

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BIBLE

Dear Reader,

The Bible is the Word of God... but even if you had bought this book and read it with much attention, you cannot force God to hand over his message to you. God himself will introduce you to the Truth if you can meet certain requirements. The first one is to search with perseverance: the door will be opened to those who knock. Do not give up if you cannot understand at the beginning, but ask in prayer and you will receive light. Another condition to grasp the teaching of God is that you search for it together with your brothers and sisters as you participate in a Christian community.

If you have something to share, suggestions to give or doubts and questions to be clarified, please write to:

Fr. Francis, U.P. P.O. Box 4
1101 Quezon City, Philippines
Email: bible@claret.org
www.bible.claret.org

Copyright © Bernardo Hurault 2010
Main Editor: Patricia Grogan, FCJ

Imprimatur
Catholic's Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

PASTORAL BIBLE FOUNDATION
8 Mayumi St., Diliman 1101 Quezon City
Philippines

Distributed by:
CLARETIAN PUBLICATIONS
U.P. P.O. Box 4, 1101 Quezon City
Philippines
TE: 921-3984 • Fax: (632) 921-7429

CLARETIAN PUBLICATIONS
P.O. Box 5577, Malleswaram West, Bangalore - 560 055, India
Tel: 00 91 (0) 80 - 23446977
Fax: 00 91 (0) 80 - 23469445
E-mail: info@claretianpublications.org

Printed in China by Nanjing Amity Printing Company

ISBN 971-501-952-8 (PBF)
ISBN 978-81-89851-16-3 (India)

Complete text translated
from the original language
with introductions and commentaries
for the Christian Communities
and for those who seek God.

Forty-eighth Edition

 PASTORAL BIBLE
FOUNDATION

 CLARETIAN PUBLICATIONS

CLARETIAN  PUBLICATIONS – INDIA

CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY
BIBLE

The Old Testament

THE LAW (Pentateuch)

Genesis	55
Exodus	131
Leviticus	189
Numbers	225
Deuteronomy	271

PROPHETIC History

Joshua	315
Judges	343
1 Samuel	373
2 Samuel	412
1 Kings	443
2 Kings	484

Other Historical Books

1 Chronicles	523
2 Chronicles	548
Ezra	579
Nehemiah	592
1 Maccabees	609
2 Maccabees	644

PROPHETS

Isaiah	671
Jeremiah	761
Ezekiel	829

The Twelve Minors

Daniel	947
--------	-----

WRITINGS

Job	973
Proverbs	1015
Ecclesiastes	1041
Song of Songs	1051
Ruth	1063
Lamentations	1068
Esther	1075
Tobit	1090
Judith	1103
Baruch	1120
Wisdom	1127
Sirach	1147
Psalms	1193

<i>The Twelve Minor Prophets</i>	
Hosea	885
Joel	896
Amos	900
Obadiah	908
Jonah	910
Micah	914
Nahum	920
Habakkuk	923
Zephaniah	927
Haggai	930
Zechariah	933
Malachi	943

The New Testament

The FOUR GOSPELS

Matthew	1319
Mark	1395
Luke	1451
John	1531
Acts	1589

PAUL'S LETTERS

Romans	1654
1 Corinthians	1691
2 Corinthians	1719
Galatians	1737
Ephesians	1751
Philippians	1764
Colossians	1772
Philemon	1780
1 Thessalonians	1782
2 Thessalonians	1789
1 Timothy	1793
2 Timothy	1802
Titus	1808
Hebrews	1813

CATHOLIC EPISTLES

James	1833
1 Peter	1841
2 Peter	1848
1 John	1853
2 John	1863
3 John	1864
Jude	1865
Revelation	1867

MAPS	
Departure of Abraham	77
The Roads of Exodus	156
The 12 Tribes	330
The Kingdom of David and Solomon	521

Jesus is Risen!

You have opened the Bible: look for Christ.

The Bible is not only a book for prayer or for our instruction. The Bible is the Word of God which communicates life to us.

The Cross of Jesus and his Resurrection are at the very center of the Bible. You for whom the road is difficult and who do not see the light at the end of the tunnel learn from the Bible that you are walking toward the Resurrection, and understand who the risen Jesus is for you.

The Bible...

The Bible did not fall from heaven. The books it contain were not proclaimed from the clouds by some heavenly speaker, but rather they were patiently gathered throughout the centuries within the heart of Israel, the **people of God**, thanks to the faith of its most conscious minorities.

For some eighteen centuries, from Abraham to Jesus, the people of Israel discovered ever more clearly that the One God had committed himself to them. The experiences of the national community, the warnings of those men called prophets, who spoke on behalf of God, the concerns which developed among believers: all of this somehow went into these books. The religious leaders of Israel received books, selected and accredited them, then integrated them into the Sacred Book.

That was how the *Old Testament* of the Bible was formed. It is called *testament* because these books were like the most precious inheritance given by God to his chosen people.

After so many experiences there came a time of crisis for the people of Israel when God wanted to bring them at last to mature faith. And Jesus came for that purpose. The most transcendental experience in all of history was fulfilled in him. Jesus—his efforts to save the Jewish people from imminent destruction, his rejection, his death, and then his resurrection—this was the final word of God.

The person of Jesus gave rise to the preaching of the apostles and to the first communities of Christ's Church. The written testimonies of these beginnings, approved by responsible members of the Church, form the *New Testament*: books of the New Covenant, where the book cannot but help the work of the Holy Spirit within us instilling the total, unique truth which becomes certainty within us.

...and Tradition

The books of the Bible only get their message through to those who come to share the experience of the community where these books themselves originated. There is a way of understanding the Bible which is peculiar to the people of God: this is what we call the Tradition of the People of God. Jesus received this tradition from his own family and from his people. Later, he taught his apostles a new way of understanding this sacred history. This is why we speak of the Tradition of the apostles or the Tradition of the Church.

To understand the Bible well, we cannot rely on just any preacher's interpretation. We must accept it as understood by the Catholic Church—founded by the apostles and always faithful to their norms.

The Book in Your Hands

The order of the books: an explanation

In the Pastoral Bible published for the use of Christian Communities, the usual order of the books in the New Testament is maintained: after the four Gospels, there is the Acts of the Apostles, then the letters of Paul, the letter to the Hebrews, the letters of James, Peter, John and Jude, and finally the Revelation.

In the Old Testament we made a choice. While the order in the New Testament is never questioned, the ancient manuscripts offer different orders of the books in the Old Testament. It is interesting to note that the lists of the books that the manuscripts count among the inspired scriptures are not always the same.

In effect, to decide which books are or are not the word of God touches the very bases of revelation. Only those who were chosen to lead the People of God could take such a momentous decision. The Jewish authorities at the time of Jesus and of the apostles had not yet taken this step. There was a Hebrew bible used in Palestine and a Greek one translated from the first, used by numerous Jewish communities scattered throughout the Greek world. At times this was also used in Palestine. The Greek bible included the most recent books originally written in Greek. (See the note about *Deuterocanonicals* p. 1089.)

The Greek Bible sent back *Ezra* and the *Chronicles* among the historical books after which it placed the books of *Maccabees*. It also inserted *Daniel* among the prophets. We have maintained the Greek way of classifying these books, for, although it could still be questionable, it is universally accepted. To the five deuterocanonical books of Sapiential character (*Tobit, Judith, Baruch, Wisdom* and *Sirach*) we have given appropriate place, that is after the most ancient wisdom Writings.

How to use this book

To facilitate the reading and research of a text through the books of the Bible, an English bishop at the beginning of the 13th century suggested dividing them into chapters. And in 1551 a French printer completed the work by numbering the phrases of the New Testament—the verses. A short time later the same was done for the Old Testament.

Each book of the Bible is divided into *chapters* and each chapter into *verses*. Usually a book is quoted in an abbreviated form as for example, *Mt* means the Gospel according to Matthew. You will find these abbreviations in the index. Chapters are indicated by large numbers at the beginning of a paragraph and verses by small numbers within the text.

Reference to a passage in the Bible is given by the chapter number followed by the verse number. For example *Jn 20:13* refers to John's Gospel, chapter 20, verse 13; *Lk 2:6-10* refers to Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, from verse 6 to 10.

The *biblical text* is found at the top of the page with the commentaries below in a different print. The sign • indicates to what paragraph of the text the commentary refers.

We use italics:

- in the New Testament for quotations from the Old Testament. For example in Matthew 26:3 the evangelist quotes from the prophet Zechariah 13:7;
- in the Old Testament for various reasons which are indicated in the introduction to each book.

Where do we begin our reading of the Bible?

The simplest way is to start with the Gospels where we meet Christ, who is the Light, the Truth and “the” Word of God.

Obviously the Old Testament contains many important lessons. Yet the person who reads them after having heard Christ understands them differently and discovers a deeper meaning in them.

Some people are accustomed to opening the Bible at random, thinking that the first paragraph they find will give them the precise word they need at that moment. Certainly God can answer their concerns in this way but he never committed himself to communicate with us in such a manner.

In any case it is advantageous to have read each book of the New Testament in sequence at least once. It is good to begin with the Gospels. In this regard, read the Introduction to the Four Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament.

How to avoid misunderstanding the Bible

1. Do not think that you are the first to understand God’s message and that there were no true Christians before you. This would be the way to become a founder of another strange sect.

2. The word of God is life-giving but that does not mean that every word is an instant problem-solver today. Each word was given by God to people living under concrete circumstances. Let us ponder what their problem was and what God wanted them to understand. Then we may ask: What light does this message shed on the present time and circumstances?

3. God taught his people for more than fifteen centuries from Abraham to the apostles, but he did not teach everything from the beginning. Do not wonder, then, that Moses and even the Prophets ignored important matters as manifested by the witnesses of Jesus who is *the Word* of God.

4. From the very first message which God gave his people, he had in mind the coming of his Son and the mystery of his cross and resurrection. All is to be understood in this light.

5. In the Bible, what is most important is clearly taught. However, some pages that actually have little to teach us were written in a sophisticated way according to an old literary style. Do not cling to some strange sentences to the point of forsaking what is clear and fundamental.

6. Read your Bible continually, not to learn what you do not yet know, but as a proof of your love and faithfulness to God. If you persevere, he will give you all the understanding you need.

Inclusive language

It is relatively easy to translate the Bible into classic English. The marriage between the Anglo-Saxon and Latin languages resulted in a rich language full of nuances expressive of abstract ideas—the paradise of the Greeks—and of concrete facts of the Hebrew language as well.

As in many other languages, English used the masculine form referring to both genders at the same time. Perhaps this is not fair and logical. However, there are many other things equally not logical in all the languages and everyone understands them. This would not be a problem in a biblical translation, considering that the Bible transmits to us the experiences and the discovery of the faith of a male dominant society. Texts have

been written by men; they were addressed first of all to men, and they were dealing with businesses in which men played the most important role. One thing is to try to overcome the injustice of the exclusive (sexist) language and another to try to create a new language. It will take time to create new personal pronouns and for people to get used to them... (he/she and his/her) while being faithful to the quality and to the poetic texts. Present solutions have not been borne out of life but from "political" decisions that perhaps will not last long. We could think as a solution to put all texts in plural, but can we do so without being naive?

A biblical message is not only found in an intellectual content but also in the way it is said. For instance, we realize that the word "Israel" is applied at the same time to a person and to a people, and that when Moses speaks to Israel, he speaks in singular as referring to only one listener. In this case, even the English of the first part of the century betrayed the meaning when the pronoun "you" was used for both singular and plural, stealing somehow the flavor of the Deuteronomy discourses.

The same happens with the ambiguity of the word "people" that refers to a people as a cultural and human group and to an individual, so common in the Bible. We constantly read in the Bible, "your fathers" so as to express continuity and solidarity in sinning from one generation to another. If instead we use "your ancestors," we would distance ourselves from a past which is no longer ours.

Let us go further. It is not foreign to Christian personalism, that is so central to the Revelation and to western culture as well, that the word "man" means at the same time the human race in general and the concrete reality of this humanity reunited in Christ. To exchange "man" and "woman" would be to divide and destroy the biblical idea. To use the term "human being" would destroy both its meaning and its poetry. In Psalm 8, for instance, "man" is at the same time the human species and the one man, Christ. To translate this psalm in plural would betray its content. We could present many similar cases. It would be irrelevant to say that these expressions are only an external frame to the message; the "Word" is also a human word and it is impossible to totally separate both realities. At the core of the biblical hope, we find prophetic messages referring at the same time to the faithful people and to their Savior, being true to both aspects. "Man" will always mean Christ, and women are included in this expression.

Though we try to use inclusive language as much as possible in our translation, we have not tried to hide the fact that Sacred History has been made out of masculine experiences; to do otherwise would have been to side with the fundamentalists who deny the historical aspect of Revelation. We have not systematically attributed to Moses, in an anachronistic manner, an inclusive language, nor have we written "brothers and sisters" when Paul addresses himself to the Elders and the Jewish priests. We have not considered the "man" and the male pronoun as "impure" or something to be eliminated systematically, even in cases referring to Christ, or the King of Israel or one of his ministers, or to any of his enemies and adversaries.

Certainly, the biggest difficulty is found in the Psalms, the Books of Wisdom and in certain passages of the New Testament that we read as something addressed to ourselves. However, we thought it was more honest to maintain a "classic" translation in order to be true and faithful to the passages where the text would have otherwise lost its strength and meaning if translated in plural form.

This kind of difficulty is not only characteristic of modern English: we find similar problems when translating the Bible into less developed languages, or languages foreign to the biblical culture. In that case one has to choose between "saying everything that the Bible says" or "saying it in a way to be understood." We have not systematically re-

nounced the usage of classical language. Not all our readers will be pleased with our decision, but we consider, however, a gift from God that in the Church will co-exist different cultures and that our languages will have to compromise a little. This mutual acceptance is part of the Christian message (Rom 14:14).

What existed before the Bible?

For many centuries the Bible was “the” book, first for the Jewish people and then the Church. Faith was not only an individual matter, and the entire Bible was centered on a covenant of God with humankind. There had been a starting point, stages and, at the end, would take place the recapitulation of our race into Christ and the integration of the created world into God’s mystery. And so the bible was a story which sought to be the story of humankind. Not only was it the book of God’s words, but it was also one of the bases of culture.

Yet the fact is that the whole biblical history was written in the course of several centuries in a small corner of the world. Even if, as we will say, this area was a very privileged place, from their perspective, the biblical authors could see only a very small corner of space and time. Outside of their own particular history, they could only depend on hearsay and on ancient traditions. There was no doubt in their minds that God created everything “in the beginning,” that is to say, approximately 6,000 years earlier if we accept a few rough dates from Genesis. No doubt for them the inhabited world did not go much farther than Europe and the Middle East and the Gospel had been announced to humanity as a whole, even if entire areas, such as the Islamic countries had abandoned the faith. In the 13th century, Saint Thomas Aquinas maintained that if, by chance, there was anyone who did not know the Christian message, for example someone who had always lived in the middle of a great forest, God would surely send an angel to make his word known to that someone.

Science started to question such convictions only in the eighteenth century. First came the notion of time. And then the discovery of the enormous amount of time needed for the formation of the universe and of the countless animal and plant species that had disappeared from the earth. We went from the traditional 6,000 years to millions then billions of years.

A second stage affected our vision of the world even more deeply. It was the intuition at first, then an ever increasing proof of a real history of living beings. It was no longer enough to classify the living or extinct species according to their similarities or differences. The picture was becoming more like a family tree. Common trunks, branches began to appear depending on the closeness or remoteness of the relations.

Strangely enough, this discovery, which fit well with the insights of some Church Fathers, was considered by the majority of the Christian world as a dangerous threat to the faith. One of the reasons was a rationalistic or anti-religious philosophy—it would be better to say the rationalistic “faith”—of numerous scientists of the past two centuries. For them it was enough to explain a few mechanisms at work in some minute evolutions to maintain that all the inventions and wonders of nature could be explained in the same way and that all the mechanisms had come by accident from nothing.

Since Christians for their part were accustomed to think in terms of unchanging truths (this was valid for dogmas of faith), it seemed to them that God must have subjected the heavenly and earthly world to unchanging laws: heavenly bodies merely spin in circles (an elliptical orbit was already a great concession) and living beings could

only reproduce themselves in the same way. It was only the second quarter of the twentieth-century that moved beyond the opposition between science, anti-religious in its claims, and faith which chose to ignore the facts.

What is the point? Simply this. The view of a world in evolution fits in perfectly with the Christian concept of the time and “ages” of history. If we study Paul’s letters we will see that for him the whole of human history is God’s educating work from which the authentic Adam emerges. After Paul, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons saw all of history led by God’s teaching toward a fulfillment of the race, or of the human community. All this, of course, is just the reverse of the widespread image of a Tarzan-like Adam who, at the beginning of time, is handsome and strong as we see him in Michelangelo’s fresco, but later falls from his pedestal.

If these perspectives are accepted, it is no longer difficult to think that all of creation took place in time. The “big bang” is an extraordinary approach of a starting-point of created time, a time starting from eternity and returning to eternity! Twenty billion years for the expansion of millions of galaxies, each one with its thousands or millions of suns. And somewhere, planets. How many? Who knows? How many were inhabited? Still a greater mystery. Here too faith has its insights. The whole Bible singles out the freedom and the gratuitousness of God’s gestures. Though God loves all humans and leads them all to himself, whether they know him or not, he also knows how to choose the people he wants and to give to them what he will not give to others. Did he not create millions of galaxies? This does not prevent him from choosing only one of them, in some remote corner, to place on it the race of “homo habilis” which God’s Word chose as his “landing place” in creation.

So, human beings did not happen by chance. They are not monkeys that, after a few totally unpredictable chromosomal mutations, awakened one day with the ability to understand. A lot would have to be explained about materialistic theories and those chance accidents which allegedly, one day, cause a race of male and female monkeys to engender some great musicians and quite a few pretty girls. Many generations as well as many links and many humble ancestors were necessary whom God may have already known and loved as he loves us. The model and the goal, however, were already there before them, and that was Christ.

At this point, we would like to recall briefly the great stages preceding the formation of the people of the Bible.

The first steps of human beings

When and how did human beings appear? We can always argue about the terms: what kind of beings will be called humans? Those who were breaking pebbles, those who conquered fire or those who buried their dead? We are speaking of real human beings, those whose spirit is in the image of God, those whom God knows and who can know God.

No one can answer this question with precision. For many centuries, human beings did not really change the face of the earth. Their lifestyle and the creations of their minds barely distinguished them from the anthropomorphous primates from which they came.

Slowly, human beings invented language and made weapons and instruments. They were not only interested in what was useful and visible. They were artists. Underground, in the caverns and the grottos where these people celebrated their magic rituals far from daylight, they expressed their vision of the world by the animal figures they painted in the walls.

Human beings were *religious beings*. They buried their dead with rituals destined to assure them of a happy life in another world. However, primitive they may have been,

these primitive beings had a conscience: they were capable of loving and they were discovering something of God (as said by Paul in Acts 17:27).

The first civilizations

About 10,000 years ago a change began to occur in humankind. People gathered together in great numbers in the fertile plains. Within a few centuries they discovered how to cultivate land, to raise cattle, to mold and bake clay. There appeared villages which united to defend themselves and to make better use of the resources of the soil. The first civilization had been born.

After that, everything happened very quickly. Five centers of civilization appeared on the earth.

Three thousand five hundred years before Christ, in the geographical area called the Middle East where the biblical people would be born, two empires were being formed. One was Egypt and the other was Chaldea, the land from which Abraham would come centuries later. Chaldea perfected an irrigation system, constructed houses with baked clay walls, invented a writing system, had laws and a centralized administration. Egypt had also progressed. They constructed magnificent temples for their gods and built the pyramids for the tombs of their pharaohs.

Similarly in China and India, approximately twenty centuries before Christ, and in Central America, ten centuries before Christ, other civilizations were born. Those of Central America, China and India developed separately since in those days it was very difficult to travel over the continents. In the Middle East instead, Chaldea and Egypt were in contact with each other and the road leading from one country to the other passed through a small country which later would be called Palestine.

The Bible and world religions

These few reminders are enough to show that history and biblical traditions only cover a small, though one of the most important areas of human history, at the crossroads of three continents. Perhaps no other area of the planet has seen so many geological and human upheavals. But most of humanity bypassed this history and experienced life and God in its own way. We should never forget that.

Biblical people came late on the chessboard of nations and for a long time they did not raise any questions about those who had not received God's Word of which they were the bearers. And for that reason, God said nothing to them about it because when God speaks to us, he speaks in a human language and within our own culture and, to some degree, God respects our limitations and our ignorance. However, God had already communicated his word and his spirit in a thousand ways. At various times, Israelites or Christians thought that everything coming from abroad was bad, that all wisdom born outside of Jewish or Christian lands was to be rejected. But there were also inquisitive times during which faith became enriched through its contact with other cultures, other prophets and other thinkers.

We should not therefore seek too many answers from the Bible about the way God spoke in other cultures, the way his Spirit was at work in their midst, about the way in which they are touched today by the energy radiating from the risen Christ and how they are saved by the one and only Savior. The Bible only asserts that God's call to Abraham was the start of a great and unique adventure, one which leads straight to the Son of God, to his Word or Wisdom made flesh.

Summary and Dates of Sacred History

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Time of the Patriarchs

Around **1750**
Abraham

Around **1600**
Jacob

1750–1550
“Slavery” in Egypt

Between the year 2000 and 1750, the two great powers of the Middle East, Egypt and Mesopotamia underwent a period of intense political upheavals. It was then that nomads whose means of living was the rearing of goats and lambs (“Hebrews” in Egyptian), occupied in Palestine the places left behind by the Canaanites who after 1,000 years, had founded in these regions small and numerous kingdoms. The Bible talks to us about some great figures who left their names in the memory of these nomadic clans: **Abraham**, **Isaac** and **Jacob** among others. It is with them that the adventure of the People of God begins. They are the **Patriarchs**.

For almost two centuries, Egypt was governed by foreign princes of Asian origin who favored the arrival of nomads searching for pastures in the Nile delta. Among them were the clans from Palestine who later will be part of the people of Israel: the descent to Egypt of the **children of Jacob** refers to this period.

The Exodus and the Conquest

Around **1250**
Exodus

Under the kingdom of Ramses II, some nomads flee to Egypt under the leadership of **Moses** to escape from slave labor: this is the **Exodus**, the “flight from Egypt.”

While going through the desert, the nomads live in the mountain of **Horeb**, a unique experience which will be decisive for the future of Israel. In Kadesh, a place of pilgrimage of the nomads, the clans of Moses share the new faith with other tribes.

1200–1030
Time of **Joshua** and
the **Judges**: settlement
in Palestine

The nomads who entered Palestine with Joshua united with those who had been in the country. Towards the end of the second millennium, frequent conflicts occurred between the Canaanites from the interior cities and the Philistine settlers on the hills.

Slowly the nomads were able to impose their law. The tribes learned to live a certain sense of solidarity, with a greater trust in the God who saves.

1030–1010
Establishment of the
Monarchy
Saul, the First King of
Israel

The frequent conflicts and the lack of unity forced the tribes to ask for a king to be their leader. Saul from the Tribe of Benjamin is chosen. His reign without glory will help clarify the respective roles of the **prophet** and of the **king**. Israel will not be a kingdom like the others since it is God’s people.

1010–970
Reign of **David**

Saul dies in the battle of Gilboah. **David** is consecrated king of Israel by **Samuel**. He reshapes the unity of a people that was again torn apart by tribal feuds. He conquers

Jerusalem which was outside the territories of the tribes and makes it the capital. Military campaigns consolidate the sovereignty of Israel over the small surrounding kingdoms.

The Time of the Kings

970–931
Solomon

Solomon, son of David, adopts the concept of the Oriental kings by taking foreign wives, with their gods and their cultic practices. He builds the **Temple** on an elevated area dominating the city and builds his palace nearby: on high, God and king, and below the people, a politics of prestige mainly at the expense of the northern tribes.

931
The Schism

The crowning of Rehoboam in Shechem is the occasion for the northern tribes to present their complaints to the new king. His refusal to listen to them provokes rebellion. The northern and central tribes organize themselves as an independent kingdom that will keep the name **kingdom of Israel**. The south, remaining faithful to the descendants of David, will become the **kingdom of Judah**.

The Golden Age of the Prophets

931–721
The time of the two kingdoms

After the schism, the two kingdoms often live in conflict, worsening the difficulties coming from external aggression. In Israel as well as in Judah, the prophets will unceasingly recall the marvels God had done in favor of their “fathers.” They proclaim fidelity to the demands of the covenant and the conversion of the heart.

Through daily contact with the Canaanites, the kingdom of Israel lets itself be attracted by the cult of idols and accepts pagan customs.

The intervention of the prophets: **Elijah, Elisha and Hosea**

The kingdom of the north experiences the instability of human institutions: coup d’etat and the changes of dynasties multiply.

721
Fall of Samaria and exile to Nineveh. The kingdom of Judah remains.

The awakening of Assyria in the eighth century brings to an end the kingdom of the north. The country is invaded and part of the population is deported to Nineveh. Others take their place, and since then, Samaria becomes a province of the Assyrian empire.

In spite of its mistakes, the kingdom of Judah experiences another favor. Faithful to his promise, God maintains on the throne the descendants of David. Then the intervention of the kings to ensure the clerical authority of the Temple of Jerusalem and the intervention of the priests in favor of the legitimate kings.

It is in the kingdom of Judah that God calls the largest number of witnesses to his Word. Some of the great prophets lived during the eighth and seventh centuries: **Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah**. **The expectation for the messiah** and of a new age takes shape. Miraculous **liberation of**

Jerusalem in 701. Offensive return of paganism under Assyrian pressure and reform of King **Josiah**. Assyrian and Chaldean invasions.

Double siege of Jerusalem; the city falls captive. The elites are **deported to Babylon**.

The Exile

The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple is a dreadful test of faith. This time, God did not intervene. Had he forgotten his promises or was he powerless?

This is a decisive turning point for Israel's faith. The prophet **Ezekiel** affirms to the deported people that God is with them in their exile. If they convert, God will have them back in their native land. But the question at hand is whether or not the kingdom of Israel will be reestablished under the guidance of better shepherds than the previous ones.

The "Second Isaiah" opens new perspectives: the humiliations of Israel were allowed by God to prepare it for a world-wide task. Its weakness will be its strength because the final word of God is not his power but his love. This revelation is so new that the majority of the exiles forget the message and they will have no other goal than the restoration of the ancient kingdom of David.

Cyrus, the Persian, successively conquers the kingdoms of the Middle East and builds up a vast empire. As ruler of Babylon, he authorizes the deported population to go back to their places of origin. Jewish caravans return to Jerusalem; the Jews rebuild the Holy City and the Temple.

The Jewish Community after the Exile

A considerable task takes place in Judaism under the leadership of **Ezra**. It is at that time that the majority of the Old Testament books are somewhat definitely fixed, especially the **Law** or **Torah**.

The clergy takes a dominant role in Israel. The country, a province of the Persian Empire had lost its independence; the priests, servants of the only Temple, ensure the unity of the people of God.

From Macedonia, **Alexander** puts an end to the armies of Darius and advances as far as India. At his death twelve years later, he leaves behind an empire which his successors divide among themselves. Thus Palestine is taken by the Seleucides who ruled in Antioch of Syria, and the Lagides (or Ptolomees) who ruled in Egypt.

Hellenism (the Greek culture) conquers the Middle East. Strong tension in the Jewish community between those open to the Greek culture which conquered the Middle East and those attached to the ancient traditions. Beginning of the Hasmonean movement (the "religious") from which will come the **Pharisees** and the **Essenes**.

587

The destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple

587–538

The Babylonian Captivity

538

The Edict of Cyrus

520–515

Construction of the second Temple

445–398

Mission of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**

336–323

Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire

167–154

The Great Persecution

Antiochus IV, king of Syria, plunders the treasures of the Jerusalem Temple to reorganize an army. This sacrilege and the following repression lead to the rebellion of the priest Mattathias, followed by his sons **Judas Maccabeus**, Jonathan and Simon. After fierce fights and cruel persecutions, the Jews recover their independence. **Simon Maccabeus**, high priest and king, begins a dynasty where political and religious powers are united under one person. The dream of a great kingdom of David was enkindled once more: reconquest of faraway territories, taking advantage of the decadence of the Syrian kingdom.

63Pompey conquers
Jerusalem

The **Hasmonean** (Maccabean) **dynasty** falls into decadence: the last Hasmonean fight for power. Pompey, in the name of Rome, profits from this and takes over the country.

*Under Rome's control***37–4 B.C.**

Herod the Great

After years of intrigues, **Herod the Great**, a foreigner, marries an Hasmonean. He makes his rivals disappear and convinces Rome to name him king.

Although the high priests are appointed by the existing power, their appointment is not for life. They are at the head of the party of the **Sadducees**. The **Zealots** become a terrorist movement against the Roman occupation with the exorbitant taxes from Rome, collected by the publicans, famine, unemployment yet much work absorb the manpower.

Herod begins the reconstruction of the Temple.

19Reconstruction of the
Temple

THE GOSPELS

4 B.C.–6 A.D.Archelaus and Herod
Antipas

About two years before Herod's death, **Jesus is born**.

Great turmoils at the death of Herod. Emperor Augustus gives Judea to Archelaus, and Galilee to his brother, Antipas. Rome, displeased with the bad reign of Archelaus, removes him from power and sends him to Gallia in Vienna. Judea is then placed under the direct administration of the Roman governor of Syria. Zealot terrorism in Galilee and repression.

Roman procurators rule over Caesarea across the sea, which Rome has made the new capital of Palestine. The most well-known Roman procurators is **Pontius Pilate**, who will condemn Jesus to death. Galilee, "an allied kingdom," is given to Herod Antipas. Herod's intrigues will eventually lead to his exile.

6–39 A.D.The period of the
Roman procurators

In the autumn of the year 27, the preaching of **John the Baptist** and the beginning of the **public life of Jesus**.

27–30The years of the
Gospel

Passover of the year 28, first ascent of Jesus to Jerusalem (Jn 2:13).

Year 29: John the Baptist is executed in the fortress of Machaerus.

Year 30: **Jesus is crucified**, most probably, on the eve of the Passover, April 7, year 30. He rises on the day following the sabbath.

APOSTOLIC TIMES

Historical Data	Data from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles	Letters of the Apostles
	Year 30: At Pentecost, the birth of a Hebrew-speaking Christian community in Jerusalem	Oral tradition, then written in Hebrew (liturgy) or in Aramaic (catechesis).
	From the year 30 to 36: Christian communities in Judea, Galilee and Damascus. The beginning of a Greek-speaking community in Jerusalem.	First writings in Greek by the Hellenists.
Autumn 36: Pilate is called back to Rome	This departure could explain why the Sanhedrin dares to have Stephen stoned to death. (Acts 7:57): Year 36.	
	End of Year 36: Conversion of Paul on his way to Damascus (Acts 9).	
Nabatean King Aretas IV dies in 39 or 40.	Years 38–39: Paul escapes Damascus and goes to Jerusalem and Tarsus (2 Cor 11:32; Gal 1:18).	
	Years 39–40: The beginning of the Church of Antioch. At the same time, Peter goes to Caesarea to baptize Cornelius (Acts 10–11).	
Year 41: Emperor Claudius in Rome. He appoints Herod Agrippa I as king of Judea and Samaria.	Year 43: Herod Agrippa had James , the brother of John executed. Peter is freed from prison and escapes most probably to Antioch (Acts 12). James, “brother of the Lord,” heads the Church of Jerusalem.	
	Years 43–44: Most probably the incident between Peter and Paul happens in Antioch (Gal 2:11).	
Year 44: Death of Herod Agrippa Judea becomes a Roman province again.	Commentary about his death in Acts 12:20. Between 44 and 48 , the first mission of Paul (Acts 13:1): Cyprus and Pisidia. The return to Antioch in 48 (Acts 14:27).	
Year 48: Famine in the East and in the West	Prophecy of Agabus (Acts 11:27).	

	49: 14 years after his conversion, Paul brings alms to Jerusalem (Gal 2:1; 2:10; Acts 11:29). The Council of Jerusalem: the question of circumcision of the pagans (Gal 2:2; Acts 15).	
	Paul in Antioch until the Council of Jerusalem during the feast of the Dedication in 49 (Acts 15).	
Year 49: Edict of Claudius expelling the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:1)	Second Mission of Paul in the year 50 (Acts 15:35): foundation of the Church in Galatia, Macedonia and Greece (Acts 16-17).	
Gallion, proconsul in Corinth in the years 51 and 52 . Paul is brought to him.	Paul remains in Corinth for a year and a half. Arrival and departure in mid-season: from September 50 (Acts 18:1) to March 53 (Acts 18:18).	<i>1 Thessalonians</i> <i>2 Thessalonians</i>
	April 53 , Paul goes to Ephesus. By boat to Caesarea, Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts 18:22).	
Year 54: Death of Claudius. Nero succeeds him.	Paul sets off again (beginning of 54?) and visits Galatia (Acts 18:23). In autumn, Paul is in Ephesus where he remains for two years and three months (Acts 19:1). Year 56: Most probably a trip to Corinth (2 Cor 13:2). Then Paul is imprisoned in Ephesus.	Pentecost 56: <i>1 Corinthians</i> <i>Philippians</i>
	End of 56: Paul is liberated and struggles against the Judaic propaganda. Paul goes to Macedonia and then evangelizes Illyricum (Rom 15:19). In Greece for the winter 57–58 .	<i>Gal;</i> <i>2 Cor</i> 10-13 Pentecost 57: <i>2 Cor</i> 1:9 <i>Letter of James (?)</i> Winter 57-58: <i>Rom</i>
	February 58: goes to Philippi At the end of the Passover week, Paul goes to Troas (Acts 26). Encounter at Miletus (Acts 20:7). Arrives in Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 20:16).	<i>Letter to Titus</i> <i>1 Timothy</i>
	At the end of Pentecost week, Paul is taken prisoner at the Temple: June 58	<i>Letter of Peter</i>
Felix, governor from year 52 to 60 . He is replaced by Festus who dies in 62.	Paul prisoner for two years in Caesarea, close to Felix (Acts 24:27). In the year 60 , soon after Festus' arrival Paul appeals (Acts 25), leaves for Rome in September.	September 58 (?): <i>2 Timothy</i> <i>Ephesians</i> <i>Colossians</i> and <i>Philemon</i>

<p>60: Colossae is destroyed by an earthquake</p>		
<p>62: The high priest has James, the brother of the Lord, stoned to death.</p>	<p>February 61: Paul arrives in Rome (Acts 28:11).</p>	<p><i>Letter to the Hebrews</i></p>
	<p>63: End of the captivity of Paul (Acts 28:30). Paul might have gone to Tarragona (Spain) as he had wished (Rom 15:28).</p>	<p><i>Gospel of Matthew (?)</i></p>
<p>64: Burning of Rome and persecution of the Christians.</p>	<p>64 or 65: Peter and Paul martyred.</p>	<p>63 or 64: Most probably in Greece, Luke publishes the Gospel and the Acts.</p>
<p>66: Jewish War; Christians in Jerusalem try to flee to Pella.</p>		<p>In Rome, <i>Gospel of Mark</i>.</p>
<p>70: Conquest of Jerusalem and burning of the Temple.</p>		
<p>81: Persecution of Domitian.</p>	<p>Around 90, the preaching of gnostic Nicolaitans in the province of Asia. Towards 95–98 John, already in Asia is exiled at Patmos</p>	<p><i>Revelation of John</i></p>
<p>98: Emperor Trajan in Rome.</p>	<p>In Ephesus John confronts the preaching of Cerinthe.</p>	<p><i>Letters and Gospel of John</i></p>

From the Apostles to Us

Seventy generations separate us from the time of the apostles. This span covers twenty centuries of Church history. To speak about the Church is to speak about these sisters and brothers of ours: it is easy to criticize them or to think that they should have been better, but it is more difficult to know the world in which they lived, a world very different from ours, and to understand what they tried to accomplish under the inspiration of their faith.

Free people, virgins and martyrs

Christians of the first centuries had the exciting experience of their newly found freedom. They felt free of pagan superstition, of fatalism in facing destiny, and of death without hope, free also from their own selfishness. But they paid a high price for this freedom. In their days there was no law superior to the emperor's will or to the customs of the people. Yet Christians placed Christ above human authorities and, being conscientious objectors, were treated as evildoers. Christian love and virginity were insults to the vices of the pagan world.

Christians were therefore persecuted. During three centuries there were repressions and martyrs, sometimes in one province of the empire, at other times in another. In some periods all the forces of power were unleashed against Christians with the intention of wiping out the name of Christ. The crowds who, for entertainment, would go to watch the tortures inflicted upon Christians came back ashamed of their own wickedness and convinced of the authentic humanity in the persecuted.

Constantine's conversion

Meanwhile the Roman world was becoming decadent. Before they were vanquished by their enemies, the Romans' spiritual forces which had so exalted their empire were weakening: the old beliefs were lifeless. In the year 315, Constantine, the emperor himself, asked to be baptized. After him, all rulers were Christians. This was a decisive event for the Church which became protected instead of being persecuted.

This triumph, which in a certain way benefited the masses, brought along some disadvantages as well which would be seen with time. From then on the Church had to be the spiritual force needed by the people of the Roman Empire. It replaced the false religions and opened up its doors for the crowds seeking baptism. The Church was no longer restricted to believers baptized after being converted and tested. Rather the Church had to be the educator of a "Christian people" who did not differ significantly from the previous "pagan people." What was gained in terms of numbers was lost in terms of quality. The "Christian" emperors were not much different from their predecessors. As they had been the supreme authority in the pagan religion, now the emperors wanted to rule the Church, to appoint and control its bishops. They protected the faith: they also protected a state religion against the "virus" of the Gospel.

On the other hand, when Christians were no longer underground and oppressed, they became more involved in worldly problems. How could they reconcile the culture of their time with faith? This was the period when the bishops, called the "holy fathers,"

gave an extensive presentation of the faith as they responded to the questions of their contemporaries. St. Augustine stood out among the best.

Some people prefer not to see the difficult aspects of faith. Those who dare to probe them (as should be done), do not always bother about errors. A heresy which spread rapidly and almost destroyed the early Church was “Arianism.” Due to their fear of dividing the one God, Arians denied that Christ was the Son, equal to the Father; they considered him to be only the first among other beings in the whole of creation. Arian emperors would appoint Arian bishops. However, as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit preserved the faith of Christians and the heresy faded.

Seeing that the Church was no longer the fervent community of the time of the martyrs, Christians looking for perfection in those days began to organize themselves into austere and demanding communities. They felt they had to withdraw from the comfortable life to seek God with their whole soul. First in the deserts of Egypt, then throughout the whole Christian world, there sprang up monks and hermits. In the Church, monks preserved the ideal of a perfect life, a life totally surrendered to Christ. Their life of mortification allowed them to know the deepest recesses of the human heart. And God, for his part, gave them the experience of transformation or divinization reserved for those who have left everything for him.

The yeast in the dough

When the Roman Empire collapsed with the invasion of the barbarians and was devastated it seemed as though it was the end of the world. (We mention the Roman Empire not because it was the only inhabited place in the world, but because Christian preachers had scarcely gone beyond its frontiers.) It was the beginning of some centuries of ruin and devastation. Some thought the end of the world was near.

But in reality, this destruction announced by John in Revelation marked the beginning of a new time. The Church did not collapse in the turmoil. Instead, it discovered a new role: to evangelize and educate people who, after the barbarian invasions, had come back to a poorer society, quite uncivilized and totally disorganized.

The only moral force or stable institution people knew was the Church. Many times the bishop became the only “defender of the people” against the invaders. There was no one but priests to educate the people; books about ancient culture were kept in monasteries along with the Sacred Scripture. The Church was the soul of these primitive people, who were cruel and excessive. While the Church was struggling to limit wars and revenge, to restore civil authority, to protect women and children, and to teach the values of constructive work, it allowed itself to be invaded by superstition and corruption. Quite often it seemed that even the highest authority, the popes and bishops, sank into corruption and vice... but the Church was far more than they, and what had been sown in tears would bear fruit.

In the course of salvation history, God instructed the people of Israel in the midst of many errors that would be corrected in time. In their turn the peoples who formed Christianity, learned to live as human beings, responsible and free. In the new civilization that was emerging, culture, art and above all ideas were the products of their faith, even if they were mixed with many things, not completely Christian.

Catholics and Orthodox: the Schism

The Eastern part of the Roman Empire resisted the barbarian invasions. Little by lit-

tle this part of the Church, called Greek or Orthodox, which later would evangelize Russia, distanced itself from the Western part occupied by the barbarians and led by the Church of Rome. There were two churches, different in culture, language and religious practice although keeping the same faith. Both churches, however, erred in paying more attention to their own customs than to the common faith. Thus, the Eastern church moved away from the pope, Peter's successor in Rome.

Later the Turks, followers of Islam, conquered the rest of the Roman Empire in the East and there remained only a few Christian communities where the ancient churches of Syria, Palestine, Egypt... had flourished. Today, Greece, Romania and Russia form the most important part of the Orthodox world.

The Church and the Bible

In 1460 Gutenberg's discoveries made the printing of books possible. Before that there were only expensive and rare books, written by hand. The average person could not have a Bible, nor even a Gospel. The Bible was read in church and was the source of preaching. To make it more visible to the faithful, no church was built without adorning it throughout with paintings, sculptures or stained-glass windows depicting biblical scenes.

The invention of Gutenberg was to make the Holy Scripture available to everyone, provided of course one could read. This technical discovery would also speed up a new crisis in the Church. For centuries Church institutions, clergy and religious upheld the culture and the unity of the Christian world; as a result of their social status, worldly interests tended to attract greater interest than did the ministry of the Gospel itself. But what was more grievous, the institutional Church had become a very heavy religious system, often stifling intellectual research as well as evangelical renewal. Many outstanding religious and holy people protested and asked for reforms. But no reforms followed. With the printing of the Bible many thought that the only way to reform the Church was to give the Sacred Book to everyone so that by reading it, people would appreciate the original message and correct the errors and evil customs which had become so entrenched.

Martin Luther took upon himself the task of translating the Bible into German, which was the language of his own people. Up till then the Bible had normally been published in Latin, the language of the clergy. Only a few at that time considered individual reading of the Word of God important for all Christians. It was feared that if the Holy Book were given to everyone, many would not interpret it correctly. Such a view was not entirely wrong: shortly after Luther had translated the Bible into the language of the people, his disciples began fighting among themselves and founded rival churches, each one convinced of possessing the truth.

Later, after the rift with the Protestants, the Catholic Church, impoverished in human riches reformed itself. Great things were achieved and saints with exceptional personalities abounded. Still the Catholic Church was unable to stress listening to the Word of God. On the contrary it was more than ever under the control of ecclesiastical authority, restraining to a large degree the expansion of the role of the Christian laity. Preachers and missionaries did indeed preach the Gospel, but were more like knowledgeable experts than servants of the Word of God trying to discover, together with their sisters and brothers, its richness.

The missions of the Western Church

From the time of the apostles, believers have been preoccupied with passing the faith on to others. There were missionaries who ventured among hostile peoples, or people who spoke different languages, in order to preach the Gospel when all Europe was more or less united under Christianity and the cultural and social fields animated by the Church, people felt the missionary task had already been achieved. What existed outside the Christian nations? Most would have answered: “Only the Moors.” The Moors, that is the Muslims, were fierce enemies of the Christian nations. No one thought there were other people beyond themselves and the Muslims.

Some prophets like Francis of Assisi or Raymond Lull understood it to be better to preach Christ among Muslims than to fight with arms. There were also some missionaries, like John of Montecorvino, who traveled to Asia on foot all the way to China. They were the exceptions. In those days which may seem remote to us, the churches of Europe already accumulated centuries of tradition; they had their culture, their own way of thinking about the faith and of living the Gospel. It was very difficult for people of that time to understand people of another culture and to pass the Gospel on to them in such a way that they could organize themselves into a church suited to their own temperament and according to their own way of thinking. It is the main reason why the missions which the Church established in these distant places did not prosper and the Church became identified with European Christianity.

When Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus pierced the wall of ignorance surrounding Christianity, the Church realized the true dimension of the world which had not yet received the Gospel: Africa, Asia and America. The first to sail to far countries were merchants and adventurers—unobtrusive people do not usually venture into such exploits. But as soon as they had discovered the new world, they were to be accompanied by adventurers of the faith, people eager to win for Christ those who did not yet know him. Among those who left without weapons, with little preparation other than their faith were saints and martyrs.

In Africa, mission and colonization traveled together. Christian faith reached animist religions. In their preaching, missionaries lightly regarded the cultural background of people so that the numerous baptisms did not mean the depth of the African soul had been converted.

In great parts of Asia, especially in China and India, many missionaries were not prepared to undertake an evangelization starting with the knowledge of local culture and religion. The ignorance of such a long religious experience resulted in the conversion of only minorities except in some parts of India and Vietnam.

It seemed that mission in America would be easy and fruitful. The Spaniards destroyed the indigenous nations and, oftentimes, ruined their culture. The natives did not resist the faith and, in various places, privileges were granted to those who became Christians. But under a thin layer of Catholic practices, the native people preserved their pagan beliefs. Most of them did not encounter Christ, nor did they convert to his message in a meaningful way.

The rebellion of the laity

When we discussed Christianity, we said that the Church often took over many public services out of necessity for there were no civil or military authorities to administer them. The clergy founded and managed schools and universities; the religious were in

charge of public health—hospitals, hospices and orphanages. Monks colonized and developed uncultivated lands.

In time, the more responsible among leaders and intellectuals realized that all these tasks should be given back to civil authorities. They agreed with the Gospel which distinguishes between what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. They had to confront an already established power and custom: how difficult it is to cede one's responsibilities to others! In the historical changes that accompanied the birth of modern nations, lay institutions and sciences independent of the faith, often appeared to be a struggle against ecclesiastical power. Everyone has heard of the trial against Galileo and the political conflicts between popes and kings.

The Church and the modern world

In the last four centuries the world has experienced more crises, progress and changes than cumulatively in all previous times. Christian faith gave Europeans the energy, security and awareness of their mission in the universe which enabled them to formulate science, develop techniques and dominate other continents. Obviously, conquests and colonization sprang from motives very foreign to faith; even so, they were unknowingly completing the plan of God who, from the beginning, contemplated the reunion of all nations.

The Church participated in this expansion. In the 19th century there were as many as 100,000 missionaries, priests and religious committed to evangelization and education in Asia, Africa and America.

However something very important was occurring in Europe. The Church was facing modern culture which had emerged from the Church but which, having become independent of it, was turning out to be an enemy. Learned minds commonly believed that their wisdom was capable of bringing about progress, happiness and peace to humanity. Conversely they saw nothing in the Church but ignorance and prejudice. In short, they saw the Church as the main obstacle to human liberation. Many dared to predict the death of Christianity before the 20th century.

There was no less blindness in the church. It is only a hundred and fifty years since a pope condemned railways as a diabolical invention. The hierarchy was accustomed to teach and to have the last word on every topic. Even today it often is not able to remain silent on problems concerning the laity, where ideally each person should find his/her own way according to faith and conscience, and make responsible decisions with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Church gradually found itself marginalized in many areas. It was tempted to absent itself from the world and stay far from the realities of life as a small group of those who know and are saved. Such a temptation has always been present. Great apostles have fortunately shown that the Church can fully carry out its mission in the world provided it always comes back to the humble Christ, servant and poor, instead of seeking support from the great of this world or trusting in its banks.

The Church is no more than a minority in the world: about a billion Catholics among six billion inhabitants of the earth. More than ever this minority feels concerned with all that is human, knowing that God saves not only souls but the human race as a whole. Just when the world is seeking its unity, Christianity remains divided. Catholics and Protestants embody the same division that was seen in the two nations of Judah and Israel: the Catholic Church more attached to the authenticity of the faith and to the tradi-

tion of the apostles, the Protestants more enthusiastic for the communication of the Word of God. Although unable to unite up to now, they must face together the call of the world where a planetary civilization appears to be in its early stages.

The return to the Gospel

Return “to” the Gospel. All through history the Church has experienced renewals and reformers. Reform has always meant a return to the Gospel.

Today however, a return to the Gospel has taken on a special meaning. For centuries (what Paul and Luke have called “the time of the nations”), the Church was the educator of the people where it established itself. With them it went through the same experience as the people of Israel. It both handed over the Gospel, the mystery of God-communion, the love and mystery of the cross to them; and it took its part in the slow climb of nations to maturity, through suffering, struggle and ignorance.

Today we begin to look back on the road that has been traveled. The Gospel was for all humankind, which was a declaration of a humanity-with-God. Yet progress now means taking steps toward this encounter with all cultures and all human realities. It is the hour for the Church to fully enter into the New Testament. From now on the Church will no longer be the tutor of the nations, but Christians will rather be yeast in the dough. The huge Church structures, which can only grow bigger will lose their importance. The search for God through his word will take the most important place in the religious life of the believer.

It would be more appropriate for us to speak of a return “of” the Gospel. Today the Gospel emerges as the key to our history. For centuries Christians have seen in faith and religion the means of saving their soul and of serving God, but they lacked the key to understand actual history in its daily barbaric reality. It is only now that the key words of the Gospel begin to make sense in the context of planetary problems. It is not an accident that in the eastern countries millions of people search in the Gospel for the secret of a seeming western superiority.

Whatever the sin and ignorance of the West has been, the risen Christ has been working on humanity through them. The Gospel is not merely words (and hardly a religion), but an opening, a state of grace in the human person who finds herself/himself facing God, through the cross of Christ. Few bastions of humanity still resist new forces. Cultural worries, even when gone astray, almost always open doors to the Gospel. Mozart’s music has opened a fresh Christian awareness to more people than some great missionaries. Feminine emancipation has brought nations and millions of men to a true conversion.

Now is the time when every Christian and Christian community finds itself led back to the time of Jesus and the apostles. Free of the religious structures which supported and at the same time imprisoned our forebears, it is time for us to announce the Good News to the world. We have already experienced the disappointment of the hope placed in science, communism, and the reign of reason. Humanity, now in control of many elements of its own destiny, begins to face the great fundamental question: live, but why? We have come to the great century of evangelization: the Lord comes!

BIBLICAL TEACHING

The Old Testament: GOD TEACHES HIS PEOPLE

0 **Creation Redemption Sanctification**

God's relations with the created world manifest three aspects of the divine purpose:

- God loves humankind. Here we recognize his **justice** and **generosity**, and we speak preferentially of **creation** and **providence**.
- God chooses those who will be granted a closer relationship with him through Christ. Here we recognize his mysterious and loving predestination. And we speak preferentially of **grace** and **sanctification**.
- God wants his chosen ones to take part in the work of bringing salvation to the rest of humankind. In this work of **redemption** Christ, the Chosen One and the **Savior of all**, stands out.

1^A **God the creator 10 God of all people**

The universe is the work of God: Gen 1; Is 44:24; Ps 8:4, 18:2, 32:6. God, **creator of the heavens and the earth**: Gen 1:1, 14:9, 22. God created from nothing: 2 Mac 7:28.

11 God creates **with wisdom**: Ps 104:24. God creates **through his wisdom**: Pro 8:22; Wis 8:6; Sir 24:9; or through his Spirit: Ps 33:6, 104:30; Jdt 16:14. God creates with measure, number and weight: Wis 11:20. The apostles discover that this Wisdom is the **Word** or the **Son** of God: Jn 1:3; Col 1:16. Through him God plans the development of history: Heb 1:2. God brings creation to maturity by infusing his Spirit into it: Wis 1:1-7, 10, 11:20-12:2.

12 **God has created us through his Son**: he makes us children "in him": Gal 3:26-29, 4:4-7; Eph 1:3-4. And gives the human person life through his Word and his Wisdom: Dt 8:3; Pro 8:1-21; Lk 1:50-55. Examples in Ex 3; Jdg 6; 1 K 19:6-8; Is 6:8; Jer 15:19-21. See also **153-156**.

13 **The universe praises its creator**: Ps 18:2, 148; Bar 3:34; Dn 3:56-80.

14 God rules the universe: Ps 33, 96; Rev 4:1-10. **He directs events** for our good: Mt 6:31; Lk 12:5-7; Jn 16:23; Rom 8:28. God looks after all his creatures: Ps 104; Jon 4:11; Wis 11:23-26.

15 Spiritual creatures called angels take part in the development of the universe and in the execution of the divine plans: Zec 1; Ex 23:23; Tb; Dn 3:49; 9-11 and commentary on Dn 12:6.

16 God blessed humanity and its development: Gen 1:28. He renewed his blessing after the fall: Gen 8:21, 9. He is the God of all nations: Dt 33:3; Mal 1:11; and the savior of all: Jon 4:11.

17 God punishes sin (Gen 7:10), but he never ceases to love the human race: Gen 8:21.

18 God **gives signs to all peoples** (Heb 14:17; Mt 2:1) and he also gives them prophets to interpret these signs: Num 22-24; 1 S 6; Jon. There are saints not belonging to the people of God: Enoch (Gen 5:23), Melchizedek (Gen 14:18), Job and Daniel (Ezk 14:4).

1^B **God and his chosen ones**

19 However, to achieve his work of salvation, not from outside but within the frame of history, and respecting the necessary stages, **God chooses a people of his own** through whom his promises will come to all the nations: Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8 and

		14. See 37 . All of Sacred History refers to this chosen minority. It manifests their mission and the inheritance God willed to grant to them. God who sends them is the same God who loves them for all eternity. See commentary on Lk 1:38; Eph 1:18 and 2:7-10.
2. God gives his Covenant to Abraham	20	First step in Sacred History: God calls Abraham : Gen 12:1. God's call to Abraham includes a double promise: he will give him descendants (Gen 15:4; 18:10) and a land : Gen 12:7.
	21	God makes a Covenant with him. From then on he will be the God of Abraham and of his descendants for ever: Gen 15:18; 17:7; Is 51:2.
	22	This covenant makes Abraham (and his descendants), the servant of God and of his works in the world, so that God's blessing will come to all nations : Gen 12:3; 28:14.
	23	On various occasions Abraham demonstrates his faith in the promises of God for whom nothing is impossible : Gen 15:1-6; 22.
	24	God shows that he is pleased with Abraham's faith (Gen 15:6) and obedience (Gen 22:26; James 2:21) more than with the fulfillment of some religious practices (Rom 4:3-4 and 4:19-22).
	25	Abraham's faith makes him a friend of God : Is 41:8; Dn 3:35; James 2:23, and he lives with God after death: Lk 20:38.
	26	Because of his faith, Abraham becomes a person who counts in the eyes of God who takes him into account when he makes decisions: Gen 19:17-33; Is 41:9, 43:1, 49:4.
	27	Abraham's faith shows the way that all must follow from then on in order to receive God's promises: faith in the promises of God (Rom 4:20) who can even raise the dead: Heb 11:17-19.
	28	The Covenant with Abraham is confirmed in his descendants (Gen 28:10; 32:23; 49:28). However, this covenant continues to be a gift of God which is given not to all of Abraham's children by family right, but to those whom God designates: Gen 21:12, 25:23; Rom 9:6-13.
3. Moses and the Exodus, God as Liberator and Just	30	God sees the sufferings of his people in Egypt (Ex 2:24 and 3:7) and remembers his covenant with Abraham (Ex 2:24 and 3:16). God calls Moses (Ex 3:1 and 6:28) to liberate Israel.
	31	In Hebrew culture the liberator of a thing or a person is the one who buys it or takes it away from the owner in order to make it his own. Israel is liberated from the power of the Egyptians in order to belong to God: Ex 3:10 and 3:12; 19:4 and 19:6; 20:2 and 20:3.
	32	The God who liberates Israel teaches them his very Name , or a part of his mystery. The name with which Israel will invoke him: Yahweh: I am . Ex 3:14-15. See commentary on Ex 3:1 and Jn 8. Yahweh: the one who is, the one who brings into existence; the God who reckons with what is nothing and worthless in order to humble those who believe in them: 1 S 2:4-8; Ps 113:7; Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 4:17. See commentary on Ex 3 and 4.
	33	Yahweh is the Only God (Dt 6:4) who cannot be portrayed without diminishing him (Ex 20:4): totally different from all that we can imagine or invent, namely, from all that can be seen (Dt 4:12). We know him only through his word (Dt 4:12; Jn 5:38). Against images : Dt 4:15 and com. on Is 46:5 and Bar 6.
	34	God is holy (Am 4:2; Hos 11:9). Holiness means an irresistible

		<p>and deep-seated vitality, an energy which devours and gives life at the same time. God is holy and holy is his name (Am 2:7; Lev 20:3; Is 57:15). No one can endure his presence when he comes near (Ex 19:16; Is 6:1). We cannot see him: Ex 3:2, 33:20; Jn 1:18; Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17; com. on Gen 16:1. We cannot judge his actions: Is 40:21; Ezk 18:29; Job 38, 42; Rom 11:33; 1 Cor 2:9.</p> <p>35 God is jealous (Ex 20:5): he cannot tolerate a stranger who comes and profanes what he has chosen or cared for, what he has chosen is already sanctified (Num 17:1). He cannot stand to see his plans fail: Ezk 36:22; Ex 32:12. He cannot cede his glory to another: Is 48:11. A devouring fire and a jealous God: Dt 4:23; Heb 12:29.</p> <p>36 God is just. He forgives sin, but he does not leave it without punishment Ex 20:5; Jdg 2:13-22; 2 S 12; Jer 3; Hos 2; 3. He brings sins into the open: Jos; 1 K 21:20; Is 22:14; 2 Mac 12:38. God is just and his commands demand that we be just: Ex 20:1-17. See 50.</p> <p>37 The only God, Holy, Jealous and Just, is a God who works in history and asks his people to do the same, differently from the other gods of nature (see com. on 1 K 17). The God Liberator (Ex 14:15; 16; 17) also demand the conquest of the land of Canaan: Ex 34:11-13; Num 14 and com. on Ex 32.</p> <p>38 From then on instead of only remembering the past, the religion of Israel will also look forward to new liberations (Jdg 4-6; 1 S 17; 2 K 18-19; 1 Mac 4; Lk 1:73; Acts 1:6) and it will have new goals: Is 40-42, 65-66; Zec 8:20-23; Dn 7:26-27; Acts 1:8.</p> <p>39 On Sinai God celebrates a Covenant with the people who will be his servant as he works in history: Is 49: 1-9; Ps 2; Ps 149:6-9.</p> <p>God makes them a people of priests and a consecrated nation: Ex 19:6, 24:3-11; 1 P 2:9. Renewal of the Covenant: Jos 8:30; Jos 24; 2 K 23:21; Ne 8. He establishes a New Covenant: Jer 31:31; Ezra 36:22; Mal 3:1.</p> <p>Hebrew tradition will consider Moses as the first of the prophets (Dt 18:18-20, 34:10-12). It states that Moses was the first one to recognize the true face of God: Merciful and Gracious, rich in Love and Fidelity: Ex 34:1-9.</p>
4. Time of the Kings	40	<p>Prophecy will develop in Israel from the time of David onwards. Prophets affirm that God is Love and Fidelity, especially in Deuteronomy.</p> <p>Love and Fidelity refrain of Psalm 89: verses 2, 3, 15, 25, 29, 34, 50. Dt 7:9; 2 S 2:6.</p> <p>Love (or Gift, or grace) of God for Israel. God chooses Israel who does not deserve it (Dt 7:7, 9:5, 10:15); and gives her the land (the land of Canaan) as inheritance: Dt 4:1, 4:38, 6:10. God makes the Israelites his children: Dt 32:5-6; Hos 11:1; Is 1:2.</p> <p>He gives prosperity in the Land: Dt 7:12-15, 8:18-19. Israel will keep God's gifts if she obeys and loves God: Dt 4:40, 6:10-19, 11:12-21.</p>
a) The first prophets teach that God is Love and Fidelity	41	
	42	<p>If Israel fails God, he will take away their prosperity and their land: Dt 4:24-31, 28:15-68. But the ever-faithful God will convert Israel after punishing her: Dt 30:1-10. A remnant of Israel will be saved: see 1 K 19:18 and 60-67. Israel's destiny: cho-</p>

		sen, punished and renewed: Dt 32. Then I will love them: Hos 14:5.
	43	Love (or Gift) of God for David . He gives him the Kingdom and makes him his own: 2 S 7:12-16. In Israel, only kings were considered as God's children: 2 S 7:14; Ps 89:27-28; Ps 2:7. Because of his love for David, as ruler God looks after his descendants: 1 K 8:25, 11:34. Because of their sins, they deserve to be rejected by God: Jer 22:24. But God, being merciful and faithful, will again establish a descendant of David as ruler (see 60-67).
	44	Fidelity or Truth : it is the same word in Hebrew and it is similar to amen which means: it is so! (2 Cor 2:18-20). Every word of God is faithful and it will be fulfilled: 1 K 8:26; Ne 9:33. God's faithfulness to Israel cannot be denied: Rom 11:28; 15:8.
	45	In politics, kings must respect the demands of the Covenant (Dt 17:16-20; 1 K 13; 2 K 9:6-10). While priests condemn disobeying the Law of God (2 Chr 26:16), prophets focus on all that betrays the spirit of the Covenant: 2 Chr 20:36, 25:15.
5. Time of the Kings	50	You will love God with your whole heart, your whole soul... : Dt 6:4. Love for God, an interior attitude, is worth more than worship : Hos 6:6 and costly sacrifices: Mic 6:7-8; Jer 2:2.
b) The great prophets speak of Love, Justice	51	True love comes from the knowledge of God : Is 1:3; Jer 31:34; Hos 2:22, 3:5. To know God is to recognize his actions in events: Is 1:1-6, 22:8-14, 28:23-29, 30, 31:1-9, 42:18-25; Jer 6:10-16; Am 4:4-13; and to listen to his prophets: Is 6:9-12, 8:11-18, 41:21-29; Jer 13:15-17; Am 5:6-8; Zec 7:9-12.
	52	Love and the knowledge of God will be the fruits of the New Covenant , profound gifts of God: Jer 31:31; and work of the Spirit : Ezk 36:27-30; Jl 3:1-2; the covenant of God with the humble and the poor in Spirit: Zep 3:11.
	53	The Covenant must turn into a real marriage . Israel, the bride of Yahweh: Is 54:61, 10, 62:1-5. Israel compared to the unfaithful bride : Hos 2; Jer 2-3; Ezk 16 and 23. The future wedding in Love and Fidelity: Hos 2:20-25; Jn 1:17; Rev 21:2-4, 21:9.
	54	God, Just and Holy demands social justice . Return to a society of equality and fraternity: Jer 34:8-19. The rich as an oppressor : Is 5:8-9; Mic 3:9-11; Mic 2:9. Inequality: a source of violence : Is 5:7; Ezk 22:23-25, 24:6-8; Am 5:7-13; Mic 2:1-5. Unjust laws : Is 10:1-2; Am 5:7.
	55	God detests the pride coming from money: Is 2:6-22, 3:16-24; as well as the pride coming from power: Is 14:5-21, 36:22-29, 47; Heb 2:6-13.
	56	God prepares a destructive Judgment , called the Day of Yahweh : Is 1:24-28; Am 5:14-21; Zep 1:14-18, 3:1-8. A Judgment which will reestablish justice: Is 2:1-5, 4:2-6; Ezk 34; and will bring about final peace: Is 9:1-7, 11:1-9, 32:15-20. God prepares a City of Justice : Is 1:26, 60; Zec 8:1-17 and Triumph for the humble : Is 26:1-6; Zep 3:12-18, and Consolation for the oppressed : Is 61:1-3.
6. God the Redeemer and his Messiah	60	In the Bible the word Redemption means the same as Liberation . One liberates a thing or person that was under the power of another in order to make it/him/her one's own: It is some-

		<p>what like buying. See in Lev 25 the redemption of slaves and lands. More still in Lev 2:20, 3:13, 4.</p> <p>61 God the Redeemer frees his people from the power of foreigners: Jdg 2:13-17; Dt 4:34; Ex 20:1, 3:8. After the first liberation from Egypt and many other liberations (Jdg 3:4; 1 S 7; 2 K 19), it was becoming evident during the time of the Exile that a definitive liberation was near: Is 40, 41:8, 43:1-7.</p> <p>62 God also led them to hope that by saving his people he would give peace to all the earth: Gen 12:3; Is 49:6. This hope took shape with King David: Israel believed they had found the perfect king in this anointed one (or Messiah). Gen 49:10; Num 24:7 and 17 refer to him.</p> <p>63 Later, they considered David and his descendants as being sacred and they hoped for the coming of a Messiah like David: Ps 132, 72; Jer 30:9. But they also understood that the Messiah would surpass all the rulers of the earth and that he would establish a kingdom of justice and peace: Is 4:2, 9:1-7, 11:1-9; Ps 2; Ps 110.</p> <p>64 During the Exile, the author of the second part of Isaiah sees in the believing remnant of Israel the Servant of Yahweh, an instrument of his salvation: Is 49:1-6, 50:1-9, 52:13-53:12.</p> <p>65 The figure of a Suffering Messiah also appears in Zec 12:10-12. In Dn 7:13 the Son of Man, who comes from God himself, was perhaps an image of the Holy People (7:27). Jesus, however, will consider it as announcing himself: Mt 24:30 and 26:64.</p> <p>66 Various biblical texts leave us in doubt. Will it not be God himself who will visit people to meet those who are waiting for him? Is 25:6-10, 7:12, 63:19; Zep 3:14-18; Zec 2:14-17.</p> <p>67 When the Bible speaks of the Shepherd who will rule over Israel, it sometimes calls him the Messiah King (Jer 23:4; Mic 5:4; Zec 13:7), sometimes God (Is 40:1; Mic 7:14; Song of Songs 2:16; Ps 23:1, 28:9, 80:2) and easily associates the one with the other (Ezk 34:11-25).</p>
7. Time of Judaism: the religion of the Law	70	<p>The Law sometimes means all the laws of the Bible (Mt 22:36), or the Bible itself (Jn 12:34) or at times the Jewish religion (Gal 2:19). The Law and the Prophets, or The Law, the Prophets and the Psalms are two ways of referring to the Bible (Mt 7:12; Lk 24:44).</p>
	71	<p>The Law reveals two basic demands: Justice and Holiness. Holiness, that is, respect toward God and the rules of purity. The first is found in the Ten Commandments of Moses (Ex 20:1-17) and the second in the commandments of God expressed in Ex 34:10-26.</p> <p>Laws of Justice: Ex 21:22; Lev 19:10-18, 19:35-36; Dt 19 and 24.</p> <p>Laws of Holiness: Lev 17-18; Dt 23.</p>
	72	<p>The Law was both the expression of God's will and of Jewish culture. In the Law, we find God's attempt to transform the customs of Israel and to educate believers: Ex 15:15; com. on Lev 8:11, 11:1, 24:17.</p>
	73	<p>The Law differentiates between ordinary days and days dedicated to God, the Sabbath: Gen 2:3; Ex 20:8, 23:12, 34:21; Num 15:32; 28:9-10. New Moons: Num 28:11-15.</p> <p>The three feasts of Passover, Weeks (Pentecost) and Tabernacles (or booths): Dt. 16; Ex 23:14-17; Lev 23; Num 28:11-31; Num 29:1-6 and 12-39.</p>

		Especially about Passover : Ex 12:1-17 and 43-51. The Day of Atonement : Lev 16; Num 29:7.
74		The Law determines what is pure and impure , namely the requirements for participation in divine worship: Lev 15:31. Circumcision : Gen 17:9-14; Ex 12:48. Cleanliness in sexual life : Lev 21:1-8; Lev 15. Diseases : Lev 13:14. Contact with the dead and with unclean animals: Lev 11:24-40, 21:1-12, 17:15-16. On not mixing materials or harnessing animals of different species: Lev 19:19.
75		The Law forbids certain foods : Blood : Gen 9:4; Dt 12:16; Lev 17:10-14. Fat : Dt 14:21; Lev 7:22-25. Certain animals : Dt 14:3; Lev 11:1-23.
76		The Law includes sexual morality : Ex 21:7-11; Lev 18, 20:11-21, 21:13-15; Dt 22:13-30.
77		The Law teaches solidarity within God's people : You will love your neighbor (from the same race or people): Lev 19:18, but it advocates separation from and aggressiveness towards foreigners : Ex 23:32; Dt 22:9-11, 23:4 and it especially condemns marriages with foreign women: Dt 7:3-5. Forms of solidarity with the poor : Ex 22:25-27; Dt 22:1-4, 24:10-22, 23:20; Lev 19:9-11, 23:22. Respect for the help- less, widows, orphans and strangers : Ex 22:22-24. The Jubilee Year : Lev 25:13.
78		The Law teaches about gifts to God and to his priests : Tithing : Ex 23:19, 34:26; Num 18:21-32; Dt 14:22-29. Sacrifices : Lev 1:7. Voluntary sacrifices : Ex 25:1; Num 6; Dt 16:16-17. Rights of the priests : Lev 7:9, 7:34-36; Num 18:18-25; Dt 18:8-19.
8. Wisdom teaching	80	In the Bible, Solomon is the first and the model of wisdom teachers : 1 K 4:29-34; Sir 47:14. The dream and the judgment of Solomon: 1 K 3. Various wisdom books written after him are attributed to him: Pro 1:1; Ecl 1:1; Wis 9:12.
	81	Wisdom means : practical intelligence to govern one's house and to achieve success: 1 K 10:6; Ezk 28:1-7. The ability to put one's life in order according to the Law of God: Pro 16:1-11; Sir 15:1-3; 24:23-30.
	82	How to obtain wisdom ? Wisdom is a gift of God: Sir 1:1; Wis 6:14-16, 9:1-6. It can be found in the sayings of wise men and in meditating on their proverbs: Pro 1:6, 13:20; Sir 6:34-36; in overcoming one's whims: Sir 11:1-10, 23:1-7; Pro 16:32; in perseverance in trials: Sir 2:1-14; and in studying: Sir 6:23-33; in meditating on the Law: Sir 32:7-24, 39:1-11, 51:17-21; Ps 119; and in reflecting on one's experience: Ecl 1:12-18, 2:1-11; Sir 34:9-11.
	83	Wise people ask: What are human beings ? Almost all of the Old Testament was written by Jews of Hebraic culture and they express the concepts of that culture which, unlike ours, does not distinguish in a person a spiritual part, or soul, and a material part, or body. Instead, they saw a person as a whole and in speaking of flesh, body, and heart, they were referring to various human aspects. Man is called flesh and blood since he is a mortal creature. Man is called soul because each one is a liv-

ing being. **Soul** means breath (Gen 2:7 and 7:22) and the Jews readily identified breath with life (Ps 104:29). Moreover, they believed that life was in the blood (Lev 17:10-14). The **spirit** means openness to God. The **heart** refers to the inner self, not only to feelings, but also to mind and conscience. Very often we should translate **my soul** as: myself, my life, or **I**.

Different from animals, the human soul receives something of the Spirit, or the **breath** of God (Gen 2:7). The spirit is both the human spirit and the Spirit of God in a person (Ecl 12:7).

Humans are free and responsible for their actions: Sir 15:11-21 and 17:3-14.

Humans are sinners from birth (Ps 51:7; Job 10 and 13). The weight of sin upon them is the result of the sin of their ancestors: they bear the consequences of those errors: Gen 3; Jer 31:29; Lm 5:7; Ps 106:6; Tb 3:3.

The great evil for each person is **death**: Job 14; Ecl 3:18-22, 6:1-10, 8:7; Sir 42:9-14.

84 How must man and woman be? The equality of men and women is affirmed at the beginning of the Bible: see commentaries on Gen 1:26 and 2:20. However, this is contrary to the whole approach of **Hebrew culture which is male-centered**. The inferiority of women admitted by the Law (Dt 24:1; Num 5:11; Lev 27:3-7), is accepted by wise men: Ecl 7:27-28. Women are seen as being responsible for men's sins (Pro 7:5-27); they must be watched (Sir 42:9-12, 25:15-26) and they are praised when they serve their husbands well: Pro 31:30-31; Sir 36:23-26. It is only in the Song of Songs that a woman's equality in love is recognized.

85 Work and human effort are the conditions for excellence: Pro 6:6-11, 27:23-27; Sir 7:15. Work keeps people occupied (especially slaves) and disciplined: Sir 33:25-28; yet it is not everything in life: Sir 2:4-11, 4:7-12.

86 Regarding social relations, the social order with its distinctions between rich and poor, between kings and subjects, is accepted: Ecl 5:7-8, 4:1-3; Sir 8:1-3. The king is respected as God's representative: Pro 16:10 and 24:21. However, his company is dangerous (Ecl 8:2-4; Sir 13:9-10) and his whims are feared: Sir 16:12-15.

Inferiors (slaves) as well as the young must be watched (Sir 33:25-30); their freedom cannot be trusted and they must be trained firmly: Sir 30:1-13.

87 In order to please God we must be humble (Sir 10:6-26), **merciful** (Sir 28:1-7) and we must be **generous with the poor** (Job 30 and 31; Sir 4:1-10, 29:1-13).

88 How does God reward the just? The wise people of the Old Testament did not know yet of the hereafter (Ecl 3:17-22, 8:7-8; Sir 17:27-30). Therefore, knowing that God is just, they made an effort to examine divine retribution in this life. God is just and he does not leave evil people unpunished (Job 18 and 20). God rewards his people, maybe not with money and a long life (Pro 10:22-30, 11:20-21; 13:21-23), but at least by giving them peace and security. He may test them (Job 36; Wis 3:1-6), but in the end God will reward them: Wis 3:5; Sir 1:23, 11:21-26. And yet, some point out many exceptions to this retribution: Job 21 and 24; Ecl 7:15-16, 8:11-14.

See also **90-92**.

89 Wisdom of God and human wisdom. Gradually wisdom writers

		realize in the Wisdom of God something distinct from God, though it is part of him: Pro 8:22 and 30. Through Wisdom, God created the world (Pro 8:22-30; Sir 24:3-4) and Wisdom shines forth in him: Sir 43. Wisdom guarantees the unfolding of the plan of salvation: Wis 10 and Sir 24:9-29. Wisdom completely surpasses the human mind (Job 9 and 28; Ecl 3:10) and it is only communicated through God's revelation (Bar 3:9-29 and 4:1-2; Sir 24:8-12 and 23-25). Wisdom is nourishment coming forth from the mouth of God : Dt 8:3; Pro 9:5; Sir 24:3 and 19; Ps 19:11 and 81:17.
9. The Resurrection and the hereafter	90	According to the teaching of Jesus (Lk 24:27) the whole Bible announced the Resurrection, for wherever the Bible speaks of the covenant of the living God with mortals, it is understood that God means to share life with us forever: Ex 3:6 and Mk 12:26; Ps 16:11, 23:6, 73:25-26.
	91	But Old Testament believers, who only spoke of a sad and strange survival in Sheol , or the Place of the Dead, did not see that: Is 38:18-19; Ps 88:12-13, 115:17-18.
	92	The persecution at the time of the Maccabees forced them to reflect on the fate of the martyrs and it became obvious to them that there would be no justice of God if he did not raise them to share a happy life with him. Since Hebrew culture did not make the distinction between body and soul (see 83), they said that people would emerge from dust, or that they would have life again on Judgment day: Dn 12:2; 2 Mac 7.
	93	At that same time Greek culture influenced Israel: the Greeks saw in each person something material, the body , and the soul (which gives life), oftentimes different from the spirit , in search of truth and good: 1 Thes 5:23. For this reason, Wisdom, the last of the Old Testament books, says that the soul (or the spirit) is immortal and it meets God at death: Wis 2 and 3. This conviction will later be found in all the books of the New Testament: Mt 10:28; 2 Cor 5:1-8.

The New Testament: THE FAITH OF THE APOSTLES

10. The person of Jesus, Jesus and Mary	100	After speaking so many times through the prophets, God spoke one last time through his Son (Heb 1:1) when the fullness of time had come (Gal 4:4). Jesus is the only and eternal Son (Col 1:13-15), the Word who is in God and is God present to the Father (Jn 1:1; Rev 19:13).
	101	The Son of God became man (Jn 1:14). Jesus, true man and not an apparition, nor God disguised as human, took the form of a slave and died on the cross (Phil 2:6-11; Gal 4:4). Other than at the Transfiguration (Lk 9:32), the glory which was his as Son did not manifest itself in his humanity (Jn 1:15 and 17:5); rather Jesus wished to grow by means of suffering like anyone else (Heb 5:7-8). From the start Jesus was conscious of who he was (Lk 2:49; Heb 10:5). It did not however mean that he knew everything (com. on Mk 6:2), for he discovered the demands of his mission gradually (com. on Lk 3:21 and 9:31).
	102	Jesus enters into our history . The Gospel situates his birth (Lk 2:1; Mt 2:1; Jn 7:42), the beginning of his public ministry (Lk 3:1-2; 3:22), his death at the time of Pilate, the governor, and

	<p>Caiaphas, the High Priest (Jn 11:49). He was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth (Mt 2:23; Lk 4:16) where he worked; he never left to become the disciple of any master (Jn 7:15).</p> <p>103 Jesus begins by preaching in the synagogues (Lk 4:15; Mk 1:21) and by initiating the Reign of God (Mk 1:15 and 110-118). He gathers crowds (Mt 5:1; 14:14). After a while a crisis takes place (Jn 6:66) and Jesus devotes himself to forming his disciples (Mk 9:30) who will become the nucleus of his Church (Mt 16:16; Lk 22:24-32). Then, he prepares for his death (130-138) crowned by his Resurrection (see 140-148).</p> <p>104 Jesus performed miracles as the prophets had done but in a different way, as someone with divine authority (Mk 2:27; Mt 5:21, 5:28, 5:32). He easily puts himself in the place which belongs to God (Mk 2:1-12; Lk 7:36-50; Mk 8:34-38). He declares he is one with the Father (Mt 11:26-27; Jn 5:18, 8:58, 10:30, 10:37-38).</p> <p>105 Jesus usually refused being called Son of God (Mk 3:11, 5:7) because this title was traditionally given to the kings of Israel (2 S 7:14; Ps 89:27), and Jesus was son in a very different way. He preferred to be called Son of Man (Mt 26:64) referring to Daniel 7:13 (see 65). But, first, Peter (Mt 16:16) and, later, the Church recognized Jesus as the Son of God (Heb 9:20). See 140-145.</p> <p>106 The eternal Son of the Father did not come down from heaven to humankind, but he was born from a people, Israel, and from a woman (Gal 4:4), Mary, uniquely associated to the Father's divine plan (com. on Lk 1:26). The one who was to be welcomed by the "virgin of Israel" (Is 7:14; Zec 2:14, 9:9) was born of a virgin mother (Mt 1:18; Lk 1:26 and com. on Mk 6:1). Mary's faith and consent allowed the work of the Spirit to be accomplished in her (Lk 1:45).</p> <p>107 Mary intervenes in the Gospel: for the sanctification of John the Baptist (Lk 1:39); at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Jn 2; Cana) and in order to welcome us as adopted children (Jn 19:25). She is mentioned in the birth and infancy of Jesus (Lk 2; Mt 2). Two texts compel us to realize that her greatness does not come from having given physical birth to Jesus, but rather from her being the model of believers (Mk 3:31; Lk 11:27). Mary is also mentioned in the first nucleus of the Church (Acts 1:14).</p> <p>108 Here are some biblical texts which help us express what Mary means to God and to the church: Gen 3:15; Is 7:14; Song 4:12-16; Pro 8:22-31; Jdt 13:18-20, 16:9-10; Rev 12.</p>
<p>11. Jesus proclaims the Reign of God</p>	<p>110 Jesus begins by proclaiming a new age, announced by the prophets, the age of God's favor (Mk 1:14; Lk 4:21, 4:19).</p> <p>111 Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God (or Kingdom of heaven: Mt 5:1 and com. of Mt 6:9). His miracles are signs that this Kingdom of God is already in the midst of humankind (Mt 11:26; Lk 17:21) with the power to cure all their ills: Mt 9:35.</p> <p>112 The Kingdom of God means that now God reveals himself as Father (Mt 6:1, 6:9, 6:18...) and he must be acknowledged as such by his children (Mt 11:26-27). The whole newness of the Kingdom lies in a new awareness of God (Jn 4:23), an awareness of the Father (Jn 7:28-29) and of the Son (Jn 17:3), erasing the old image of a punishing God (Lk 9:54 and 14:2;</p>

	<p>Jn 9:3) with mighty power (Mt 11:29; Jn 12:34-35) and very distant from us (Jn 14:8).</p> <p>113 The Kingdom of Heaven is proclaimed to the poor first (Lk 4:18; 6:20; 7:22). They are the first to enter it (Lk 16:9) and they will have a decisive role in the spreading of the Kingdom: Lk 12:32-34; 1 Cor 1:26; Jas 2:5-7. This is not because the poor are better but because the power of God is better manifested in human weakness (1 S 17; 1 Cor 1:29; 1 Mac 3:18; 2 Cor 12:9) and because God loves to save what was lost (Is 49:2; Lk 1:25; 19:10). He humbles the proud and raises the humble: Lk 16:15; 1 S 2:3-8.</p> <p>It is rather significant that the first promises of the Kingdom are addressed to a great king (2 S 7:13; 1 K 8:24) and the last to the poor of Yahweh (Zep 3:12; Zec 9:9; Ps 132:15), the oppressed believers (Dn 3:30; 1 Mac 2:7) exploited by the rich and the opportunists (Ps 55, 58, 123:3). These poor welcome the Gospel more readily (Lk 2:8, 10:21, 4:18).</p> <p>114 The fact that God reigns does not mean that from then on humankind will leave him to act alone, but rather that people will act with more freedom because they are freed from prejudices (Mk 7:15; Acts 10:15 and 34) and laws (Lk 14:3; Col 2:16) and are concerned about developing their talents (Mt 25:14-30).</p> <p>115 Salvation is not achieved from above by eradicating evil (Mt 13:24; 26:53): it is a seed sown among humankind (Mt 13:1, 13:31) that grows slowly (Mk 4:26), first within the person (Mk 4:14; Mt 13:44; Jn 3:3); and then becomes a visible reality (Mt 5:14; Lk 12:32) which is concretized in the Church (Mt 16:18).</p> <p>116 The contemporaries of Jesus thought that the Kingdom would begin after the Judgment of God which would separate the good from the bad (Is 1:25-28, 4:2-5; Zep 1:14; Mal 3:1-2; Mt 3:9-12). Jesus states that the judgment is not for now (Mt 13:32; Acts 1:7): nonetheless, even now each person is being judged by his/her attitude toward the Gospel (Jn 3:18-20, 12:46) and so are the nations (Lk 10:13, 14:19; Mt 23:37).</p> <p>117 Jesus presents himself as the One sent by the Father (Jn 6:29, 10:36) and the apostles discover the unique relationship which unites him to the Father (Lk 11:1; Mk 1:35; Lk 6:12; Mk 14:37; Jn 4:31-34, 16:32). Jesus says: My Father (Mt 7:21, 10:32, 16:17; Mk 25:34) and your Father (Mt 5:16, 10:20). He never says Our Father.</p> <p>118 Jesus asks the Jews to recognize that they were living in an exceptional moment (Lk 12:54; Mt 11:21, 12:41) and that they had to overcome the crisis that divided them (Lk 12:57, 13:5) by accepting this new vision of God the Father and the primacy of mercy (Lk 15) and reconciliation (Mt 19:23).</p> <p>119 The great majority of the Jewish people did not respond to this call (Mt 12:45; Lk 13:34) and their fanatical religion brought them to the catastrophe foretold by Jesus (Mt 21:43, 22:7, 23:35-37; Lk 21:23 and 23:28-31).</p>
<p>12. Jesus prepares his Church 120</p>	<p>The Church (Acts 9:31) and the churches (Gal 1:22). The Church of God (Acts 20:28) and the churches of God (1 Cor 11:6; 1 Thes 2:14). The Church is the spiritual people of God. Church means the Assembly convened by God, or the As-</p>

		sembly of God's elect. They are also called the saints: the Church of the saints (1 Cor 14:33).
121		To renew Israel and then to extend the Kingdom to all the nations (Mt 10:5, 15:24), Jesus plans his Church founded on Peter (Mt 16:18) and the apostles (Mt 10:1). His people's lack of faith makes him think of the Church as a new people of God, open to all nations (Mt 8:10; Jn 10; Mt 21:43, 22:1, 23:37) in which the Kingdom will be concretized (See com. on Mt 13:31).
122		Jesus is followed by disciples who believe in him (Lk 6:17, 19:37). Among them he chooses those he wishes (Mk 3:13; Jn 15:16) to be his apostles (Mk 3:16). They will form the core of his Church (Lk 22:28-30). Jesus asks self-sacrifice from them (Mk 8:34; Lk 9:57) and total fidelity to him (Mt 10:37; Lk 14:25).
123		Jesus teaches them the foundations of co-existence in the Church. The greatest will be the servant of the others (Mk 10:43; Mt 18:6 and 10). No one will be called Father, Master or Teacher, but authority will respect the fundamental equality of all and their direct relationship to God (Mt 23:8). The greatest Law will be love (Jn 13:34-35 and 15:12-14). Love will be expressed primarily in forgiveness (Mt 18:21 and 23) and in concern for unity (Jn 17:21). Church decisions will be ratified by God (Mt 16:19 and 18:18).
124		The growth of the Kingdom in a world which rejects light will be a source of conflicts and will bring about persecutions to the Church (Lk 12:49-53; Jn 15:18-25; Mk 13:13; Mt 5:11; Rev 12:13-18). The first crisis will be the destruction of the Jewish nation (Mk 13:5-23, 13:28-31). See com. on Mt 24. Other crises will follow until the last one which will witness the return of Christ and the Judgment: Mt 16:27; Acts 3:21; 1 Thes 4:16; Mk 13:24-27; 2 Thes 2; Rev 19:11-21, 20:7.
13. The Sacrifice	130	The death of Jesus is not accidental. (Heb 10:5). From the start he prepared to face it (Mt 20:28; Jn 11:9, 12:27). He predicted it many times (Mk 8:31, 9:9, 10:32; Lk 13:31). He assumed full responsibility for it (Jn 10:28-30, 19:30), knowing that this Hour was the hour of his triumph (Jn 7:6-8, 12:31, 17:1-2).
	131	Jesus' sacrifice is like a second revelation of the justice of God (Rom 3:25-26) completing that of the Old Testament. The punishing God banished sinners (Gen 3:22-23); God-become-human heals evil people and accepts their rejection of him (Jn 1:11; Mt 21:37). The liberating God demonstrated his sovereignty (Ex 15; Dn 4 and 5); Jesus chooses the last place in order to save (Mt 20:28).
	132	Those who became victims of society have greater power to disturb us after their death. Jesus chooses the last place (Phil 2:8) in order to bring to repentance the very society which condemned him (Zec 12:10; Jn 19:37; Rev 1:7), and in so doing, he draws all people to himself (Jn 12:32).
	133	Since the beginning, people have offered sacrifices . The holocaust (that is when the victim is completely burned) expressed a person's total submission to God: Lev 1:1; 1 S 15:22; Ps 51:18; Heb 10:6-7. The blood poured out atoned for sins (Lev 5, 17:11; Heb 9:22). The eating of victims in a communion banquet caused the participants to share in divine holiness (1 Cor 10:18). The sacrifice of the lamb served to renew God's covenant with his people (Ex 12; Ps 50:5).

	<p>134 Jesus' death and resurrection constitute the new and final sacrifice that replaces all the previous ones (Heb 7:27, 9:25). This is why Jesus is called Lamb of God (Jn 1:29). His sacrifice is identified with the New Passover (Passover means: Passage) leading to holy and eternal life (Lk 12:50, 22:16; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 5:7; com. on 2 Mac 15:12).</p> <p>135 The sacrifice of Jesus enabled him to reach his perfection and to receive the gifts that make him the Leader and the Head of all humanity (Is 53:11-12; Acts 2:33; Heb 2:10, 5:7). See 203.</p> <p>136 With the pouring of his blood, his painful death obtains the forgiveness of sins for all people (Is 53:10; Mt 26:28; Rom 3:21, 5:9; 5:19, 8:3); it reconciles us with God (Rom 5:10, 5:20; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 1:21); it redeems us (1 P 1:18); it gives us freedom (Rom 7:4; Eph 1:17) and it begins a process that brings a solution to all the contradictions in the universe (Rom 8:19; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20).</p> <p>137 The sacrifice of Christ reveals the love of God for us in the Father's great generosity (Rom 8:3; Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:10) as well as in the Son's obedience (Mk 14:36; Rom 5:6; 1 Jn 3:16). In Jesus' pierced heart (Jn 19:34) we contemplate the mystery of the love of God who wished to amaze us with his capacity for total surrender in order to restore trust to his lost creation (Rom 5:8).</p> <p>138 Jesus' death and resurrection teach us the meaning of our own life: the one who gives his life comes to a new birth (Lk 17:33; Jn 12:24-26, 16:21, 17:9). His death and resurrection point out to us the demands of genuine love (Jn 15:13) and of ministry (2 Cor 6:3-10, 12:14) as well as the value of our own trials (Jn 15:2; 2 Cor 12:9-10).</p>
<p>14. The Resurrection, Jesus Lord of History</p>	<p>140 Jesus is risen as he had said he would (Mk 9:9-10), according to the Scriptures (Lk 24:25-27; 1 Cor 15:4; Acts 2:30). The appearances of the risen Jesus in Jerusalem and in Galilee (Mt 28; Mk 16; Lk 24; Jn 20 and 21; 1 Cor 15:5-8).</p> <p>The Resurrection has a double meaning: Jesus has returned to life (Lk 24:5; Acts 2:24) and Jesus has been glorified or exalted (Jn 17:1; Acts 2:33, 3:13). Jesus' last appearance (or the Ascension) expresses this second aspect of the Resurrection (Mt 28:17-20; Lk 24:50; Acts 1:9).</p> <p>141 In being raised, the humanity of Jesus is totally transformed by divine energy, receiving the fullness of life which the Father communicates to his son (Jn 1:14, 17:1; Acts 2:32; Rom 1:3). Now Jesus is recognized as Son of God. Being the Son, splendor of the Father (Heb 1:1), Jesus, Son-of-God-become-human, is the manifestation of the invisible God in this created universe (Jn 14:9; Col 1:15). In him the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled (Mt 12:41-42, 23:35-36; Jn 8:56; Rev 5). Now as a human being, he is the head of all creation (Col 1:18), above all creatures, whether material or spiritual (Heb 1:4-14).</p> <p>142 Jesus has come from God (Jn 13:3, 16:27, 17:8) and returns to the Father through his death and resurrection (Jn 16:28) so that the filial relationship which unites him to the Father can come to perfection (Acts 2:33; Rom 1:4). To express her faith in Jesus, the Son-of-God-become-human, one God with the Father, the Church calls him Lord. Of the two names denoting God—God and Lord—the Church kept the first for the</p>

		<p>Father and the second for Christ (see Rom 10:9; Phil 1:11; com. on Jn 11:2, 13:2, 20:2).</p> <p>143 Jesus replaces the figure of God-Alone with that of God-Communion. Communion between the Father and the Son (Jn 1:1, 1:18; com. on Jn 5:19; Mt 11:26; Jn 13:32, 17). A communion in the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16, 15:26).</p> <p>144 The church of the Apostles baptizes in the unique name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19) and acknowledges only one God in three Divine Persons which we call the Holy Trinity: 1 Cor 6:11, 12:4; 2 Cor 13:14; Rev 1.</p> <p>145 The risen Jesus is now Lord of History: that is to say that he rules over and directs the material and spiritual forces, visible or invisible, which shape our history: Jn 12:31; Rev 1:18, 6; Col 1:18, 2:10 and com. on Mk 16:9. Paul shows Christ to be superior to the heavenly powers which, in those days, were believed to be in charge of human fate and history (Eph 1:10, 21; Col 11:6). This reign of Christ means that humanity has come of age (Gal 4:3-5).</p> <p>146 From then on salvation takes place through the Name of Jesus, that is, through the divine power (Phil 2:9-10) which radiates from him (Acts 4:30; 1 Jn 2:12; com. on Mk 16:17). Every saving act proceeds at the same time from Christ and from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 3:16-17) and is attributed to Christ the Lord or to his Spirit (Jn 6:35-36, 7:38-39; Mk 9:38; Lk 11:20; Eph 4:7 and 1 Cor 12:7).</p>
15. The New Creation— gift of the Spirit— the Mystery of Reconciliation	150	<p>Jesus did not come only to correct sins, but to renew creation (Jn 5:20). This new creation is achieved through the gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 15:45). Above all, this work means a resurrection of people and universal reconciliation (Jn 5:21).</p>
	151	<p>Jesus' violation of the Sabbath (Mk 2:28; Jn 5:29) and the Sabbath replacement by Sunday (see com. on Acts 20:7) reveals his intention to rearrange the first creation which took place in 6 days (Jn 5:17 and com. on Gen 2:3; Rev 3:14). The fulfillment of what the prophets had announced (Is 25:6-10, 32:15-20, 65:17-19; Ezk 37, 47:1-12). The death of Jesus expresses the death of all that preceded him (2 Cor 5:14; Gal 2:19). Sins are forgiven (Rom 6:10; Heb 9:28). The laws and forms of religion taught in the Bible itself are no longer valid (Rom 7:4; Gal 4:5, 5:4-6; Col 2:16).</p> <p>All distinctions of sex, class and nation are abolished (Gal 3:28, 6:15; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11). We are new creatures (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Col 1:15; Eph 2:10,15) moving towards a perfection similar to that of God the Father's (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). This new creation must embrace the whole universe: Rom 8:18-25.</p>
	152	<p>The new creation especially implies revoking the laws of the Old Testament: they were no more than the shadow of the definitive realities (Col 2:17; Heb 8:5, 10:1; Mt 11:13) which begin with Christ. To rely on circumcision (Gal 5:2, 6:12) or on the other practices of the Law (Col 2:16; Rom 14:14-20) is to go backwards and to deny God's grace (Col 2:20; Gal 2:18). The person who wishes to be righteous in terms of practices and merits (Lk 18:9; Phil 3:7-9) loses genuine justice and holiness, the gift of God in Christ: Col 2:11; Phil 3:9.</p>
	153	<p>The new creation is achieved through the gift of the Holy Spirit</p>

		<p>who gives life (Ps 104:30; Jn 6:63; Rom 8:2). Jesus' glorification had to precede the gift of the Spirit (Jn 7:37-39; Acts 2:32-33; Jn 16:7). The Spirit makes us free (Gal 4:7, 5:13-18), forgives our sins (Jn 20:22; 1 Cor 6:11). He makes us sons and daughters (Rom 8:14-17); he makes known to us God's mysterious designs (1 Cor 2:10-12; 1 Jn 2:20). The revelations of the Spirit in the church are the first fruits (Rom 8:23) and the assurance (Eph 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22, 5:5) of our complete transformation in the world to come (1 Jn 3:2-3; Rom 8:18).</p>
	154	<p>The new creation does not know death, which is a consequence of sin (Rom 5:12; Rev 20:15, 21). It is true that the part of us which is called exterior (2 Cor 4:16) or old self (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22; Col 3:9) or flesh (2 Cor 4:11; Gal 6:8; Rom 8:3) moves toward death (Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 5:16, 13:4; 1 P 3:18). But the inner self (Rom 7:22; Eph 3:16) is alive through sharing in the Spirit (Rom 8:10-11).</p>
	155	<p>The risen Jesus gives us the power of the resurrection (Jn 5:25; Col 2:12, 3:1; Rom 5:21, 6:6, 8:4) and he will raise us (Jn 5:28, 6:39-58, 11:25; Rom 8:10; Phil 3:20).</p>
	156	<p>Jesus reveals the Mystery (Eph 3:3; Rev 10:7), that is the amazing plan which was kept secret (Eph 3:9; Rom 16:25; Col 1:26). The entire work of creation, salvation and sanctification had for its goal the praise of God's grace and generosity (Eph 1:6,12). Everything was entrusted to the Beloved Son (Eph 1:1-6) and through him all receive it. All peoples are called to form a single body in him (Eph 1:22, 3:5-6) and through him they come to share the very Glory of God (Col 1:27; Eph 2:6).</p>
	157	<p>This mysterious plan was initiated with the salvation of Israel (Rom 11:25) and it extends to the whole universe (Col 1:27). This Mystery demands universal reconciliation in a world divided by nature, prejudices and sins (Eph 2:14-16; see 151: differences).</p>
	158	<p>The Apostles' ministry is to proclaim and extend this reconciliation (2 Cor 5:20-21; Rom 15:16) already announced by Jesus (Lk 4:19); the essence of the religion of the New Testament consists in achieving this reconciliation (Rom 15:16).</p>
	159	<p>In this mission Jesus appears as the unique Mediator between God and humankind (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 9:15, 12:24) since he is the one who intercedes for us (Heb 2:17-18, 4:15-16) and obtains for us the blessings of the New Covenant (Acts 13:34; Heb 9:11, 10:20).</p>
16. Salvation through faith	160	<p>We become part of the new creation as God's gift (Mt 11:27; Jn 6:43; Eph 2:8). This decisive step (Col 1: 12-13), our salvation is not the reward for our merit and good deeds (Rom 4; Phil 3:4-6), but it comes through faith (Rom 3:21; Phil 3:9).</p>
	161	<p>According to John, believing consists in recognizing the One sent by God (Jn 5:38; 6:29). It means recognizing the fact that God loves us first and forgives us (1 Jn 4:10; Jn 2:16). It means accepting God that we may be transformed and made holy (Jn 12:42-45); and recognizing that Jesus is the Christ (1 Jn 2:22-29, 5:1), namely, the Only Son who came from God and would return to God (Jn 6:62).</p>
	162	<p>According to Peter and Paul, to believe is to accept the love of God who delivered his Son for the sake of sinners (Rom</p>

	<p>5:24-25; Gal 3:1). It means to acknowledge that God has raised the Son from the dead (Rom 4:23, 10:9) and made him Lord (Acts 2:36; 1 Cor 12:3; Phil 2:11). It means to accept that all the promises of God were fulfilled in him (2 Cor 1:20).</p> <p>163 Faith that saves is supported by the witness of the Scriptures (Acts 17:3, 18:28; Rom 16:26; 2 P 1:19) but it also means discovering a word which God speaks to us today (Heb 1:1 and com. on Mk 11:29). The contemporaries of Jesus had to recognize him as the One sent through the signs that he worked (Jn 6:26, 10:32, 15:24). Later, faith was supported by the testimony and the signs given by the Apostles (Mk 16:17; Acts 8:7; 1 Thes 1:5). Faith is never limited to accepting beliefs, but it sees God's plan (Mt 11:16-24; Lk 7:30) through present events (Lk 12:56, 19:44) and the prophetic voices of the Church (Eph 3:5; 1 Thes 5:19).</p> <p>164 Faith integrates us to the people of God (Eph 2:19-22) through baptism (Mt 28:19; Mk 16:16; Col 2:11-13).</p> <p>165 Faith brings us into a state of holiness which the Bible calls justice, or righteousness, or justification (see com. on Rom 1:16; Rom 4-8; 1 Jn 2:1-6). It makes us pleasing to God, reconciled with him (Rom 5:1-2) and a reflection of God's image (Rom 8:28; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24). Faith introduces us to the Kingdom of his Son (Col 1:13) where we receive the first gift of the Spirit (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:22). See 153-154.</p>
<p>17. The Church of God</p> <p>170</p> <p>171</p> <p>172</p> <p>173</p> <p>174</p> <p>175</p>	<p>Jesus lays the groundwork for his Church: see 120-124.</p> <p>The Church did not originate from human will, but from God's eternal plan. The Mystery is concretized in the Church (Eph 3:5), that is, the saving plan of God who brings all people together under Christ, the only head (Eph 1:5-12, 22). That is why the Church is called holy because its destiny depends more upon God's plans than upon human initiatives.</p> <p>Christ, in taking the steps leading to its foundations, does not act upon his own initiative alone. He lets himself be guided by the Father (Jn 1:35-51; Mt 16:18; Lk 6:12; Acts 1:7; Jn 17:6, 17:9-12). The Churches of Christ (Phlm 16). The Church is subject to Christ who loves her and gives himself for her (Eph 5:24-25; Jn 17:19). The Church of God which Jesus bought with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The Church is his bride (Jn 3:29; Eph 5:27; Mt 22:2; Cor 11:1; Rev 21:2) and his body (Col 1:24; 1 Cor 12:12) and he is the head.</p> <p>The Church is born on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) as an effect of the pouring out of the promised Holy Spirit (150).</p> <p>The apostles' proclamation of the faith in the risen Jesus accompanies the outpouring of the Spirit (Jn 15:26-27; Acts 1:7-8) to establish the Church (Acts 2:14-39; 1 Thes 1:5). The Church is made up of all those who hear the call to conversion and who believe that they will receive forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38) and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:39) through faith in the saving power of Jesus and in baptism (see 181).</p> <p>The Church is founded on Peter and the apostles (Mt 16:18, 10:1). The faith of the Church is the same as that of the apostles (1 Cor 15:11; 2 P 1:16-21). Those who accept the witness of the apostles and of their successors belong to the Church (Jn 17:20, 20:21) and are accepted by them (1 Cor 14:38; 2 Cor 10:6, 13:10). We are in communion with God</p>

		by being in communion with them (1 Jn 1:3). Christ is with them (Mt 28:20) so that their decisions may not be opposed to the divine plan (Mt 16:19, 18:18; Lk 10:16) despite the fact that they will fail in many ways (Gal 2:11; Acts 15:37, 21:20). The Church will always be what the apostles made it (Lk 22:30; Rev 21:14).
	176	The Church is communion (Acts 2:4; Heb 13:16). The communion existing between the baptized and the Divine Persons (2 Cor 13:13; 1 Cor 1:9, 10:16) brings about communion among themselves (1 Jn 1:7) both in the spiritual (Acts 2:42; Phil 1:5, 2:1) and the material sense (Rom 15:27; Gal 6:6).
	177	The Church is the presence of divine Truth in our world (1 Tim 3:15). It is the manifestation of God's love (1 Cor 1:26; 2 Cor 4:7) and, despite the weakness of its members, it is a sign of God's saving presence (2 Cor 4) and God gives it strength (Rev 2:8, 3:8).
18. The sacrament of the Church	180	The Church is a communion of believers where God manifests himself (see com. on Mt 16:18). This is why we say that the Church is a sacrament of God (see com. on Mt 18:1). Various rites of the Church, called sacraments , come from Christ and his apostles; they express and make the saving action of God present.
	181	Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5), with the Spirit and fire (Mt 3:11); with water along with the word (Eph 5:26) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19) in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:16). Baptism for the dead (1 Cor 15:29). Baptism and baptisms (Heb 6:2 and com. on Lk 3:7).
	182	The one who believes is baptized (Mk 16:16) to receive the forgiveness of his sins (Acts 2:38, 22:16). Baptism means death to a sinful past (Rom 6:3-9) and entrance into a risen life (Rom 6:4; Col 2:11-12). It is an interior purification (1 P 1:22) through Christ's blood (1 P 1:2). It is a new birth from above (Jn 3:8), a birth in the Spirit (Jn 3:6; Col 2:12). The only baptism in the one faith reunites us in a single body (1 Cor 12:13). Baptism introduces us into life "in Christ," into Christian life (Phil 4:1ff.). See 200 .
	183	The imposition of the hands to confirm baptism and to confer the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 8:14, 19:6). A rite which cannot be performed by just any minister (Acts 8:14-17). See also Heb 6:2.
	184	The power to forgive sins: see com. on Jas 5:16. The baptized person must fear weakening of faith and loss of hope. Without faith and hope there is neither the desire nor the possibility to have sins forgiven again (Lk 13:7-9; Heb 6:4-8, 12:15). This is the kind of sin which leads to death (1 Jn 5:16). The Church may exclude the sinner if he does not mend his ways (Mt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:11-13), and may ask God to give him a warning through physical punishment (1 Cor 4:4-5; Rev 2:22).
	185	The anointing of the sick : practiced by the missionaries of Jesus (Lk 10:1) and entrusted to the elders of the Church (James 5:14).
	186	The imposition of the hands to consecrate the ministers of the Church (1 Tim 4:14, 5:22; 2 Tim 1:6).
	187	Matrimony of Christians has its own demands (1 Cor 7:10-12 and com. on 1 Cor 11:2 and 1 P 3:1): it is a sacrament be-

		cause it is an image and an active realization of Christ's union with the Church (Eph 5:22-23).
	188	The Eucharist , or the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:20) or the breaking of the bread (Acts 2:42, 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16). See the commentaries on the promise of the Eucharist (Jn 6:22-58) and its institution (Mk 14:12; 1 Cor 11:23).
	189	Some passages of the Old Testament prefigure and clarify the meaning of the sacraments , especially Baptism (Gen 6-7; Ex 14:15; Jos 3; 2 K 5; Is 12:1, 55:1; Zec 13:1; Ezk 47:1), the Eucharist (Ex 12:16; 1 K 19:5; Gen 14:14; Mal 1:11), Matrimony (Gen 1:26, 2:18; Tb 8:4-7; Song).
19. The Spirit in the Church; Charisms and Ministries	190	The Holy Spirit (see 143 and 144) who proceeds from the Father (Jn 14:16, 15:26, 16:15) and is sent by the Son (Jn 14:16, 15:26, 16:7). The Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:11, 7:40; 1 Jn 4:2) and Spirit of Jesus (Acts 8:39, 13:16; 2 Cor 3:7; Gal 4:6; Rev 3:1).
	191	Already before Christ there was mention of the Spirit of Yahweh , a supernatural power given to liberators (Jdg 6:34, 11:29, 14:6), to prophets (Num 11:25; Ezk 37), to artists (Ex 31:3) and to the wise (Wis 1). An active power in creation (Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30 and com. on Jn 7:37).
	192	As a result of Jesus' glorification, the Spirit is given to believers (Jn 7:39. See 153 and Heb 9:17, 19:2; Rom 5:5; Gal 3:2; Eph 1:3; 1 Jn 3:24). Upon entrance into the Church, the Spirit is received in the rite of the imposition of the hands (Acts 8:15; 19:6) which normally accompanies baptism (Acts 2:38; Tit 3:5; Jn 3:5). God can, however, make exceptions; he is not bound to the sacraments (Acts 10:45).
	193	The spirit is given to everyone according to the degree of Christ's gift (Rom 12:3; Eph 4:7; Heb 2:4) and he manifests his presence in different gifts (1 Cor 12:3, 12:7-11; Gal 3:5; Phil 1:19). These gifts of the Spirit make us members of one same body diversified (Rom 12:5-8) and organized (Eph 4:16).
	194	The spiritual gifts (often called charisms which means gifts: 1 Cor 1:7, 7:7, 12:31; 1 P 4:10) are for the good of the community (1 Cor 14:1-6, 14:19, 14:32). For this reason, they can also be called services (or ministries) and works (Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:5). Even though we know that the gifts and ministries are valid inasmuch as they encourage real love and communion (1 Cor 12:31; Eph 4:3), the most important of them are the apostolic ministries of the founders and those responsible for the churches (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).
	195	Regarding ruling ministries, see com. on Acts 14:21. Some are called apostles , not only the Twelve (1 Cor 1:1; 9:1-6). The prophets (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 2:20, 3:5, 4:20; Rev 11:10, 16:6, 18:20). Apollos was most probably a prophet and so were Timothy and Titus (see com. on Acts 11:19, 13:1, 15:32; 1 Thes 5:19; Heb 7:1; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6). The bishops (or inspectors) had an active part in the councils of presbyters (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1; Tit 1:7). The presbyters (or elders): Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2-23, 21:18; 1 Tim 5:19; Tit 1:5; James 5:14; 1 P 5:1. The deacons : Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1 and com. on Acts 6.
	196	The spiritual gifts, however varied they may be, come from Christ, the only head, and they must be aimed at the unity of the growing body: Jn 17:21; Eph 2:18-22, 4:3, 4:12-13.

20. The Spirit and Christian Spirituality

- 200** Christian life was formerly called **the way** (Acts 9:2, 19:9, 16:17, 18:25; 2 P 2:2) and it was not based on special commands (Acts 15:18) to such an extent that Paul relates the demands of sexual morality to faith in Christ and not to any particular law (1 Cor 6:1; 1 Thes 4:2).
- Christians of Jewish background spoke at times as if Jesus had confirmed the Law of the Old Testament (James 1:25, 2:12, 4:11), but usually they understood that the **new Law** proclaimed by Jesus (com. on Mt 5:17) replaced the Law of the Old Testament (Mt 5:22, 5:28...). The **only command** of love (Mt 22:39) replaces the many precepts of the Law of Moses (Mt 22:40; Rom 13:8; Gal 5:14).
- 201** But we are also told that Christ **freed us from all human law** (and not only from the Judaic Law): Rom 7:4; Gal 4:5; Eph 2:15. We should understand, then, that in speaking of the Law of Christ, another meaning is given to the word **law** (Rom 2:27, 8:2). We do not place too much value on human effort to fulfill the law (Mk 10:21, 10:27; Gal 2:16, 3:5) but we must invite everyone to allow himself to be guided by the Spirit (Lk 10:33; Rom 8:14; Gal 5:16) who, alone, can transform the heart (Ezk 36:25; Rom 2:29) and make the fulfillment of the Law possible (Rom 8:4).
- 202** Entrance into the Church (see **192**) makes us **new creatures** (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 4:24). Recreated in the Son (Eph 2:10), sons and daughters of the Father (Rom 8:15; Jn 1:13), the Spirit is already given to us in this life (Rom 12:11; Gal 4:6) as a foretaste of what definitive and holy life will be in heaven (Rom 8:11, 23; Eph 1:14). From now on we are in **communion with the Three Divine Persons** (Jn 14:17; 1 Jn 1:3, 3:21-24, 4:15).
- 203** Christian life presupposes the constant **cooperation of people with God** who acts in each one through the Spirit. We have died to sin (Rom 6:11) and we must die to the works of the "flesh" (Rom 8:13). We have been renewed and we must walk along new paths (Rom 7:6). We have been made just and holy (Rom 6:2; 1 Cor 6:11) and we must walk as saints (Rom 6:13, 19; Gal 5:25). We were liberated (Rom 6:14, 8:2) but we still have to liberate ourselves (1 Cor 7:15, 23). God's love has been given to us (Rom 5:5; Jn 17:26) and we must persevere and grow in this love (Jn 15:9; 1 Cor 16:14; Phil 1:9; 1 Thes 3:12).
- 204** The Christian's new life is energized through participation in the **Eucharist** (Jn 6:48-58), through **good works** (James 2:14-28; 1 Jn 3:18; 2 Thes 1:11; Tit 2:14, 3:8; Heb 10:24; 2 P 1:10) and through **prayer** (see **230**). It is a source of **happiness** (Jn 16:24; Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; 2 Cor 7:4; Gal 5:22; 1 Thes 1:6; 1 P 1:8), of **freedom** (Jn 8:32, 36; 2 Cor 3:17; Gal 5:1; 2 Tim 1:7; 1 P 2:16) of **peace** (2 Cor 13:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 6:23), and of **thanksgiving** (Rom 14:6; Eph 5:20; Col 3:17; 1 Thes 5:18).
- With **perseverance** (Lk 8:15, 21:19; Rom 2:7, 5:3; Col 1:11; Heb 10:36; James 1:4), it produces a transformation of the whole being (Rom 12:2; 1 Thes 5:23), enabling one to relate to God as a son (or daughter) (Rom 8:15-17; 1 Jn 4:17-18) and to be a living stone of the spiritual building (Eph 2:22; 1 P 2:5).
- 205** Christian life manifests itself, above all, in three powers which we

		usually call theological virtues , which is to say, that they come from God and are oriented to him: they are faith, hope and love (1 Cor 13:13; Gal 5:5-6; Eph 1:15-16; Col 1:4-5; 1 Thes 1:3, 5:8).
21. Faith and Hope	210	Faith means: 1) the act of faith which, in conversion, obtains for us the holiness or justice proper to a Christian (see 165); 2) the gift of faith which achieves miracles: 1 Cor 13:2; James 1:5; Mk 11:20-24 and their commentaries; 3) the first of the theological virtues (see 205 and 211) born of the first act of faith.
	211	Christian faith is submission to the word of God (Jn 12:44-46; Rom 10:14; 2 Tim 3:15, 4:3) as received from the prophets and Christ through the witness of the apostles (see 163). It accepts without adding or deleting (Dt 4:2; Rev 22:18) the entire faith (Tit 1:13, 3:10-11) preserved by the Church as the Tradition of the Apostles : 1 Tim 4:6; 2 Tim 2:8, 3:14.
	212	A Christian has the same faith attitude as the Old Testament believers (Rom 4:23-25; Heb 11). Now, however, the final words have come to us (Heb 1:1-2; Jn 3:31, 4:26) through the person who is the Word of God (Jn 1:1,18; Heb 2:2-3). See 152 . In the person of Jesus, God talks to us without parables or examples (Jn 16:25-29).
	213	Faith works through love (Gal 5:6) and it manifests itself in works of love (James 2:14; 1 Cor 13:13). Faith must grow (2 Cor 10:15; 2 P 3:18) along with the knowledge of God. With love, faith is the attitude of someone who lives in the light (Rom 13:12; Eph 5:8; Col 1:12; 1 Jn 1:7, 2:9) and is light for the world (1 Thes 5:5).
	214	Hope is born of faith in God's promises (Eph 3:5-10; Heb 3:14, 6:11-20; 1 P 5:9). We hope for what we do not see (Rom 8:4; Heb 11:1) and would not have dared imagine (1 Cor 2:9; 2 P 1:4). We believe that God is faithful (see 40-44). We have confidence in God who can sustain us in faith and love (Phil 2:12; 1 Thes 5:23; 2 Thes 3:3; 1 Cor 1:8). Hope means perseverance and constancy in our trials (see 204, 217).
	215	Israel hoped that God would give prosperity in their Land (see 42) and a Kingdom of Justice (see 56, 62). In proclaiming the Kingdom, Jesus reminds us that our hope is somewhat collective (Mt 22; Lk 22:28-30; Mt 25:31-40), but he also emphasizes the personal dimension of salvation (Mt 10:28, 32), as faith in the resurrection develops (see 92-93). We hope to share God's glory . We will be like God because we will see him (1 Jn 3:2). We will rise together (1 Cor 15:23) to see God (1 Cor 13:12) and form a single body in Christ (Eph 2:16-22). Only in God will we find happiness (Mt 25:21; Rev 21:6), and humanity, its end (1 Cor 15:28; Rev 22:1-5). Such is our inheritance (Lk 18:18; 1 P 1:4).
	216	The Kingdom of God is already present in the person who lives in God's grace. Thus all the events in his life, even his material needs , are related to this Kingdom of God and to his own progress in Christian life. Being a child of God, he expects daily bread from the Father (Mt 6:11) and he asks for his own needs (Phil 4:6) and for the needs of the world (Lk 18:11), knowing that God will provide him with what is necessary so that, in his turn, he may give to others (2 Cor 9:9).
	217	Waiting for the coming of Christ is at the very center of Christian

		<p>hope (Acts 1:11). Coming, called “parousia” which means, visit (Mt 24:27; 1 Cor 15:23; 1 Thes 3:13; 1 Jn 2:28; Rev 3:10) or manifestation (1 Tim 6:14; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 2:13). This coming seemed very familiar to the early Christians (1 Thes 4:13; Heb 10:25-27; 1 P 4:7; James 5:8).</p> <p>This waiting means a vigilant attitude (Lk 12:32-48; Mt 25:1): being awake in order not to be submerged in worldly projects and greed (Lk 21:34; see com. on Mk 13:33). It makes us constant and persevering in trials (Phil 3:10; Rom 8:17; see 184) and persecutions (Heb 12:2; 2 Thes 3:5; Lk 21:19; Mt 10:22; Rev 2:10, 3:21; 1 P 3:14). It brings us happiness even in suffering (1 P 4: 18; Mt 5:11). It makes us sober (1 Thes 5:8) and detached (1 Cor 7:29; Tit 2:12; 1 P 1:13).</p>
22. Love	220	<p>Love is power coming from God. In God, love is identified with the inner communion of the Three Divine Persons (see 143). God revealed himself to Moses as He Who Is and as Merciful (see 32, 39). However, after knowing Christ, John says: God is love (1 Jn 4:8).</p>
	221	<p>In the Old Testament God’s love was manifested as God communicated with humans. Israel, seeing how God chose, guided it (Ps 89, 105, 106, 107; Is 63:7), forgave (Ex 32:11-14) and redeemed it (Is 40, 41) understood God’s jealous love for his people (Is 5, 54:6-8). The prophets, as they became aware of the ever closer relationship between themselves and God, realized God’s strong love (Ezk 3:8; Mic 2:8), a tender (1 K 19) and demanding (Jer 15:10, 20:7) love for his friends.</p>
	222	<p>Love for God is the first command for Israel (Dt 6:1, 30) and it will continue to be first for Christians (Mk 12:28).</p>
	223	<p>When Jesus came, he tried to reveal something of the unique love that the Father has for his Son (Jn 3:35, 5:20, 17:24; see 117). Jesus, in turn, responds to the Father’s love with total surrender (Mk 1:35; Mt 11:25) in perfect accord with the Father’s will (Heb 10:5; Jn 4:34, 6:38). He shows this divine love springing from his heart to his friends (Jn 11, 13:1, 15:9-17, 18:8), to the marginalized (Mk 1:40), to sinners (Lk 7:36, 19:1), to his very enemies (Lk 23:22) and to all people (Mt 11:28; Acts 10:38); that they may also understand the love the Father has for them (see 137). We love Jesus by keeping his Word (Jn 14:15-23) and by renouncing everything in order to follow him (Mk 10:17-21; Lk 14:25).</p>
	224	<p>In his Passion and death Jesus reaches the culmination of love. Love for the Father, obeying him even to his death on the cross (Mt 26:39, 27:46; Heb 4:15), while the Father is silent he cares for and forgives each person (Lk 23:28; Jn 19:26; Lk 23:34-43). Jesus gives everything to everyone (Mk 10:45, 14:24; 2 Cor 5:14).</p>
	225	<p>Love for others is mentioned in many Old Testament texts (Lev 19:18; Dt 10:8). However, in many places of the Law (Ex 20:12-17) and of the prophets (Am 1-2; Is 1:14-17, 10:2, 65:13; Jer 9:2-5; Ezk 18:5-9; Mic 3:5), it is said that we cannot please God without respecting others; doing them justice, freeing them from oppression (Is 58) and attending to the most humble (Ex 22:20-26, 23:4-12; Jer 9:4, 22:15; Pro 14:21; Sir 4, 25:1; Wis 2:10).</p>
	226	<p>Jesus closely relates the two main commands (Mk 12:28-33). The love for one’s neighbor is the basis of Christian morality</p>

		(see 201 and 203) to the degree that it tries to imitate the love of the Father, perfect and merciful (Mt 5:48; Lk 6:36; Eph 5:1; 1 Jn 4:11) and it is a response to the love with which God first loved us (1 Jn 3:16, 4:10-19). Love is the power which the Holy Spirit communicated to us (Rom 5:5) and it is nourished by contemplating Christ's limitless love (Eph 3:18; 2 Cor 5:14).
	227	On the eve of his Passion, Jesus emphasizes love for one another as his new command : Jn 13:12-15, 34-35, 15:9-13; 1 Jn 2:6-8.
	228	Christian love is a gift without bounds, leading us to serve one another (Gal 5:13). It goes to all without consideration of social barriers (Mk 2:13; Lk 10:29, 14:13; Gal 3:28). It is manifested in forgiveness (Mt 5:43, commentary and references; Mt 18:21) and it is not denied to enemies. It inspires us to make an effort to understand the other , to respect his ideas (Rom 12:15-18, 14:1-10), to bear his limitations (1 Cor 13). The love, which is able to give and to receive, builds up the Church (1 Cor 8:1; Eph 4:16; see 196) and leads us to perfection (Phil 1:9).
23. Prayer	230	Throughout the Bible prayer is inseparable from action . The models of prayer are those who lead God's people. Moses' intercession for Israel (Ex 17:8, 32:11, 33:12; Num 11:11, 14:13). Moses gives us a pattern for intercession: he reminds God of his faithfulness ; his own honor forces him not to abandon Israel, but rather to forgive Israel. The prayer of David (2 S 7:18), Solomon (1 K 8:22-60), Hezekiah (2 K 19:15), Judas Maccabeus (1 Mac 5:33, 11:71; 2 Mac 8:29, 15:20), Esther (4:17), Judith (9:2). Penitential prayer of Ezra (9:6), Nehemiah (1:4), and Daniel (3:26, 9:4).
	231	The prayer of intercession is peculiar to the prophets: their word and prayer bring about and prevent events. Thus, Abraham, called prophet because of his power of intercession: (Gen 20:7) praying for Sodom (Gen 18:22). Likewise, Elijah (1 K 18:36), Amos (7:1), Jeremiah (10:23, 14:7, 37:3). The prophet feels divided between compassion for his chastised people (Jer 14:19, 8:18; Ex 9:8) and zeal for God betrayed (Jer 2:3; Ezk 16). His prayer is a confrontation with God (Num 17:6; Ezk 13:5, 22:30).
	232	Prayer is also the prophets' ongoing dialogue with God at the very root of their call (Ex 4:5-22, 17:4; Jer 12:1, 15:10, 20:7), coming face to face with God (Ex 33:18; 1 K 19:9).
	233	The Psalms are the prayer book of God's people. Prayer flows from the very needs of the one who implores, not asking for heavenly things, but for the concrete help needed in this precise moment. Yet, prayer is always forgetting self in order to praise God: Ps 47, 81, 89, 95, 98, 113, 117, 135, never forgetting that one's well-being is in God , asking to see God and to dwell in his house (Ps 16:23, 27:7, 63:2, 65:5, 73:24).
	234	Jesus prays (Mk 1:35; Mt 11:25; Lk 22:32, 23:33; Jn 11:42) especially before making important decisions (Lk 3:21, 6:12, 9:18, 29, 23:46; Mk 14:36; Jn 8:29). See also Heb 5:7, 7:25. Jesus works his miracles for those who ask him with faith (Lk 7:1; Mk 10:46) and who persevere until he attends to them (Mt 7:24). He tells us that this is the way to ask from the Father (Lk 11:5-13; Mk 9:23, 11:22). But he also teaches

		us to ask first that the Father's will be done (Mt 6:10, 7:21, 12:50; Jn 4:34, 7:17). He tells us what we should ask of the Father and how to ask for it: the Our Father (Mt 6:9; Lk 11:1 and also Mt 6:5).
	235	The prayer of the early Church . In the Temple of the Jews (Lk 24:5; Acts 3:1; 5:12) with hands lifted up (1 Tim 2:8) or kneeling (Acts 9:40). Community prayer (Acts 1:14; see Mt 18:19) in difficult situations (Acts 4:24, 6:6, 12:5).
	236	Paul's letters include invitations to pray (Eph 6:18; Col 1:3; 1 Thes 5:17; Rom 15:30; 1 Cor 7:15; 1 Tim 2:1, 5:5) and spontaneous thanksgiving (Rom 8:31, 11:33, 16:25; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1). For him the prayer of intercession is a struggle (see 231 ; Rom 16:30; Phil 1:30; Col 4:12 and com. on Col 2:1; see also com. on Gen 32:23). There is always a balance between supplication and thanksgiving (Phil 4:6).
	237	Prayer in the name of Jesus is fitting for one who shares Jesus' mission and allows his Spirit to guide him (Jn 14:12-13, 16:23). It is the perfect prayer of one who has achieved self-renunciation; it is not guided by human greed (James 4:3) but inspired by the Spirit of adopted sons and daughters (Rom 8:15, 26). This prayer is addressed to the Father (Gal 4:6), making us desire with our whole being what the Father wants and what hastens his Kingdom. We ask for specific things (Mt 7:11), but in another sense it is the Holy Spirit for whom we wait (Lk 11:13). This prayer which is always heard brings joy (Jn 16:24).
	238	Other texts: 1 P 3:7, 4:7; James 1:6, 5:16; Rev 5:8.
24. Mission and evangelization	240	The word mission means being sent (com. on Mt 10:1). Jesus is the One sent by the Father to bring the Good News to Israel (Jn 3:17, 4:34, 6:38, 9:4, 10:36, 17:18; Mt 15:24), to the poor and the afflicted (Is 61:1; com. on Mt 5:1; Lk 7:22). On leaving this earth Jesus sends forth the apostles (Jn 20:21; Mt 28:19; Acts 1:8) and authorizes them with signs of the Holy Spirit (Mk 16:17; com. on Lk 10:1). Apostle means one sent (Lk 6:13). After the Twelve, the Church will keep on sending apostles and missionaries (com. on Lk 5:1). One must be sent by the Church, just as the Twelve were sent by Christ (Mk 3:13; Acts 26:16, 13:2, 19:14).
	241	The missionary task is the common work of the apostles and of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:26; Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4) who will give witness together with them (Jn 15:26). The Spirit encourages the apostle (1 P 1:12), the apostle's words later bring the Spirit upon his hearers. Whoever receives the apostles receives the Father and the Son (Lk 10:16).
	242	The missionaries announce the Gospel (that is the Good News). In the words of Jesus, the Good News means the coming of the Kingdom of God (see 110-116) and it is accompanied by the many cures that Jesus works (com. on Mt 9:35; Lk 7:22). In the words of the apostles, the Good News means the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (Acts 13:32). It is the gift of forgiveness and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38, 3:26, 10:43, 13:38). The Good News is all about the coming of Jesus (Mk 1:1) which brings us peace (Acts 10:36; Eph 2:14). For Paul the Gospel is God's plan of salvation for all (Rom 15:9; Eph 3:6) which centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15:1). It is a power that conquers the world (Rom 1:16; Col 1:6).

243	<p>Preaching the Gospel, when it is welcomed, brings repentance (Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 17:30, 26:20) and conversion (Mt 4:17; Mk:12 and 182). People see their sinful situation in a lost world (Acts 2:40; 3:26) and believe in the forgiveness God offers them through Christ (Acts 5:31 and 160-164). This conversion of the heart and of the innermost being is different from giving up only one's vices (see com. on Lk 3:7 and 7:24). It is the work of God (Ezk 36; 1 K 18:37; Rom 2:4). On the other hand, when preaching is rejected, people and societies are ruined (Mt 11:20, 12:41; Mk 16:16).</p>	
244	<p>To evangelize is not only to announce the Gospel, but to make it Good News, which frees a person in concrete circumstances of his life (com. on Mt 28:16). The Gospel means a healing of the whole human person. Liberation from religious prejudices (Col 2:16-22; Gal 4:8-11) and from social barriers (Gal 2:11). It brings about a renewal of the whole culture and a radical criticism of the social order (1 Cor 7:17-24). It leads to maturity in judgment and in relationships with others (Eph 4:14, 22-32).</p>	
245	<p>Those who announce the Gospel become witnesses of Christ (Acts 1:8; Jn 15:27); the faithful witness after Jesus (Rev 1:5, 3:14) who comes to the world to give testimony of what he has heard from the Father (Jn 1:18, 3:11) and of who he is (Jn 8:13; 1 Tim 6:13), the apostles, in their turn, give witness to him (Jn 15:17, 20:21). Through their testimony, it is God who gives testimony (1 Jn 5:9).</p>	
246	<p>Martyr, in Greek, means witness. Someone who has suffered and given his life to remain faithful to his testimony is called a martyr (Rev 2:13, 6:9, 11:3, 17:6; Mk 13:9 and com. on Mt 10:16). Due to the devil's hatred for the Church, there will be many martyrs (Rev 17:6). They are the true victors of the world (Rev 12:11).</p>	
<p>25. The future of the world, Judgment and the Resurrection</p>	250	<p>The Kingdom of God develops in the world the work of God as yeast (Mt 13:33) capable of transforming and saving it (Jn 3:16). Yet, this world is in the power of the evil one (see com. on Jn 3:11 and Jn 5:19) due to Adam's fall which alienated human freedom (Jn 8:34; Rom 8:18). In his death, Jesus somehow deprived the evil one of his power (Mt 12:29; Jn 12:31). Yet, if we judge according to appearances, he (the evil one) continues to have much influence (Mt 16:18) and moves a powerful current opposed to truth and justice (Jn 3:19) and he hates, above all, the witnesses of Christ (Jn 15:18; Mt 10:16; Rev 12:17) and of his Church (Rev 12:13). This hostile current is at times called "the world" (Jn 16:33). At times "world" refers to those who do not know their vocation as sons and daughters of God (Jn 14:19, 16:20, 17:23; 1 Cor 5:10). See also 1 Jn 2:15.</p>
251	<p>Believers are in the world without being of the world (Jn 17:15). The Church is at the service of the world to bring it to its true goal (Mk 16:15; Col 1:20). It is not at the service of the world's designs (James 4:4) nor of human ideals of happiness, justice and peace, which are always limited (Lk 12:13, 51), and which forget the real situation of sinful humanity (Mt 4:1) and do not understand salvation through the cross (Mt 16:23; Lk 24:26; 1 Cor 1:20).</p>	
252	<p>Yet, if we pay attention to the Old Testament, we discover a divine</p>	

- pedagogy.** In order for human beings to understand their divine vocation, they need to taste the goods of the earth and to **struggle for human ideals** (see com. on Gen 13:7; Ex 3:16; Introduction to 1 K; com. on Mt 5:1), limited ideals which God will gradually help to purify, bringing people to understand the mystery of the cross (see com. on Lk 24:13).
- 253** For his own growth as well as for the good of the world, the believer **involves himself in the tasks of the world** (Mt 25:14; 2 Thes 3:10; 1 Tim 4:3; Tit 3:8; com. on Mk 3:33) and in so doing he **cooperates with God the Creator** who continues to act and to create (com. on Gen 1:28; Jn 5:7).
- The Church can hope for a time of peace and the spread of the Gospel (Rev 20:1). Its influence will be manifest (com. on Mt 13:31) and all kinds of human institutions will be under its protection (Mt 13:32). Yet, there will be **persecutions** (see **251**) as well as **scandals** within the Church (Mt 13:47). In opposition to the Church, the devil will favor false religions (Rev 13:11) and totalitarian regimes (Rev 13:2) and at times, will give the impression that he has won (Rev 11:7, 13:14-17).
- 254** After many a crisis, the time of final confrontation will come (see **124**) and the time of the **Antichrist** (2 Thes 2:3-9; 1 Jn 1:18) as the prelude to the coming of Christ (Mk 13:26) and to the Resurrection (1 Thes 5:15; 1 Cor 15).
- 255** **What is our destiny** after death? We live only once (Heb 9:27, 6:4-8; Lk 16:27) and our eternity is determined in this one life. Some books of the Old Testament already spoke about life beyond death: **83** and **90-93**.
- 256** Our destiny is to be resurrected when Christ comes to judge the living and the dead. How shall we be after the resurrection? What kind of body and existence shall we have? See Lk 20:27; 1 Cor 15 especially.
- This existence above all will be sharing in the Glory of God, seeing him, loving him, being transformed into his likeness and made one spirit with him: 1 Cor 6:17, 13:13; 1 Jn 3:2.
- However this existence is always pictured as a communitarian and happy life: Mt 22, 25:1-30; Lk 22:30.
- 257** Will those who die not live at all until the last day of Resurrection? This was a difficult question before Jesus came when the Jews had just come to believe in the resurrection of the dead: Dn 12:1-5 and 12:13. But the teaching of the New Testament is clear: Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; 1 P 4:6; Rev 14:3.
- 258** Scripture speaks in a figurative way of those who have definitely rejected God's love. We are used to speak of **hell**, something as final as heaven will be for the elect: Mt 13:42; Mk 8:42; Lk 16:23; Rev 21:5.
- 259** No one can approach God without having been purified of all sin and impurity. What happens to all the believers who die in the grace of God but are also filled with imperfections and human desires? It has been a constant teaching of the Church that purification takes place during death or after death: 2 Mac 13:43; 1 Cor 3:15.

INDEX OF THE GOSPEL

(The words and numbers in **bold** type refer to Gospel texts with commentaries)

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
An angel announces the birth of John the Baptist			1:5	
The Annunciation to Mary			1:26	
Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth			1:39	
First steps of John the Baptist			1:57	
Jesus is born in Bethlehem			2:1	
Jesus is presented in the Temple			2:21	
First initiative of the young Jesus			2:41	
<hr/>				
Jesus' ancestors	1:1		3:23	
Jesus is born of a virgin mother	1:18			
The Magi come from the East	2:1			
The flight to Egypt	2:13			
<hr/>				
John the Baptist	3:1	1:1	3:1	
John's preaching: Repentance	3:7		3:7	
John presents Jesus	3:11	1:7	3:15	1:19
Jesus receives John's baptism	3:13	1:9		
Jesus is tempted in the desert	4:1	1:12		
<hr/>				
Jesus and his first disciples				1:35
The first miracle: the Wedding at Cana				2:1
<hr/>				
Jesus proclaims his mission in Nazareth	4:12			
Jesus calls his first disciples	4:18	1:14		
Jesus cures a demoniac in Capernaum		1:21	4:31	
Cures in Capernaum	8:14	1:29	4:40	
Night prayer of Jesus		1:35	4:42	
The Miraculous catch			5:1	
Cure of a leper	8	1:40	5:12	
The paralytic healed and forgiven	9:1	2:1	5:17	
The Captain's servant	8:5		7:1	4:46
Jesus calls the publican Levi	9:9	2:13	5:27	
New wine in new wineskins	9:14	2:18	5:33	
The man with a withered hand	12:9	3:1	6:6	
The twelve apostles of Jesus	10:1	3:13	6:12	
<hr/>				
The Beatitudes	5:1		6:20	
Salt and light of the earth	5:13		12:34	
A more perfect Law : Reconciliation	5:17			
You will not commit adultery	5:27			
You will not swear	5:33			
Loving all people	5:38		6:27	
Doing good without bragging about it	6:1			
How to pray	6:5			
The Our Father	6:9	11:25	11:1	
Do not amass riches	6:19			
The lamp and the conscience	6:22		11:34	
Trust in God rather than in money	6:24		16:13	
			12:22	

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The plank and the speck	7:1		6:37	
Ask and you will receive	7:7		11:9	
The narrow door	7:13		13:23	
A tree is known by its fruits	7:15		6:43	
The house built on rock	7:21		6:47	
<hr/>				
Jesus and Nicodemus				3:1
John the Baptist's last testimony				3:22
Jesus and the Samaritan woman				4:1
The paralytic at the Bethsaida pool				5:1
<hr/>				
Jesus raises the widow's son			7:11	
John the Baptist's messengers	11:2		7:18	
Jesus praises John the Baptist			7:24	
The sinful woman and the Pharisee			7:36	
The women who follow Jesus			8:1	
The true family of Jesus	12:46	3:31	8:19	
The sin against the Spirit	12:25	3:23	11:17	
			12:10	
<hr/>				
The comparison of the sower	13:1	4:1	8:4	
The seed which grows by itself		4:26		
The wheat and the weeds	13:24			
The mustard seed ; the yeast	13:31	4:30	13:18	
The treasure , the pearl , the net	13:44			
Jesus calms the storm	8:18	4:35	8:22	
The demoniac of Gerasa	8:28	5:1	8:26	
Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus	9:18	5:21	8:40	
Is this not the carpenter ?	13:53	6:1	4:16	
<hr/>				
Jesus commissions the Twelve	10:5	6:7	9:1	
They will persecute you	10:16		12:2	
I did not come to bring peace	10:34		12:51	
He who loves his father more than me	10:37		14:26	
The death of John the Baptist	14:1	6:14		
First multiplication of loaves	14:13	6:34	9:10	6:1
Jesus walks on water	14:22	6:45		6:16
Discourse on the bread of life				6:30
Genuine purity	15:10	7:1	6:39	
Jesus heals the daughter of a pagan woman	15:21	7:24		
Cure of a deaf mute		7:31		
Second multiplication of loaves	15:32	8:1		
Why do they ask for a sign ?	12:38	8:11	11:29	
The signs of the times	16:1		12:54	
The blind man of Bethsaida		8:22		
Do you also want to leave me?				6:59
Peter's faith and Jesus' promises	16:13	8:27	9:18	
Jesus announces his passion	16:21	8:31	9:22	
If you want to follow me, take up your cross	16:24	8:34	9:23	
The Transfiguration	17:1	9:1	9:28	
The return of Elijah	17:9	9:11		
Jesus cures the epileptic boy	17:14	9:14	9:37	

	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Jesus pays the Temple tax	17:9	9:11		
If anyone wants to be first	17:24			
The little ones and the stumbling block	18:1	9:33	9:46	
How a community lives together in faith	18:6	9:42	17:1	
The one who did not forgive his companion	18:15		17:3	
We saw one who expelled demons	18:23	9:38	9:49	
<hr/>				
They refuse to welcome Jesus			8:51	
The demands of the master	8:19		9:57	
Jesus sends out the seventy-two	9:37		10:1	
Woe to you Chorazin!	11:21		10:13	
Jesus gives thanks to the Father	11:25		10:17	
Take on my yoke	11:27			
The good Samaritan			10:29	
Martha and Mary			10:38	
Jesus teaches us how to pray			11:4	
Happy the one who gave you birth!			11:27	
Jesus criticizes the people of his generation	12:38		11:29	
Life is not in possessions			12:13	
Be forewarned	24:43		12:32	
The fig tree without fruit			13:1	
A cure on the Sabbath			13:10	
<hr/>				
The first seats			14:7	
The guests who excuse themselves			14:15	
The price of following Jesus	10:37		14:25	
The lost sheep	18:12		15:1	
The prodigal son			15:11	
The astute manager			16:1	
Lazarus and the rich man			16:19	
We are useless servants			17:7	
The ten lepers			17:11	
About the coming of the Kingdom of God	24:26		17:20	
The evil judge and the widow			18:1	
The Pharisee and the Publican			18:9	
<hr/>				
Marriage and divorce	19:1	10:1		
Contenance for the sake of the Kingdom	19:10			
Let the children come to me	19:13	10:13	18:15	
The rich young man	19:16	10:17	18:18	
It will be easier for a camel to...	19:23	10:23	18:24	
The reward of those who follow Jesus	19:27	10:28	18:28	
Those who went to work in the vineyard	20:1			
James and John request the first places	20:20	10:35		
Bartimaeus , the blind man of Jericho	20:29	10:46	18:35	
Zacchaeus			19:1	
The ten coins	25:14		19:11	
The adulterous woman				8:1
Jesus cures a man born blind				9:1
I am the good Shepherd				10:1
The resurrection of Lazarus				11:1
The Jewish leaders decide the death of Jesus				11:45
The meal at Bethany	26:6	14:1		12:1

Jesus enters Jerusalem	21:1	11:1	19:28	
Jesus drives the merchants out of the Temple	21:12	11:15	19:45	2:13
Jesus curse s the fig tree	21:18	11:12	13:6	
The power of faith	21:20	11:20		
With what authority do you do it?	21:23	11:27	20:1	
The parable of the two sons	21:28			
The murderous tenants	21:33	12:1	20:9	
A king celebrates his son's wedding	22:1			
The tax for Caesar	22:15	12:13	20:20	
Do the dead rise ?	22:23	12:18	20:27	
The greatest commandment	22:34	12:28	10:25	
Christ, son of David ?	22:41	12:35	20:21	
The widow's offering		12:41	21:1	
<hr/>				
Do not imitate the teachers of the Law	23:1	12:38	20:45	
Against the Pharisees	23:13		11:39	
Lament over Jerusalem	23:37		13:34	
Destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world	24:1	13:1	21:8	
Be prepared and alert	24:37	13:33	21:34	
Parable of the ten maidens	25:1			
Parable of the talents	25:14			
The judgment of the nations	25:31			
If the grain of wheat does not die			12:20	
<hr/>				
The Last Supper	26:17	14:12	22:1	
Jesus washes his disciples' feet				13:2
I am going to the Father				14:1
I am the vine				15:1
The world hates Jesus and his people				15:18
The Spirit will come				15:26
You will see shortly				16:16
The prayer of Jesus for his holy people				17:1
<hr/>				
In the garden of Gethsemane	26:36	14:32	22:39	
Jesus appears before the Jewish authorities	26:57	14:55		18:12
Peter's denial	26:69	14:66	22:56	18:25
The death of Judas	27:3			
Jesus appears before Pilate	27:11	15:2	23:2	18:28
The way of the cross	27:27	15:16		
Jesus is crucified	27:35	15:23	23:32	19:17
Jesus' last words	27:45	15:33	23:33	19:25
<hr/>				
Jesus is risen	28:1	16:1	24:1	20:1
The disciples on the way to Emmaus			24:13	
Jesus appears to his disciples			24:36	20:19
Appearance on the lakeshore				21:1
Jesus missions his apostles	28:16	16:9	24:44	