</sup> Today we are overwhelmed by an avalanche of a culture of death, for example with New Age ideas which are even manifested in some of the members of the Catholic Church. And this gives the impression that we are passé or out of style. But it is they who are out of style! Because this will pass as many things have passed. However, the words of Christ will not pass away, because they are *words of eternal life*. These are not weak words, like the words of men, who say one thing today and another thing tomorrow, who play with words and juggle ideas. It is as if Peter had said: “*You have words that will not pass away.*”

“*You have words of eternal life*” is like saying: “You **alone** (“alone” in the sense that no word of Jesus ever stops being a word of eternal life, even when He teaches about the existence of hell and eternal condemnation. Also when He speaks of the primacy of charity, and when He speaks of the final judgment) are the one who has the words of eternal life.” ...**All of the words of Jesus are words of eternal life.** We must incarnate all of them in ourselves, because no word of Jesus is passing, changeable, trivial or superfluous.

And it is also to say: “You are the **only one** who has words of eternal life.” No other man has them, because no other is God, and no other has taught doctrine as admirable as the doctrine the Lord taught, or done miracles or prophecies to show the truth of what He taught, as He did. He is the only one. All the great men in the history of the world and of our country, not even all of them put together, have words of eternal life. Jesus is the only one!

In addition, we can and must understand that, “*You always have words of eternal life.*” These words continue to be heard throughout the centuries with the same force they had the first time they were spoken, and they will continue to be heard with the same force, because they do not die, they don’t lose strength; they do not need anyone to empower them...because they are words of eternal life!

And this must be our deepest conviction. Otherwise, we deserve the reproach that the great theologian Melchor Cano gave when he complained about certain bishops, priests, religious and laymen, who were responsible in their times, as others are now, for relaxing the identity of Christian life, seeking in other places what can only be found in Jesus. He said that these men do not believe, and therefore, ultimately, they are traitors: “One of the things that makes me unhappy with these fathers is that instead of turning gentlemen into lions, they make chickens out of them...” Those who, by the position they occupy, cause people to lower their guard, depositing them into the swamp of progressivism, they say that everything is alright, nothing’s wrong; they make compromises, and destroy the only truth that saves, which is the truth of Jesus Christ.

This is the world in which we find ourselves today. A woman once told me that she heard someone asking a favor from Judas Iscariot on the radio. For those who ask for graces from the tooth fairy or from singers, “saint ABBA” or “saint Madonna” are confused and ignorant. Those who do not have faith, and hand Jesus over and betray Him, take advantage of the credulity of many people for commercial reasons.

Let us make it our goal to put into practice what we say in our Constitutions: “We want to be founded in Jesus Christ who *has come in the flesh*,<sup>292</sup> and only in Christ, and always in Christ. We want Christ to be in everything and in all, and all of Christ.”<sup>293</sup>

The Most Holy Virgin understood more than anyone that the words of her Only Son were words of eternal life and will always be so for all generations of men. Only Christ had them and taught them to His disciples who participated in them. She understood that His words would not be subjected to the inconstancy of the times and fashions, that they would never grow old and would never be surpassed. Many would give their lives for them, that they would never deceive anyone. May she who kept these words in her heart remind us of this.

## 4.

# *THE ACTUALITY OF THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD*<sup>294</sup>

*“In Christ, religion is no longer a 'blind search for God' (cf. Acts 17:27) but the response of faith to God who reveals himself. It is a response in which man speaks to God as his Creator and Father, a response made possible by that one Man who is also the consubstantial Word in whom God speaks to each individual person and by whom each individual person is enabled to respond to God. What is more, in this Man all creation responds to God.”*

Tertio Millenio Adveniente, 6,

November 10, 1994.

In this time of “militant atheists,” archaic laity, moral eclipses, or hidden or public apostasies and anti-Christian media, it is interesting that the most current and present reality is the fact that the Word become flesh.

This is the case for several reasons:

1. There is no one more actual than God, who is the creator of everything that exists, preserves creation in existence and even governs it with His providence. He is the “*Ipsum esse subsistens*,” the subsistent Act, the infinite being who *became man*.

2. The Word of God made flesh means that the divine nature and the human nature are united in the one divine Person of Jesus Christ. This is the great mystery of the hypostatic union—union in the Person—that will never end. Therefore, it is always actual. This unending union of both natures in the divine Person was defined as a dogma of faith, because Marcellus of Ancyra (d. circa 374) who was condemned as a heretic in the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381),<sup>295</sup> was against it. In response to his false doctrine, the phrase: “of his kingdom there will be no end”<sup>296</sup> was added to the symbol of the faith. Yes, the union between the two natures in Jesus Christ will remain for eternity; the Incarnation of the Word is absolutely actual.

3. The actuality of the mystery of the Incarnation can also be seen by the spread, among others, of Hegelian ideas in philosophy and Marxist ideas in sociology, since they flow from a caricature of the Incarnation.

First of all, we should take note of the spread of Hegel’s doctrines. Massimo Borghesi’s<sup>297</sup> testimony is enough, which summarizes Hegel’s book in an article: “Hegel, the master of all—even of Catholics.”<sup>298</sup> Take note of this concise affirmation: master of all

—even of Catholics. It is not necessary here to dwell on the diffusion of Communism.

According to the Catholic doctrine that is more than twenty centuries old, God is infinitely transcendent—He is even closer to us than we are to ourselves. He creates man and the world freely. There are two immanent divine processions (“immanent” means that they “remain in Him”): the generation of the Word and the spiration of the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, the Word, without ceasing to be God, assumes the human nature in unity of Person, in the womb of the Virgin Mary. It is the greatest communication and communion between God and creatures. What an august, impenetrable and marvelous mystery!

In his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul describes the Incarnation as the “negation of God”; [he] *emptied himself*,<sup>299</sup> which is to say “He made Himself nothing.” The Vulgate “*exinanivit*” and the Greek “*ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν*,” are translated as “He emptied Himself.” A bad understanding of these concepts, which express transcendent realities, causes false readings.<sup>300</sup>

There is a false interpretation of this passage in the Lutheran Reformation, which influenced Hegel and his dialectic, and it rests on the so-called “second moment,” “antithesis,” “negation,” “contradiction,” or above all, “alienation.”

The emptying of the Word *is not ontological*, as if He were to stop being God and begin to be something else. When the Word empties Himself He gives Himself to us as an example of humility, by hiding the glory and power of the divinity.

By losing sight of the *sapiential* vision of the Christian mysteries, Lutheranism only focuses on what they mean *for us*, for *praxis*, and is not concerned with the metaphysical and contemplative aspect of the Incarnate Word, only its dramatic aspect. According to this doctrine, it doesn’t matter that Christ has two natures in one Person, it only matters that He has come to take away our sins and to give us His justice.

From there it is just a small step to confuse the language used, the association and mutual interchange of divine and human properties, attributes, and operations that refer to *only one concrete subject*, Jesus Christ. Thus we say, and it is true, that “God was born in Bethlehem,” that “God died on the cross,” which doesn’t mean that He was born or died in His divinity, but rather that He was born and died according to His humanity. However, that humanity has been assumed by the divine Person of the Word, it is true that God was born and died, as a man.

Luther, on the other hand, interpreted the “*kenosis*,” the emptying, of God, as if at the Incarnation God were to give up the attributes of His divine nature, His immutability, and His infinite power, and to take up creaturely conditions. Centuries later, Lutheran theologians would interpret the Incarnation as if the Word were not to have being outside of His humanity, nor were His humanity to have being outside of the Word. Behind this great error is the error of *Nominalism*, which teaches that being is univocal, not analogical. Nominalists refute the idea that there are two ways to have being (God, who is being by essence and creatures who are being by participation). Instead, they maintain that there is only one way to have being. From this false belief comes the absurd notion that what God

has, creatures do not have, and what creatures have, God does not have.

The Hegelian and Marxist systems are based on alienation. Hegel calls it *Entäusserung*, the substantive form of the phrase *hat sich selbs geeussert*, which is how Luther translated “he emptied himself” from the Vulgate. Therefore, in Hegel the “Word” empties Himself until He becomes part of the Absolute Spirit that encompasses the identity of identity and of non-identity. He rejects the transcendent God in the famous analogy of the master and the slave. The master is the transcendent God and the slave is the consciousness. However, the slave will become master of his master when he manages to absorb the divinity into the immanence of the consciousness. And so, the exaltation of the faith of the Church follows from the *kenosis*, while the conversion of divinity into consciousness follows from the negation of the divinity as transcendence.

So, “the master of all, even of progressive Catholics,” takes the idea of *process or procession* from the Trinity, and the idea of *self-movement or alienation* from the Incarnation and transfers this from theology to a *concept*.

The most dangerous part of all of this is that the dialectic is caused by opposition, contradiction and negation; it is not moved by being, but by nothingness. The great destructive power that these systems have comes from the nothingness that they contain.

The free Protestant inquiry gave birth to savage liberal Capitalism. The misreading of the *kenosis* hymn that Protestantism made gave birth to the Hegelian dialectic, whose right side produced Nazi totalitarianism and whose left side produced Marxist totalitarianism, enslaving entire peoples with terror for as much as seventy years. This goes to show that we reap what we sow. The false interpretation of the *kenosis* also speaks to us of the perennial value of the Incarnation, as the negative of a photograph would.

My dear young people, let us not fall into the false and nefarious dialectics that the globalized world sets before us today, obliging us to side with one position necessarily against another.

Remember that when we were children we knew how to break false dialectics between two good things. When we were asked, “Who do you love more, your mom or your dad?” We would answer, “Both!” And if the things they want to make us choose between are both evil, then without ambiguity we must say that we don’t want either.

Tertullian would compare the scandal of the Incarnation to the scandal of the cross, because the scandal of the cross could not have happened without the scandal of the Incarnation: Which is more unworthy of God, which is more likely to raise a blush of shame, that *God* should be born, or that He should die? That He should bear the flesh, or the cross? Be circumcised, or be crucified? Be cradled, or be confined? Be laid in a manger, or in a tomb?... Spare the whole world’s one only hope, you who are destroying the indispensable dishonor of our faith. Whatsoever is unworthy of God, is of gain to me. I am safe, if I am not ashamed of my Lord... The Son of God was crucified; I am not ashamed because men must needs be ashamed *of it*. And the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd... But how will all this be true in Him, if He were not Himself true—if He really had not in Himself that which might be crucified,

might die, might be buried, and might rise again?... Thus the nature of the two substances displayed Him as man and God,—in one respect born, in the other unborn; in one respect fleshly, in the other spiritual; in one sense weak, in the other exceedingly strong; in one sense dying, in the other living... Wherefore halve Christ with a lie? He was wholly the truth.<sup>301</sup>

Let us be faithful to the true doctrine about the Incarnation of the Word, which has been infallibly taught by the Catholic Church for 2,000 years. And may we know how to be filled with a holy astonishment at the reality of the event that divides the history of the world into a before and an after.

Even the greatest anti-Catholic thinkers can't think except in dependence on the great mysteries of the Catholic faith, even though they seek to deform them.

May the Virgin Mary, who was a ciborium for nine months, a monstrance for 33 years and a luna for 2,000 years for the Word of God Incarnate, make us know Him, love Him and serve Him ever more intensely.

## *THE NEGATION OF THE INCARNATION*

*“The mystery of the Incarnation reveals God’s astonishing love, whose highest personification is the Holy Spirit, since he is the Love of God in person, the Person-Love...the glory of God is revealed in the Incarnation more than in any other work.”*

*Wednesday Catechesis, May 27, 1998.*

The feast of Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of the Lord. In the Eastern Churches it is celebrated on the same day as the Baptism of our Lord in the River Jordan, the Adoration of the Magi and the first miracle of our Lord at the wedding at Cana.

In the liturgical readings of the feast of the Epiphany we remember in a special way what Saint Paul says when he speaks of the revelation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word; and the mystery is that the pagans also fully participate in Him. This is the feast on which we remember the entrance of the gentile peoples, the non-Jewish peoples, into the Church and the kingdom of God.

### ***I***

The negation of the Incarnation of Christ by those who don’t believe is a reality Sacred Scripture warns us about. It was already happening in apostolic times:

*For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist.<sup>302</sup>*

*Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us.<sup>303</sup>*

*Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. Anyone who denies the Son does not have the Father. He who confesses the Son has the Father also.<sup>304</sup>*

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already.<sup>305</sup>*

*Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion*

*comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God proclaiming himself to be God...For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.*<sup>306</sup>

## **II**

The same considerations were made in the era of the Church Fathers. Commenting on the second to last text above, Saint Augustine said: “‘Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, is of God.’ Then is the spirit that is among the heretics, of God, seeing they ‘confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’? Aye, here perchance they lift themselves up against us, and say: You have not the Spirit from God; but we confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:’ but the apostle here has said that those have not the Spirit of God, who confess not ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.’ Ask the Arians: they confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’: ask the Eunomians; they confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’: ask the Macedonians; they confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’: put the question to the Cataphryges; they confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh’: put it to the Novatians; they confess ‘that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.’ Then have all these heresies the Spirit of God? Are they then no false prophets? Is there then no deception there, no seduction there? Assuredly they are antichrists; for ‘they went out from us, but were not of us.’

“What are we to do then? By what do we discern them? You have already heard what was said above, ‘Whosoever denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the same is an antichrist.’ There also we asked, Who denies? because neither do we deny, nor do those deny. And we found that some do in their deeds deny; and we brought testimony from the apostle, who says, *For they confess that they know God, but in their deeds deny him.*<sup>307</sup> Thus then let us now also make the enquiry in the deeds not in the tongue. What is the spirit that is not from God? That ‘which denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.’ And what is the spirit that is from God? That ‘which confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.’ Who is he that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Now, brethren, to the mark! Let us look to the works, not stop at the noise of the tongue. Let us ask *why* Christ came in the flesh, so we get at the persons who deny that He is come in the flesh. If you stop at tongues, why, you shall hear many a heresy confessing that Christ is come in the flesh: but the truth convicts those men. Wherefore came Christ in the flesh? Was He not God? Is it not written of Him, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?*<sup>308</sup> Was it not He that did feed angels, is it not He that does feed angels?...Wherefore then came He in the flesh? Because it behooved us to have the hope of resurrection shown unto us. God He was, and in flesh He came; for God could not die, flesh could die; He came then in the flesh, that He might die for us. In what way did He die for us? *Greater charity than this has no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*<sup>309</sup> Charity therefore brought Him to the flesh. Whoever therefore has not charity denies that Christ is come in the flesh. Here then do you now question all heretics. Did Christ come in the flesh? ‘He did come; this I believe, this I confess.’ Nay, this you deny. ‘How do I deny? You hear that I say it!’ Nay, I convict you of denying it. You say with the

voice, deniest with the heart; sayest in words, deniest in deeds. ‘How,’ do you say, ‘do I deny in deeds?’ Because the end for which Christ came in the flesh, was that He might die for us. He died for us, because therein He taught much charity. ‘Greater charity than this has no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.’ You have not charity, seeing you for your own honor dividest unity. Therefore by this understand ye the spirit that is from God. Give the earthen vessels a tap, put them to the proof, whether haply they be cracked and give a dull sound: see whether they ring full and clear, see whether charity be there. You take yourself away from the unity of the whole earth, you divide the Church by schisms, you rend the Body of Christ. He came in the flesh, to gather in one, you make an outcry to scatter abroad. This then is the Spirit of God, which says that Jesus is come in the flesh, which says, not in tongue but in deeds, which says, not by making a noise but by loving. And that spirit is not of God, which denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; denies, here also, not in tongue but in life; not in words but in deeds. It is manifest therefore by what we may know the brethren. Many within are in a sort within; but none without except he be indeed without.”<sup>310</sup>

Do not think that these teachings are things of the past.

### ***III***

In spite of the great Jubilee celebrated in 2000, in which we solemnly remembered the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, and in spite of the new awareness it brought, and the multitude of people who participated in the celebration, the negation of the incarnation is still a painful and clear reality.

The Holy Father recently taught in a letter to the Dominicans<sup>311</sup>: “From the outset, one of the first tasks assigned to your Order was the proclamation of the truth of Christ in response to the Albigensian heresy, a new form of the recurrent Manichaean heresy with which Christianity has had to contend from the beginning. At its core there lay the denial of the Incarnation, a refusal to accept that *the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth*.<sup>312</sup> To respond to this new form of the old heresy, the Holy Spirit raised up the Order of Preachers, men who would be pre-eminent for their poverty and mobility in the service of the Gospel, who would unceasingly contemplate the truth of the Incarnate Word in prayer and study, and through their preaching and teaching would pass on to others the fruits of that contemplation. *Contemplata aliis tradere*<sup>313</sup>: the motto of the Order became its great call to action, and it remains such to this day...

“It is clear that the ancient afflictions of the human soul and the great untruths never die but lie hidden for a time, to reappear later in other forms. That is why there is always need for a new evangelization of the kind to which the Holy Spirit is now summoning the whole Church.” (A new evangelization is always necessary, first of all, in ourselves. When the priest or the layman ceases to evangelize himself, he begins to become careless which could lead to scandal). “We live in a time marked in its own way by a denial of the Incarnation. For the first time since Christ’s birth two thousand years ago, it is as if he no longer had a place in an ever more secularized world. Not that he is always denied explicitly: indeed many claim to admire Jesus and to value elements of his teaching. Yet

he remains distant: he is not truly known, loved and obeyed, but consigned to a distant past or a distant heaven.

“Ours is an age which denies the Incarnation in a multitude of practical ways, and the consequences of this denial are clear and disturbing.” (The negation of the Incarnation is seen, above all, in the abasement of the human being, which couldn’t be otherwise).

1. “In the first place, the individual’s relationship with God is seen as purely personal and private, so that God is removed from the processes that govern social, political and economic activity.” What this means is that the negation of the Incarnation which ultimately seeks to separate people from God can be seen in many forms, including social, political and economic activity, liberalism, Marxism, technocracy, and laicism. The world that man constructs without God turns against man. When he doesn’t want God to reign, man enslaves himself.

2. “This leads in turn to a greatly diminished sense of human possibility, since it is Christ alone who fully reveals the magnificent possibilities of human life, who truly ‘reveals man to himself.’”<sup>314</sup> When a sense of human possibilities decreases, men and women fall into marginalization, social exclusion, the plague of unemployment, the exploitation of workers, and the accumulation of riches in the hands of a few while the poor grow poorer, increase in number, and have less and less participation in common wealth. Healthy creativity is lost.

3. “When Christ is excluded or denied, our vision of human purpose dwindles; and as we anticipate and aim for less, hope gives way to despair, joy to depression.” Saint Paul teaches that we must not *be submitted to the elements of the world*,<sup>315</sup> which, in the end, is clearly manifested in all known forms of addictions: alcohol, drugs, speeding, money, sex without responsibility, power, internet and television, and irrational violence. Man falls into existential meaninglessness and the loss of the self control of a Christian. Reductionism in human existence enslaves man to things that are inferior to him. This is why humanity in the modern world more or less, thinks the same way and believes what the mass media under the dictatorship of the “givers of meaning” repeats daily.

4. “There also appears a profound distrust of reason and of the human capacity to grasp the truth; indeed the very concept of truth is cast into doubt. To their mutual impoverishment, faith and reason part company, degenerating into fideism on the one hand and rationalism on the other.”<sup>316</sup> Man makes himself a slave to his subjective caprice and to the dictates of relativism. The image of relativism can be seen in “talk show” television programs that feature lifestyles of prostitutes, gays and lesbians as if they were legitimate habits of being: “You who are a prostitute, what can you tell us about sex? You who are gay, what can you tell us? You who are a lesbian, what do you think of love? You who are a transvestite, what do you think about abortion?” Everything is the same: “Nothing is true or false, but depends on the angle from which it is seen.” That is their creed.

So man is not interested in the truth. He is not interested in extra-mental reality, or what is outside, over and superior to him...“I make the truth; I am the measure of all things.” That is the summary of their lives.

5. “Life is not valued and loved; and hence the advance of a certain culture of death, with its dark blooms of abortion and euthanasia.” Contraception, anti-life ideologies, cloning, divorce, widespread suicide, the killing of the innocents, the death of the soul from not having recourse to the grace given by the sacraments. Therefore, men and women live like animals, without sacraments: they don’t go to Confession, don’t receive Communion, don’t go to Mass on Sundays, they don’t receive the Anointing of the Sick, or get married in the Church. They do anything in order to destroy the divine image of marriage and the family, and the dignity of human work.

6. “The body and human sexuality are not properly valued and loved; hence the degradation of sex which shows itself in a tide of moral confusion, infidelity and the violence of pornography.” Men and women are pushed to all kinds of pathological sexual extremes: pedophilia, cross-dressing, sadism, masochism, and pornography in magazines, newspapers, movies, radio, television and the internet. Virginity and purity are held in contempt. Humanity suffers a true eclipse of ethics and morality.

7. “Creation itself is not valued and loved; hence the spectre of destructive selfishness in the misuse and exploitation of the environment.” Creation is the great page written by God, and every effort is made to destroy the image of God written on it so that man would forget that *all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made*.<sup>317</sup> Look at what is left of the Sea of Azov.

According to the Holy Father, the practical negation of the Incarnation of the Word is perceived in the social and public orders of peoples, in the possibilities of man and his very existence, in not loving life, the body, or creation. These are just a few examples that could be expanded upon.

“In such a situation, the Church and the Successor of the Apostle Peter look to the Order of Preachers with no less hope and confidence than at the time of your foundation. The needs of the new evangelization are great; and it is certain that your Order, with its many vocations and outstanding heritage, must play a vital part in the Church’s mission to overturn the old untruths and proclaim the message of Christ effectively at the dawn of the new millennium.”

## ***IV***

Recently, the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger recalled: “The world has athirst to know, not our ecclesial problems, but the fire that Jesus came to bring to the earth.<sup>318</sup> [...] The central problem of our times is that the historical figure of Jesus Christ has been emptied of all meaning. An impoverished Jesus cannot be our one Savior and mediator, the God with us: Jesus is replaced with the idea of the ‘man of the kingdom’ and he is converted into empty hope. We must return with clarity to the Jesus of the Gospels, for it is He alone that is the true Jesus of history [Cf. *Jn* 6:68].”<sup>319</sup>

## ***V***

Let us reaffirm our faith in Jesus Christ.

May we know how to say to him with deeds and in truth: *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*<sup>320</sup>

## *EPILOGUE*

### *DO YOU LOVE ME MORE?*

*“This love, like other loves and yet even more so, demands a response. After his resurrection, Jesus asked Peter the basic question about love: ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’*

*And following his response Jesus entrusts Peter with the mission: ‘Feed my lambs.’<sup>659</sup>*

*Jesus first asks Peter if he loves him so as to be able to entrust his flock to him. However, in reality it was Christ’s own love, free and unsolicited, which gave rise to his question to Peter and to his act of entrusting ‘his’ sheep to Peter.”*

*Pastores Dabo Vobis, 25.*

This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. *When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’*

*He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’*

*A second time he said to him, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’*

*He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’*

*He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’*

*Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’<sup>660</sup>*

Dear youth, today Jesus is asking you the same question that he asked Peter once...***do you love?***

#### ***1. ...do you love...?***

We know that today’s youth are not formed for true love. They are not taught to love and this lack of love in youth has various causes:

-a false rigidity, by which manliness is confused with a lack of sentiments and with the absence of an ardent will;

-they are not given an example of true love;

-the force of family problems, failure in love, not knowing that one is loved, etc.

This is why Jesus asks: *do you love?*

Which, in turn, provokes another question: what does it mean to love? To love implies an intense and vehement will. Cicero says: "loving consists only in delighting in the one you love, without seeking in the beloved any other advantage, which, nevertheless, is poured forth from the same friendship the less that you seek such advantage."<sup>661</sup>

Human love can be taken in two ways:

a- in the proper sense as a passion of the sensitive appetite, if it tends to the form of a desired sensible good;

b-in the analogous sense, as an act of the rational appetite, tending to the form of the rationally desired good.

We must consider three things concerning tendency towards the beloved object.

1. The moving of the *a quo* term toward the *ad quem* (meaning, the movement from the point of departure to the point of arrival). In the appetite this corresponds to *love or simple volition*.

-Do you intensely strive to overcome idleness, laziness, lack of generosity, pusillanimity, fears and cowardice, lack of desire to serve, and lack of solidarity?

If you don't intensely strive to overcome lukewarmness and mediocrity, it is a sign that you do not love well.

-Have you not decided to leave behind the things of the flesh, your comforts, your self-love?

If you have not decided to leave behind your disorders, you lack growth in love.

2. The movement or effective transition from the *a quo* term to the *ad quem* term corresponds to the *desire or intention* in the appetite.

-Do you intensely seek sanctity, virtue, wisdom, prayer, and souls for Christ?

If you do not intensely seek to improve, it is a sign that you do not love well.

-Do you effectively seek the good of others?

If you do not put all of your effort in coming out of yourself, you lack growth in love.

3. The consequence of the movement or the arrival at the *ad quem* term corresponds to *pleasure, rest, or fruition* in the appetite.

-Do you take intense joy in mortifying and sacrificing yourself, imitating Jesus Christ, by crucifying yourself to reach great goals in study, sports, relations with others, and prayer through great effort?

-Do you tend, with effort, to seek the glory of God, the salvation of souls, the spreading of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, the honor of Holy Mother

Church, and sanctity?

-Do you know how to rest; do you reach tranquility in the beloved object?

I fear very much that, if you do not do these things, you do not yet know what love is.

There are young people who seem to have no blood in their veins; they are not disturbed by anything, they do not tremble for noble things, they are not excited about anything, for them everything is the same.

*To faint, to dare, to be furious,*

*Desmayarse, atreverse, estar furioso,*

*Rough, tender, liberal, shy,*

*Áspero, tierno, liberal, esquivo,*

*Encouraged, fatal, dead, alive,*

*Alentado, mortal, difunto, vivo,*

*Loyal, traitor, coward and bold!*

*Leal, traidor; cobarde y animoso!*

*Not finding—apart from the good—center or  
repose,*

*No hallar fuera del bien centro y reposo,*

*Show oneself joyful, sad, humble, haughty,*

*Mostrarse alegre, triste, humilde, altivo,*

*Angry, valiant, fugitive, satisfied, offended,  
suspicious;*

*Enojado, valiente, fugitivo, satisfecho, ofendido,  
receloso;*

*Hiding one's face to obvious disappointment,*

*Huir el rostro al claro desengaño*

*Drinking poison as if smooth liquor,*

*Beber veneno por licor suave,*

*Forgetting the benefit, loving the harm;*

*Olvidar el provecho, amar el daño;*

*Believing that heavens fit in a hell,*

*Creer que el cielo en un infierno cabe,*

*Giving one's life and soul for a disappointment:*

*Dar la vida y el alma a un desengaño:*

*This is love; whoever has experienced it knows.*

*Esto es amor; quién lo probó lo sabe.*

*(Editorial Translation)*

*(Lope de Vega)*

## ***2. ...do you love more...?***

Let us look at the effect of love:

1. *Simple Union*: The union of the lover with the beloved object, as contributing to his well-being.

-Are you united to your friends and family in this way?

-Do you understand their good as ***your good?*** When one loves, “he wills good to him, just as he wills good to himself...wherefore he apprehends him—poor, sinner, or enemy—

as his other self,”<sup>662</sup> like “half of his soul.”<sup>663</sup>

If you are not yet moved to desire and seek out the people whom you must love as belonging to yourself, then you do not yet *love more...*

2. *Mutual indwelling*: Every lover is in the beloved, and every beloved is in the lover. *I hold you in my heart*<sup>664</sup> said Saint Paul. Because he who truly loves “is not content with a superficial knowledge of the beloved, but makes an effort to study in depth everything about the beloved, so to penetrate to the interior,”<sup>665</sup> like the Holy Spirit, who is the love of God, who *searches everything, even the depths of God*.<sup>666</sup> In addition, the lover and the beloved are mutually present “*merely by the interior pleasure [the lover takes] in the beloved one,*” delighting in the beloved or in each other’s goods. Lovers unite themselves to each other, penetrating to the interior of the beloved, judging as their own the goods or evils of the one loved and the will of the one loved as their own, so that they mutually seem to suffer the same evils and possess the same goods as the one loved. In addition, they mutually love each other, they mutually desire each other and mutually do each other good.

Do you love in this way, to the most interior point....Or are you contented with a superficial knowledge?

3. *Ecstasy*: Pseudo-Dionysius said, “*Love...produces ecstasy.*” By this, he means that love places one outside of himself, because it elevates him to an understanding that exceeds the senses and reason, and by orienting oneself to the other, he comes out of himself in a sense. This is why the Second Vatican Council teaches that man: “can only fully discover his true self in a sincere giving of himself.”<sup>667</sup> Love makes one meditate intensely on the beloved object, forgetting other things; and because love wants and efficaciously does good to loved ones, it introduces the cares, problems, and needs of the beloved causing one to come out of oneself.

- Do you really come out of yourself, giving yourself with sincerity to God and to your neighbor for God’s sake?

-Do you still not know how to deny yourself? If the grain of wheat does not die, it does not love!

4. *Zeal*: *I the Lord your God am a jealous God*<sup>668</sup>; *the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*<sup>669</sup>; “on account of the great love that he has for what exists,” as Pseudo-Dionysius says. Ordered zeal comes from the intensity of love. Zeal means ardor, fervor, intensity and vehemence in love. “He who loves intensely supports nothing that causes distaste to his love.”<sup>670</sup> Perfect zeal is directed against those things that are in some way opposed to the good of the people loved. This is why when one rejects with strength, those things that are against the honor or the will of God, we say: *Zeal for thy house will consume me.*<sup>671</sup>

We should be able to say, *I have been most zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts.*<sup>672</sup>

-Is your life consumed by zeal for God? Or, on the contrary, are you consumed with jealousy?

5. a. Wounding or vulnerability. He who loves is moved and is wounded by sympathy for the beloved. That is why it is said: *You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes.*<sup>673</sup> Love wounds the heart like an arrow.

-Do you love to the point of feeling wounded in your heart? When you feel wounded, do you love even more?

b. *Ardor. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of Yahweh himself.*<sup>674</sup> “So that it may boil, spill over itself and come out of itself.”<sup>675</sup> A fire starts in the deepest part of a person, and from there it can only break out into inflamed words. This is why the saints do not bore, they convince.

c. *Softening or melting* of the heart occurs in order that the loved one might enter there, against the coldness, or hardness of heart. *My soul failed me when he spoke.*<sup>676</sup>

d. *Languishment.* This is why we must seek strength. *Strengthen me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.*<sup>677</sup> One suffers a certain sadness at the absence of the beloved: *I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him I am sick with love.*<sup>678</sup>

e. *Fruition.* When the beloved object is present and it is possessed, it causes pleasure. One feels the effects listed above and love dissolves into a sort of sweet intoxication: *I eat my honey and my honeycomb, I drink my wine and my milk. Eat, friends, and drink, drink deep, my dearest friends.*<sup>679</sup>

6. *Love is my weight.* Finally, love is the cause of everything that a lover does. Saint Augustine said: “My weight is my love, he takes me wherever I am taken.”<sup>680</sup> And elsewhere: “...souls tend to those things which they love, so as to arrive at them and rest.”<sup>681</sup>

### 3. ...do you love me more?...

But we would not respond to this question if we did not realize that this **love** refers to Jesus Himself. And we would not be aware of the deep significance of the words of Saint Paul: *I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me.*<sup>682</sup> *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*<sup>683</sup>

### 4. Summarizing

\*Am “I transforming” into Jesus, “in a way am I converting myself”<sup>684</sup> into Him? Can I say: *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me?*<sup>685</sup> Do I effectively seek to do this?

\*Do I live in Him and He in me? *God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in Him.*<sup>686</sup> Or am I content with a superficial knowledge of the Beloved?

\*Do I tend to Him by that “excess of the mind that is called ecstasy,” in such a way that lower things are erased from my memory, as Saint Augustine says?<sup>687</sup> Do I do this with

intensity and vehemence?

\*Does zeal for the honor of His name devour me? Do I burn with His love?

\*With Him, does my heart *rejoice, sweeten and pine after Him*, allowing Him to penetrate it? Am I *wounded* by the *fire* that He produces in me? Do I suffer *vulnerability* and *transfusion*? Do I find impenetrable serenity in Him?

\*Can I truly say that “My weight is my love, he takes me wherever I am taken”? Do I enthusiastically take others to Him who takes me?

Dear Youth:

...do you love...?

...do you love more...?

...do you love Me more...?

May these questions and their answers, *the love of Christ*, be the great gift that this book leaves for you. May the sweeping strength of the love of Jesus Christ make you able to creatively live your youth, walking on the paths of the Lord and transforming the world that you must construct and build up for Him.

## APPENDIX

### *A LETTER TO A SPIRITUAL SON IN THE YEAR 10,000*

Because there is a need in my heart, I must write this letter to you. I do not know if the world will last for many more years. Maybe it will last for much longer. Anyway, I address myself to you whether you are from the twentieth, fiftieth, hundredth, or the thousandth century. But why do I write to you? Through my crosses, prayers, preaching, the apostolic zeal of one of my writings, the foundation of the Congregation of the Incarnate Word, the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matará, or from the Third Order, or through one of its members, you have received the life that Jesus Christ brought to the world. I do not know the concrete and particular way the grace of God has related us to each other as a father to his child. I don't know if you are in America, Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania, or on some other planet.

Nor do I know your name, age, history, culture or family. I do not know your gender, the color of your skin, or your face. But this is of little importance because it is enough to know that you are my son and, therefore, my glory and my crown. I trust that God who gave me the grace on Earth to be able to look into the eyes of many young people and love them, will give me in the Heaven I await (not by my merits, but only by His grace), the happiness of being able to know and love all those who, with the passage of time, will be considered my children. I believe that even in this case I have to trust more in you than in myself, as has already begun to happen to me while I am still in this world.

I believe that each time I see you I will feel a tingling joy at seeing the prolongation, in time and space, of myself; I will feel the indescribable joy of begetting and raising children knowing that we are of the same flesh and blood, the same spiritual family.

Do not think it is improper on my part that I attribute to myself a fatherhood which does not belong to me. Really, the only one who is Father, by essence, is God, and from Him proceeds all paternity (*cf. Eph 3:15*) by participation.

The true priest who authentically seeks the glory of God is supernaturally fruitful. He begets life and life in abundance because “the life of man is the glory of God” as Saint Irenaeus said.<sup>688</sup> Whoever seeks the Glory of God transmits life to man by it.

Because of this, let me say that **I love you** from the bottom of my heart. **I trust in you** in spite of your limitations and your sins. How could I not? If God trusts in me even though I have many more sins than you do, how could I not trust in you? I am convinced that you will be much better persons than I am and you will do greater things for the Glory

of God. I am ashamed of myself, but God has given me the grace that, at least up until now, I never have had to be ashamed of an authentic son or daughter. I do not love you less because of your sins and your failures; rather I love you even more.

I cannot imagine what cities will be like in your century, or the transportation, communications, and other advances that will have taken place in medicine, computer technology, and energy. I cannot imagine which sports will be the most popular, what the organization of education will be, or the new nations that will exist in the world. How power will be redistributed or how new languages will emerge are unknown to me (I am sure you will laugh at my language, but people will do the same at yours later on). I cannot imagine what new pastoral techniques they will use...but the Catholic faith will be the same, and true love will be the same, for *love never ends*.<sup>689</sup> And so, I aspire to love you with this love.

If this letter remains until the year 10,000, it will certainly be an archeological find. But faith and charity, together with hope, will always be what is most up to date, what is youngest, and newest. The world and its concupiscence are passing away, but God remains. What are 10,000 years in comparison to eternity? Not even an instant! And how foolish it is to lose eternity by attaching oneself to an instant. Heaven is the greatest thing, and in order to reach it, we have to arrange things on earth according to Christ.

What is it that is truly worth the most in the passing of the centuries while the world lasts? What is worth living for and worth dying for if necessary?

First of all, a right understanding of God, who is an infinitely perfect Being, “*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*,” who is One in three distinct Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He governs Heaven and Earth and all they contain with His Providence, *in everything God works for the good with those who love him*.<sup>690</sup>

Secondly, faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the Christ, *the Son of the living God*,<sup>691</sup> our Redeemer and Savior, *who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification*,<sup>692</sup> the only One who has *the words of eternal life*.<sup>693</sup> He is the only thing that is truly new; the passing of the centuries since the moment of His redeeming Incarnation have not given Him even a touch of aging. *When He gave Himself, he gave novelty to all things*.<sup>694</sup> To be His disciple is nothing other than imitating Him to the point that you can say *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*,<sup>695</sup> and to try to always *seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well*.<sup>696</sup>

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is prolonged and perpetuated in the Catholic Church, which He founded, and to whom He left as an inheritance the treasure of His Body and Blood and the perpetuation of His unique Sacrifice in the Eucharist *until He comes*.<sup>697</sup> He also left His Mother, Mary, as the Mother of the Church,<sup>698</sup> and He placed Peter, present in his successors, the Popes, Bishops of Rome, as the visible Head of the Church. In doctrine we must follow the Pope, who cannot err, and in life we must follow the saints, who have not erred. Only the Church that was founded upon Peter, the rock, will prevail against the gates of Hell (cf. *Mt 16: 18*). On the Vatican hill in Rome, the first Pope, Peter, the Fisherman, is buried. Do the columns of Bernini, the Egyptian obelisk, the facade of the Basilica of Maderno, and the dome of Michelangelo still exist? I celebrated Holy Mass

there many times and I also prayed for you.

And so, in desiring for you true faith, I wish for you what is best. Faith is the beginning of the spiritual life and it is the path that leads to Jesus Christ, through real, true, and psychological contact, in spite of time and distance. Only He is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*.<sup>699</sup> Commenting on this text, a classic for all times says:

“Without the way, no man can go;  
without the truth, no man can know; and  
without life, no man can live. I am the  
way you must follow, the truth you must  
believe, the life you must hope for. I am  
the way secure from danger, the truth  
that cannot deceive, and the life that will  
never end. I am the straightest way, the  
supreme truth, the genuine life, the  
blessed life, the uncreated life. If you  
keep to My way, you will know the truth  
and the truth will deliver you, and you  
will possess everlasting life.”

I hope that you grow always in *hoping against hope*,<sup>700</sup> and that you may know *what is the hope to which he has called you*.<sup>701</sup>

Above all, I strongly recommend that you live the charity of Christ, the queen of all virtues, which *covers a multitude of sins*,<sup>702</sup> and *binds everything together in perfect harmony*,<sup>703</sup> and on which *depend all the law and the prophets*.<sup>704</sup> People should be able to say of you: “John is patient and kind; he is not jealous or boastful, arrogant, or rude; he does not insist on his own way; he is not irritable or resentful but rejoices in the right. He bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.”<sup>705</sup> And particularly he loves sinners, the poor, and his enemies.

Dedicate yourself to the propagation of the Gospel, so that someone could say of you: He was a preacher of the truth and an apostle of freedom.<sup>706</sup> Keep your faith pure and your conscience clean. May nothing human be foreign to you, so that you might raise it up to Christ. May Sacred Scripture always be your nourishment and the Eucharist your greatest love. Work for the increase and sanctification of vocations to the consecrated life. Feel the wind of Pentecost in your soul to inspire and remind you to: *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation*.<sup>707</sup> Do not forget that we are living instruments of Jesus Christ, but we are deficient and absolutely in need of His grace: *apart from me you can do nothing*,<sup>708</sup> the good works come from Him and only the mistakes are ours.

I hold you close to my heart, knowing that as we were united in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the

mind of God who has *arranged all things by measure and number and weight*,<sup>709</sup> we will be even more united in your century through grace and, still more, in the glory that we await. Forward, always forward! Ave Maria, and go forward! Give me your hand and a great hug! Full speed ahead until Heaven! I am proud of you.

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