

Fr. Roger J. Landry  
Church of Our Savior, Manhattan  
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## The Vision of Pope John Paul II 25 Years Contemplating Christ and Man

(notes)

### Introduction

- Context of so many focusing on the incredible array of things JP II has done in his 25 years (9131 days):
  - The great teacher of the Gentiles: He has written 14 encyclicals, 14 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, 42 apostolic letters and 28 Motu proprio in addition to hundreds of other messages and letters.
  - The globe-trotting evangelist: 102 foreign trips; 143 trips within Italy, 301 parishes in Rome. Altogether Pope John Paul II has reached the 1,163,865 kilometer mark (698,310 miles), that is, just over 28 times the earth's circumference or 3 times the distance between the earth and moon.
  - 1,106 Wednesday general audiences
  - 1,324 Blesseds in 140 ceremonies and 477 Saints in 51 ceremonies
  - Done so much in foreign affairs, including big contributions to the fall of Communism, to the promotion of world peace
  - Perhaps more than any other pope in history, he has nourished the Church's understanding of the Great News about Marriage, Family and Sexuality
  - Perhaps more than any other pope in history, certainly on a world scale, has a pope interacted and inspired so many young people
  - His commitment to interreligious dialogue has had no parallel. He was the first pope to visit the Synagogue of Rome. He has had an outreach even to Muslims.
  - Ecumenical affairs, with the Lutherans, with the Orthodox.
  - Push for human rights and religious freedom.
  - Renewal of moral theology
  - Tireless defense of human life, from conception until death.
  - Code of Canon Law
  - The Catechism of the Catholic Church
  - And so much more.
- Vatican's own conference yesterday (Oct 15) focused on six of what are commonly considered the most important areas of his work:
  - The Petrine Ministry and Communion in the Episcopacy
  - Priests, the Consecrated Life and Vocations
  - The Family
  - Ecumenism
  - Missions
  - Service to Peace
- Journalists have been listing many other realms in which he has made a mark.
- Because of all that he's done, we can get dizzy even thinking about it or reviewing it. But we can ask if there's something that ties all of this together. Many in the press have been trying to say that, in some ways, it's a tale of at least two JP II's, one who is so progressive on issues of world peace and on human rights, but one who seems so conservative in terms of things within the Church.
- But that's a distortion of Pope John Paul II, as if he were a schizophrenic pontiff.
- But what unites the various things that he has done and taught over the past 25 years? Is there a way we could synthesize all of what he has done to the central thought inspiring all or most of it? Is there a central vision to which the Pope is faithful in everything, that would explain all or most of what he has done?
- A few weeks ago I was in a small hour-long audience with the Papal press spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, who has been with the Holy Father for over 20 years. In the context of this speech I was preparing, I asked him what his thoughts were on a central idea or motivating impulse of the Holy Father. He acknowledged that it's a tough question but a very important question in order to understand this Holy Father. In what he said was a "first shot" at such a synthetic answer, he said his opinion would be that JP II's central attempt has been at the same time to strengthen the faith of Christ's disciples and together with them take that faith out and propose it to the world. In

- other words, to help to nourish and form true disciples who will become fellow apostles with him proposing the faith to the world.
- I don't think there's any question that the Holy Father has both tried to do this and has, to various degrees, succeeded. This explanation certainly explains a lot and encompasses both what we would call the "ad intra" side of his papacy (focusing on the Church) and the "ad extra" side (toward the others).
  - But to some degree, every Pope has tried to fulfill this two-fold mission. But each has done it in a different style. Some have been more administrative. Some have been more "political" in the broad sense of the term. Some have been more evangelical. And so we can go beyond with Navarro said to try to determine what the particular style of JP II has been in carrying out this mission, what has his particular take been. What has been the chief nourishment he has given to the disciples so that they can take this to others?
  - The Pope himself gave us his plans and hopes in the his first encyclical, published four-and-a-half months after his election, which one could argue was at least what he thought was the most urgent thing he needed to say if not the most important. It was entitled *Redemptor Hominis*, Christ, the Redeemer of Man. In it he seemed to chart the path he wanted to follow throughout his papacy. It was a path he took from what he called the theological school of the Second Vatican Council, two passages he's referred to more than any other in his pontificate:
    - Christ fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear (GS 22):
      - "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."
      - Man cannot discover himself except in the sincere gift of self (GS 24):
        - "[Creation] waits with eager longing for the revelation of the sons of God,"
  - We see how he develops an entire pedagogical and pastoral program from these two seminal thoughts of the Second Vatican Council in *Redemptor Hominis*.
  - The Holy Father would write in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, a 1994 book in which he responded to questions from a journalist about how this message of *Redemptor Hominis* was within him before he was elected to the papacy and indicated both his theological vision and his pastoral style.
    - My first encyclical on the Redeemer of man (*Redemptor Hominis*) appeared a few months after my election on October 16, 1978. This means that I was actually carrying its contents *within me*. I had only to "copy" from memory and experience what I had already been living on the threshold of the papacy. I emphasize this because the encyclical represents a confirmation, on the one hand, of the *tradition of the schools* from which I came and, on the other hand, of the *pastoral style* reflected in this encyclical. The Council proposed, especially in *Gaudium et Spes*, that the mystery of redemption should be seen in light of the great renewal of man and of all that is human. The encyclical aims to be a *great hymn of joy for the fact that man has been redeemed through Christ* — redeemed in spirit and in body. This redemption of the body subsequently found its own expression in the series of catecheses for the Wednesday Papal audiences: *Male and female He created them.* Perhaps it would be better to say: "Male and Female he Redeemed them."
    - This theological vision of JP II — first contemplating Christ, who reveals the mystery and vocation of man, and then showing man the way to true human fulfillment in giving of himself in love to others — immediately translated into his first teaching and pastoral objectives, in *Redemptor Hominis* and then in the Theology of the Body and countless other initiatives over the course of the years.
  - In this talk, therefore, I'd like to flesh out in more detail this vision of JP II founded in *Redemptor Hominis* — contemplating Christ and man — so that we can start to see with his own eyes. The greatest way to honor Pope John Paul II would be to assume his vision, to let it sink in, and to let it start to flow into our own attitudes.
  - In the second step, I'd like to apply this vision to a series of issues, so that we can start to reason and act like faithful sons and daughters of this holy father. Our job is made easier by the fact that JP II has, in his writings, applied this vision to almost every area of life. As we look at those areas, we'll both gain clarity on this central vision of JP II and also see how the truth about Christ and Man will set us free to love as Christ calls us to love in all these various aspects of human life.

### Redemptor Hominis

- First sentence: At the Close of the Second Millennium The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history; to Him go my thoughts and my heart in this solemn moment of the world that the Church and the whole family of present-day humanity are now living.
- We are in a certain way in a season of a new Advent, a season of expectation: "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...,"(3) by the Son, His Word, who became man and was born of the Virgin Mary. This act of redemption marked the high point of the history of man within God's loving plan.
- It was to Christ the Redeemer that my feelings and my thoughts were directed on October 16 of last year, when, after the canonical election, I was asked: "Do you accept?"

- (7) What should we do, in order that this new advent of the Church connected with the approaching end of the second millennium may bring us closer to [God the Father]? This is the fundamental question that the new Pope must put to himself on accepting in a spirit of obedience in faith the call corresponding to the command that Christ gave Peter several times: "Feed my lambs,"(22) ... and "when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren."
- (7) To this question..., our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards Him - because there is salvation in no one else but Him, the Son of God - repeating what Peter said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."
- (8) Christ, the Redeemer of the world, is the one who penetrated in a unique, unrepeatable way into the mystery of man and entered his "heart." Rightly therefore does the Second Vatican Council teach: "The truth is that only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a type of him who was to come (Rom. 5:14), Christ the Lord. Christ, the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling."
- Christ reveals this most high calling by showing man how to love: (RH 10)Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself." ... This is the human dimension of the mystery of the redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity.
- RH 10: The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being - he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, draw near to Christ. He must, so to speak, enter into Him with all his own self, he must "appropriate" and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. If this profound process takes place within him, he then bears fruit not only of adoration of God but also of deep wonder at himself, How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator, if he "gained so great a Redeemer,"(65) and if God "gave his only Son" in order that man "should not perish but have eternal life."
- Jesus Christ is the chief way for the Church. He Himself is our way "to the Father's house"and is the way to each man (13).
- The Church cannot abandon man, for his "destiny," that is to say his election, calling, birth and death, salvation or perdition, is so closely and unbreakably linked with Christ (14). This man is the way for the Church - a way that, in a sense, is the basis of all the other ways that the Church must walk - because man - every man without any exception whatever - has been redeemed by Christ, and because with man - with each man without any exception whatever - Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it.
- RH 18: Precisely because Christ united Himself with her in His mystery of Redemption, the Church must be strongly united with each man.

### **Novo Millennio Ineunte**

- In Redemptor Hominis, we see what the Holy Father said at the beginning of His pontificate. As he celebrated the Jubilee Year, he summarized his pontificate of preparation for it, but reiterating the same types of themes. He also charted the Church's program for the 3rd Christian millennium, it started first with "contemplating the face of Christ" and then entering into the school of holiness that results from it, the school of self giving.
- Meeting Christ is the legacy of the Jubilee. "We wish to see Jesus."
  - NMI 16: Like those pilgrims of two thousand years ago, the men and women of our own day — often perhaps unconsciously — ask believers not only to "speak" of Christ, but in a certain sense to "show" him to them. And is it not the Church's task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine also before the generations of the new millennium? Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first contemplated his face.
  - NMI 23: "Your face, O Lord, I seek" (Ps 27:8). The ancient longing of the Psalmist could receive no fulfilment greater and more surprising than the contemplation of the face of Christ. God has truly blessed us in him and has made "his face to shine upon us" (Ps 67:1). At the same time, God and man that he is, he reveals to us also the true face of man, "fully revealing man to man himself" Jesus is "the new man" who calls redeemed humanity to share in his divine life. The mystery of the Incarnation lays the foundations for an anthropology which, reaching beyond its own limitations and contradictions, moves towards God himself, indeed towards the goal of "divinization". ... It is only because the Son of God truly became man that man, in him and through him, can truly become a child of God.
- Man's response is holiness, through prayer, the Mass, the Sacrament of Confession, meditation on the word of God, spreading it, and above all grace. All of this will allow us to love one another as Christ has loved us.

### How JP II has applied this vision to the various issues confronted in his pontificate.

- In almost every document he was written, Pope John Paul II has referred to the two-fold principle of contemplating Christ and man in applying it to particular circumstances. In looking at how he has done that, we will not only come to a deeper understanding of the vision, but also have a newer, fresher appreciation for how this vision helps us in the various facets of human life.

### On the Father of Mercies

- Encyclical "Dives in Misericordia" (God the Father, Rich in Mercy), November 30, 1980.
  - We read in the constitution *Gaudium et Spes*: "Christ the new Adam... fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his lofty calling," and does it "in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love." The words I have quoted are clear testimony to the fact that man cannot be manifested in the full dignity of his nature without reference--not only on the level of concepts but also in an integrally existential way--to God. Man and man's lofty calling are revealed in Christ through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love (2)
  - While it is true that every individual human being is, as I said in my encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, the way for the church, at the same time the Gospel and the whole of tradition constantly show us that we must travel this way with every individual just as Christ traced it out by revealing in himself the Father and his love. In Jesus Christ, every path to man, as it has been assigned once and for all to the church in the changing context of the times, is simultaneously an approach to the Father and his love. The Second Vatican Council has confirmed this truth for our time. (3)
  - The more the church's mission is centered upon man--the more it is, so to speak, anthropocentric--the more it must be confirmed and actualized theocentrically, that is to say, be directed in Jesus Christ to the Father. While the various currents of human thought both in the past and at the present have tended and still tend to separate theocentrism and anthropocentrism, and even to set them in opposition to each other, the church, following Christ, seeks to link them up in human history in a deep and organic way. And this is also one of the basic principles, perhaps the most important one, of the teaching of the last council. (4)

### On the Holy Spirit

- Encyclical "Dominum et Vivificantem" (Holy Spirit, Lord and Vivifier), May 18, 1986.
  - Man's intimate relationship with God in the Holy Spirit also enables him to understand himself, his own humanity, in a new way. Thus that image and likeness of God which man is from his very beginning is fully realized. This intimate truth of the human being has to be continually rediscovered in the light of Christ, who is the prototype of the relationship with God. There also has to be rediscovered in Christ the reason for "full self-discovery through a sincere gift of himself" to others, as the Second Vatican Council writes: precisely by reason of this divine likeness which "shows that on earth man... is the only creature that God wishes for himself" in his dignity as a person, but as one open to integration and social communion. The effective knowledge and full implementation of this truth of his being come about only by the power of the Holy Spirit. Man learns this truth from Jesus Christ and puts it into practice in his own life by the power of the Spirit, whom Jesus himself has given to us. (59)
  - Along this path--the path of such an inner maturity, which includes the full discovery of the meaning of humanity--God comes close to man, and permeates more and more completely the whole human world. The Triune God, who "exists" in himself as a transcendent reality of interpersonal gift, giving himself in the Holy Spirit as gift to man, transforms the human world from within, from inside hearts and minds. Along this path the world, made to share in the divine gift, becomes--as the Council teaches--"ever more human, ever more profoundly human", while within the world, through people's hearts and minds, the Kingdom develops in which God will be definitively "all in all":[258] as gift and love. Gift and love: this is the eternal power of the opening of the Triune God to man and the world, in the Holy Spirit. As the year 2000 since the birth of Christ draws near, it is a question of ensuring that an ever greater number of people "may fully find themselves... through a sincere gift of self" (59)
  - For if man is the way of the Church, this way passes through the whole mystery of Christ, as man's divine model. Along this way the Holy Spirit, strengthening in each of us "the inner man", enables man ever more "fully to find himself through a sincere gift of self". These words of the Pastoral Constitution of the Council can be said to sum up the whole of Christian anthropology: that theory and practice, based on the Gospel, in which man discovers himself as belonging to Christ and discovers that in Christ he is raised to the status of a child of God, and so understands better his own dignity as man, precisely because he is the subject of God's approach and presence, the subject of the divine condescension, which contains the prospect and the very root of definitive glorification. Thus it can truly be said that " the glory of God is the living man, yet man's life is the vision of God":[260] man, living a divine life, is the glory of God, and the Holy Spirit is the hidden dispenser of this life and this glory. (59)

### On Mary

- Encyclical "Redemptoris Mater" (Mary, Mother of the Redeemer), March 25, 1987.
  - If it is true, as the Council itself proclaims, that "only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light," then this principle must be applied in a very particular way to that exceptional "daughter of the human race," that extraordinary "woman" who became the Mother of Christ. Only in the mystery of Christ is her mystery fully made clear. (4)
  - Mary can be said to continue to say to each individual the words which she spoke at Cana in Galilee: "Do whatever he tells you." For he, Christ, is the one Mediator between God and mankind; he is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6); it is he whom the Father has given to the world, so that man "should not perish but have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). The Virgin of Nazareth became the first "witness" of this saving love of the Father, and she also wishes to remain its humble handmaid always and everywhere. For every Christian, for every human being, Mary is the one who first "believed," and precisely with her faith as Spouse and Mother she wishes to act upon all those who entrust themselves to her as her children. And it is well known that the more her children persevere and progress in this attitude, the nearer Mary leads them to the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). And to the same degree they recognize more and more clearly the dignity of man in all its fullness and the definitive meaning of his vocation, for "Christ...fully reveals man to man himself. (46)

### On the Rosary

- Apostolic Letter "Rosarium Virginis Mariae," October 16, 2002
  - With the Rosary, the Christian people sits at the school of Mary and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. (1)
  - I have felt drawn to offer a reflection on the Rosary, as a kind of Marian complement to that Letter and an exhortation to contemplate the face of Christ in union with, and at the school of, his Most Holy Mother. To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to contemplate with Mary the face of Christ. (3)
  - To look upon the face of Christ, to recognize its mystery amid the daily events and the sufferings of his human life, and then to grasp the divine splendour definitively revealed in the Risen Lord, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father: this is the task of every follower of Christ and therefore the task of each one of us. In contemplating Christ's face we become open to receiving the mystery of Trinitarian life, experiencing ever anew the love of the Father and delighting in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul's words can then be applied to us: "Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (9)
  - The Rosary is one of the traditional paths of Christian prayer directed to the contemplation of Christ's face. Pope Paul VI described it in these words: "As a Gospel prayer, centred on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, the Rosary is a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation. Its most characteristic element, in fact, the litany-like succession of Hail Marys, becomes in itself an unceasing praise of Christ, who is the ultimate object both of the Angel's announcement and of the greeting of the Mother of John the Baptist: 'Blessed is the fruit of your womb' (Lk 1:42).(18)
  - In the light of what has been said so far on the mysteries of Christ, it is not difficult to go deeper into this anthropological significance of the Rosary, which is far deeper than may appear at first sight. Anyone who contemplates Christ through the various stages of his life cannot fail to perceive in him the truth about man. This is the great affirmation of the Second Vatican Council which I have so often discussed in my own teaching since the Encyclical Letter Redemptor Hominis: "it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man is seen in its true light". The Rosary helps to open up the way to this light. Following in the path of Christ, in whom man's path is "recapitulated", revealed and redeemed, believers come face to face with the image of the true man. Contemplating Christ's birth, they learn of the sanctity of life; seeing the household of Nazareth, they learn the original truth of the family according to God's plan; listening to the Master in the mysteries of his public ministry, they find the light which leads them to enter the Kingdom of God; and following him on the way to Calvary, they learn the meaning of salvific suffering. Finally, contemplating Christ and his Blessed Mother in glory, they see the goal towards which each of us is called, if we allow ourselves to be healed and transformed by the Holy Spirit. It could be said that each mystery of the Rosary, carefully meditated, sheds light on the mystery of man. (25)
  - The Rosary is also a prayer for peace because of the fruits of charity which it produces. When prayed well in a truly meditative way, the Rosary leads to an encounter with Christ in his mysteries and so cannot fail to draw attention to the face of Christ in others, especially in the most afflicted. How could one possibly contemplate the mystery of the Child of Bethlehem, in the joyful mysteries, without experiencing the desire to welcome, defend and promote life, and to shoulder the burdens of suffering children all over the world? How could one possibly follow in the footsteps of Christ the Revealer, in the mysteries of light, without resolving to bear witness to his "Beatitudes" in daily life? And how could one contemplate Christ carrying the Cross and Christ Crucified, without feeling the need to act as a "Simon of Cyrene" for our brothers and sisters weighed down by grief or

crushed by despair? Finally, how could one possibly gaze upon the glory of the Risen Christ or of Mary Queen of Heaven, without yearning to make this world more beautiful, more just, more closely conformed to God's plan? In a word, by focusing our eyes on Christ, the Rosary also makes us peacemakers in the world. (40)

### On the dignity of women

- Apostolic Letter, "Mulieris Dignitatem", August 15, 1990.
  - It is a question here of every man and woman, all the sons and daughters of the human race, in whom from generation to generation a fundamental inheritance is realized, the inheritance that belongs to all humanity and that is linked with the mystery of the biblical "beginning": "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). This eternal truth about the human being, man and woman--a truth which is immutably fixed in human experience--at the same time constitutes the mystery which only in "the Incarnate Word takes on light... (since) Christ fully reveals man to himself and makes his supreme calling clear," as the Council teaches. In this "revealing of man to himself," do we not need to find a special place for that "woman" who was the Mother of Christ? Cannot the "message" of Christ, contained in the Gospel, which has as its background the whole of Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, say much to the Church and to humanity about the dignity of women and their vocation? (2)
  - This truth [about man's creation, male and female] also has to do with the history of salvation. In this regard a statement of the Second Vatican Council is especially significant. In the chapter on "The Community of Mankind" in the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, we read: "The Lord Jesus, when he prayed to the Father 'that all may be one...as we are one' (Jn 17:21-22), opened up vistas closed to human reason. For he implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God's children in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." With these words, the council text presents a summary of the whole truth about man and woman--a truth which is already outlined in the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, and which is the structural basis of biblical and Christian anthropology. Man--whether man or woman--is the only being among the creatures of the visible world that God the Creator "has willed for its own sake"; that creature is thus a person. Being a person means striving towards self-realization (the Council text speaks of self-discovery), which can only be achieved "through a sincere gift of self." The model for this interpretation of the person is God himself as Trinity, as a communion of Persons. To say that man is created in the image and likeness of God means that man is called to exist "for" others, to become a gift. (7)
  - The essence of the New Covenant consists in the fact that the Son of God, who is of one substance with the eternal Father, becomes man: he takes humanity into the unity of the divine Person of the Word. The one who accomplishes the Redemption is also a true man. The mystery of the world's Redemption presupposes that God the Son assumed humanity as the inheritance of Adam, becoming like him and like every man in all things, "yet without sinning" (Heb 4:15). In this way he "fully reveals man to himself and makes man's supreme calling clear," as the Second Vatican Council teaches. In a certain sense, he has helped man to discover "who he is" (cf. Ps 8:5). (12)
  - The human being--both male and female--is the only being in the world which God willed for its own sake. The human being is a person, a subject who decides for himself. At the same time, man "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self."[39] It has already been said that this description, indeed this definition of the person, corresponds to the fundamental biblical truth about the creation of the human being--man and woman--in the image and likeness of God. This is not a purely theoretical interpretation, nor an abstract definition, for it gives an essential indication of what it means to be human, while emphasizing the value of the gift of self, the gift of the person. In this vision of the person we also find the essence of that "ethos" which, together with the truth of creation, will be fully developed by the books of Revelation, particularly the Gospels. This truth about the person also opens up the path to a full understanding of women's motherhood. Motherhood is the fruit of the marriage union of a man and woman, of that biblical "knowledge" which corresponds to the "union of the two in one flesh" (cf. Gen 2:24). This brings about--on the woman's part--a special "gift of self," as an expression of that spousal love whereby the two are united to each other so closely that they become "one flesh."... This mutual gift of the person in marriage opens to the gift of a new life, a new human being, who is also a person in the likeness of his parents. Motherhood implies from the beginning a special openness to the new person: and this is precisely the woman's "part." In this openness, in conceiving and giving birth to a child, the woman "discovers herself through a sincere gift of self." The gift of interior readiness to accept the child and bring it into the world is linked to the marriage union, which--as mentioned earlier--should constitute a special moment in the mutual self-giving both by the woman and the man.(18)
  - Christ has entered this history and remains in it as the Bridegroom who "has given himself." "To give" means "to become a sincere gift" in the most complete and radical way: "Greater love has no man than this" (Jn 15:13). According to this conception, all human beings--both women and men--are called through the Church, to be the "Bride" of Christ, the Redeemer of the world. In this way "being the bride," and thus the "feminine" element,

becomes a symbol of all that is "human," according to the words of Paul: "There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). ... Christ is the Bridegroom. This expresses the truth about the love of God who "first loved us" (cf. 1 Jn 4:19) and who, with the gift generated by this spousal love for man, has exceeded all human expectations: "He loved them to the end" (Jn 13:1). The Bridegroom--the Son consubstantial with the Father as God--became the Son of Mary; he became the "son of man," true man, a male. (25)

- A woman's dignity is closely connected with the love which she receives by the very reason of her femininity; it is likewise connected with the love which she gives in return. The truth about the person and about love is thus confirmed. With regard to the truth about the person, we must turn again to the Second Vatican Council: "Man, who is the only creature on earth that God willed for its own sake, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self." [59] This applies to every human being, as a person created in God's image, whether man or woman. This ontological affirmation also indicates the ethical dimension of a person's vocation. woman can only find herself by giving love to others. (30)
- Letter to Women, June 29, 1990
  - The church sees in Mary the highest expression of the "feminine genius," and she finds in her a source of constant inspiration. Mary called herself the "handmaid of the Lord" (Lk 1:38). Through obedience to the word of God she accepted her lofty yet not easy vocation as wife and mother in the family of Nazareth. Putting herself at God's service, she also put herself at the service of others: a service of love. ... Man is the only creature on earth "which God willed for its own sake," as the Second Vatican Council teaches; it significantly adds that man "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self" ("Gaudium et Spes," 24). The maternal "reign" of Mary consists in this. She who was, in all her being, a gift for her Son has also become a gift for the sons and daughters of the whole human race, awakening profound trust in those who seek her guidance along the difficult paths of life on the way to their definitive and transcendent destiny. Each one reaches this final goal by fidelity to his or her own vocation; this goal provides meaning and direction for the earthly labors of men and women alike. (10)
  - Necessary emphasis should be placed on the "genius of women," not only by considering great and famous women of the past or present, but also those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day, women fulfill their deepest vocation. Perhaps more than men, women acknowledge the person, because they see persons with their hearts. (11)

### On the Family

- Apostolic Exhortation "Familiaris Consortio," December 15, 1981.
  - Christian revelation recognizes two specific ways of realizing the vocation of the human person, in its entirety, to love: marriage and virginity or celibacy. Either one is in its own proper form an actuation of the most profound truth of man, of his being "created in the image of God." Consequently sexuality, by means of which man and woman give themselves to one another through the acts which are proper and exclusive to spouses, is by no means something purely biological, but concerns the innermost being of the human person as such. It is realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: If the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally. (11)
  - The only "place" in which this self-giving in its whole truth is made possible is marriage, the covenant of conjugal love freely and consciously chosen, whereby man and woman accept the intimate community of life and love willed by God himself, which only in this light manifests its true meaning. The institution of marriage is not an undue interference by society or authority, nor the extrinsic imposition of a form. Rather, it is an interior requirement of the covenant of conjugal love which is publicly affirmed as unique and exclusive in order to live in complete fidelity to the plan of God, the creator. A person's freedom, far from being restricted by this fidelity, is secured against every form of subjectivism or relativism and is made a sharer in creative wisdom. (11)
  - The family, which is founded and given life by love, is a community of persons: of husband and wife, of parents and children, of relatives. Its first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion in a constant effort to develop an authentic community of persons. The inner principle of that task, its permanent power and its final goal, is love: Without love the family is not a community of persons and, in the same way, without love the family cannot live, grow and perfect itself as a community of persons. What I wrote in the encyclical Redemptor Hominis applies primarily and especially within the family as such: "Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it." The love between husband and wife and, in a derivatory and broader way, the love between members of the same family--between parents and children, brothers and sisters and relatives and members of the household--is given

- life and sustenance by an unceasing inner dynamism leading the family to ever deeper and more intense communion, which is the foundation and soul of the community of marriage and the family (18).
- Being rooted in the personal and total self-giving of the couple and being required by the good of the children, the indissolubility of marriage finds its ultimate truth in the plan that God has manifested in his revelation: He wills and he communicates the indissolubility of marriage as a fruit, a sign and a requirement of the absolutely faithful love that God has for man and that the Lord Jesus has for the church. (20)
  - In that it is, and ought always to become, a communion and community of persons, the family finds in love the source and the constant impetus for welcoming, respecting and promoting each one of its members in his or her lofty dignity as a person, that is, as a living image of God. As the synod fathers rightly stated, the moral criterion for the authenticity of conjugal and family relationships consists in fostering the dignity and vocation of the individual persons, who achieve their fullness by sincere self-giving. (22).
  - When couples, by means of recourse to contraception, separate these two meanings that God the creator has inscribed in the being of man and woman and in the dynamism of their sexual communion, they act as "arbiters" of the divine plan and they "manipulate" and degrade human sexuality and with it themselves and their married partner by altering its value of "total" self-giving. Thus the innate language that expresses the total reciprocal self-giving of husband and wife is overlaid, through contraception, by an objectively contradictory language, namely, that of not giving oneself totally to the other. This leads not only to a positive refusal to be open to life, but also to a falsification of the inner truth of conjugal love, which is called upon to give itself in personal totality. When, instead, by means of recourse to periods of infertility, the couple respect the inseparable connection between the unitive and procreative meanings of human sexuality, they are acting as "ministers" of God's plan and they "benefit from" their sexuality according to the original dynamism of "total" self-giving, without manipulation or alteration. (32)
  - The family is the first and fundamental school of social living: As a community of love, it finds in self-giving the law that guides it and makes it grow. The self-giving that inspires the love of husband and wife for each other is the model and norm for the selfgiving that must be practiced in the relationships between brothers and sisters and the different generations living together in the family. And the communion and sharing that are part of everyday life in the home at times of joy and at times of difficulty are the most concrete and effective pedagogy for the active, responsible and fruitful inclusion of the children in the wider horizon of society. (37)
  - Education in love as self-giving is also the indispensable premise for parents called to give their children a clear and delicate sex education. Faced with a culture that largely reduces human sexuality to the level of something commonplace, since it interprets and lives it in a reductive and impoverished way by linking it solely with the body and with selfish pleasure, the educational service of parents must aim firmly at a training in the area of sex that is truly and fully personal: for sexuality is an enrichment of the whole person--body, emotions and soul--and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love. (37)
  - Fruitful married love expresses itself in serving life in many ways. Of these ways, begetting and educating children are the most immediate, specific and irreplaceable. In fact, every act of true love toward a human being bears witness to and perfects the spiritual fecundity of the family, since it is an act of obedience to the deep inner dynamism of love as self-giving to others. (41)
  - By the continuous proclamation of the new commandment of love the church encourages and guides the Christian family to the service of love so that it may imitate and relive the same self-giving and sacrificial love that the Lord Jesus has for the entire human race. (49)
- Letter to Families, February 2, 1994
    - The celebration of the Year of the Family gives me a welcome opportunity to knock at the door of your home, eager to greet you with deep affection and to spend time with you. I do so by this Letter, taking as my point of departure the words of the Encyclical <Redemptor Hominis,> published in the first days of my ministry as the Successor of Peter. There I wrote that <man is the way of the Church.> With these words I wanted first of all to evoke the many paths along which man walks, and at the same time to emphasize how deeply the Church desires to stand at his side as he follows the paths of his earthly life. The Church shares in the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties Of people's daily pilgrimage, firmly convinced that it was Christ himself who set her on all these paths. Christ entrusted man to the Church; he entrusted man to her as the "way" of her mission and her ministry. (1) Among these many paths, <the family is the first and the most important.> (2)
    - The family has its origin in that same love with which the Creator embraces the created world, as was already expressed "in the beginning", in the <Book of Genesis> (1:1). In the Gospel Jesus offers a supreme confirmation: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn 3:16). The <only-begotten Son,> of one substance with the Father, "<God from God> and Light from Light", <entered into human history through the family:> "For by his incarnation the Son of God united himself in a certain way with every man. He laboured with human hands... and loved with a human heart. Born of Mary the Virgin, he truly became one of us and, except for sin, was like us in every respect". If in fact Christ "fully discloses man to himself", he does so beginning with the family in which



he chose to be born and to grow up. We know that the Redeemer spent most of his life in the obscurity of Nazareth, "obedient" (Lk 2:51) as the "Son of Man" to Mary his Mother, and to Joseph the carpenter. Is this filial "obedience" of Christ not already the first expression of that obedience to the Father "unto death" (Phil 2:8), whereby he redeemed the world? <The divine mystery of the Incarnation of the Word thus has an intimate connection with the human family.> Not only with one family, that of Nazareth, but in some way with every family, analogously to what the Second Vatican Council says about the Son of God, who in the Incarnation "united himself in some sense with every man". Following Christ who "came" into the world "to serve" (Mt 20:28), the Church considers serving the family to be one of her essential duties. In this sense both man and the family constitute "the way of the Church." (3)

- The Second Vatican Council, in speaking of the likeness of God, uses extremely significant terms. It refers not only to the divine image and likeness which every human being as such already possesses, but also and primarily to "a certain similarity between the union of the divine persons and the union of God's children in truth and love". This rich and meaningful formulation first of all confirms what is central to the identity of every man and every woman. This identity consists in the <capacity to live in truth and love;> even more, it consists in the need of truth and love as an essential dimension of the life of the person. Man's need for truth and love opens him both to God and to creatures: it opens him to other people, to life "in communion", and in particular to marriage and to the family. In the words of the Council, the "communion" of persons is drawn in a certain sense from the mystery of the Trinitarian "We", and therefore "conjugal communion" also refers to this mystery. The family, which originates in the love of man and woman, ultimately derives from the mystery of God. This conforms to the innermost being of man and woman, to their innate and authentic dignity as persons. (8)
- As the Council affirms, man is "the only creature on earth whom God willed for its own sake" Man's coming into being does not conform to the laws of biology alone, but also, and directly, to God's creative will, which is concerned with the genealogy of the sons and daughters of human families. <God "willed" man from the very beginning, and God "wills" him in every act of conception and every human birth.> God "wills" man as a being similar to himself, as a person. This man, every man, is created by God "<for his own sake>". That is true of all persons, including those born with sicknesses or disabilities. Inscribed in the personal constitution of every human being is the will of God, who wills that man should be, in a certain sense, an end unto himself. God hands man over to himself, entrusting him both to his family and to society as their responsibility. Parents, in contemplating a new human being, are, or ought to be, fully aware of the fact that God "wills" this individual "for his own sake". This concise expression is profoundly rich in meaning. From the very moment of conception, and then of birth, the new being is meant <to express fully his humanity,> to "find himself" as a person. This is true for absolutely everyone, including the chronically ill and the disabled. "To be human" is his fundamental vocation: "to be human" in accordance with the gift received, in accordance with that "talent" which is humanity itself, and only then in accordance with other talents. In this sense God wills every man "for his own sake". <In God's plan,> however, the vocation of the human person extends beyond the boundaries of time. It encounters the will of the Father revealed in the Incarnate Word: "<God's will is to lavish upon man a sharing in his own divine life.> As Christ says: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). (9)
- After affirming that man is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, the Council immediately goes on to say that he <cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self">. This might appear to be a contradiction, but in fact it is not. Instead it is the magnificent paradox of human existence: an existence called <to serve the truth in love.> Love causes man to find fulfillment through the sincere gift of self. To love means to give and to receive something which can be neither bought nor sold, but only given freely and mutually. By its very nature the gift of the person must be lasting and irrevocable. The indissolubility of marriage flows in the first place from the very essence of that gift: <the gift of one person to another person.> This reciprocal giving of self reveals the <spousal nature of love.> In their marital consent the bride and groom call each other by name: "<I... take you>... as my wife (as my husband) and I promise to be true to you... for all the days of my life". A gift such as this involves an obligation much more serious and profound than anything which might be "purchased" in any way and at any price. Kneeling before the Father, from whom all fatherhood and motherhood come, the future parents come to realize that they have been "redeemed". They have been purchased at great cost, <by the price> of the most sincere gift of all, <the blood of Christ> of which they partake through the Sacrament. The liturgical crowning of the marriage rite is the Eucharist, the sacrifice of that "Body which has been given up" and that "Blood which has been shed", which in a certain way finds expression in the consent of the spouses. (11)
- When a man and woman in marriage mutually give and receive each other in the unity of "one flesh", the logic of the sincere gift of self becomes a part of their life. Without this, marriage would be empty; whereas a communion of persons, built on this logic, becomes a communion of parents. When they transmit <life to the child, a new human "thou" becomes a part of the horizon of the "we" of the spouses,> a person whom they will call by a new name: "our son...; our daughter...". "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" (Gen 4:1), says Eve, the first woman of history: a human being, first expected for nine months and then "revealed" to parents, brothers and sisters. The process from conception and growth in the mother's womb to birth makes it possible to create a space

within which the new creature can be revealed as a "gift": indeed this is what it is from the very beginning. Could this frail and helpless being, totally dependent upon its parents and completely entrusted to them, be seen in any other way? The newborn child gives itself to its parents by the very fact of its coming into existence. <Its existence is already a gift, the first gift of the Creator to the creature.> (11)

- It is the Gospel truth concerning the gift of self, without which the person cannot "fully find himself", which makes possible an appreciation of how profoundly this "sincere gift" is rooted in the gift of God, Creator and Redeemer, and in the "grace of the Holy Spirit" which the celebrant during the Rite of Marriage prays will be "poured out" on the spouses. Without such an "outpouring", it would be very difficult to understand all this and to carry it out as man's vocation. Yet how many people understand this intuitively! Many men and women make this truth their own, coming to discern that only in this truth do they encounter "the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6). <Without this truth, the life of the spouses and of the family will not succeed in attaining a fully human meaning.> (11)
- In the conjugal act, husband and wife are called to confirm in a responsible way <the mutual gift> of self which they have made to each other in the marriage covenant. The logic of the <total gift of self to the other> involves a potential openness to procreation: in this way the marriage is called to even greater fulfillment as a family. (12)
- The teaching of the Letter to the Ephesians amazes us with its depth and the <authority of its ethical teaching.> Pointing to marriage, and indirectly to the family, as the "great mystery" which refers to Christ and the Church, the Apostle Paul is able to reaffirm what he had earlier said to husbands: "Let each one of you love his wife as himself". He goes on to say: "And let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Eph 5:33). Respect, because she loves and knows that she is loved in return. It is because of this love that husband and wife <become a mutual gift.> Love contains the acknowledgment of the personal dignity of the other, and of his or her absolute uniqueness. Indeed, each of the spouses, as a human being, has been willed by God from among all the creatures of the earth for his or her own sake. Each of them, however, by a conscious and responsible act, makes a free gift of self to the other and to the children received from the Lord (19).

## On Young People and Youth

### On the role of the lay person in the world

- Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, December 30, 1988.
- Having received the responsibility of manifesting to the world the mystery of God that shines forth in Jesus Christ, the Church likewise awakens one person to another, giving a sense of one's existence, opening each to the whole truth about the individual and of each person's final destiny. From this perspective the Church is called, in virtue of her very mission of evangelization, to serve all humanity. Such service is rooted primarily in the extraordinary and profound fact that "through the Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion to every person." For this reason the person "is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: the individual is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption." (36)

### On Catholic moral theology

- Encyclical "Veritatis Splendor" (Foundations of Catholic morality), August 6, 1993.
  - No one can escape from the fundamental questions: "What must I do? How do I distinguish good from evil?" The answer is only possible thanks to the splendour of the truth which shines forth deep within the human spirit, as the Psalmist bears witness: "There are many who say: 'O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord'" (Ps 4:6). The light of God's face shines in all its beauty on the countenance of Jesus Christ, "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), the "reflection of God's glory" (Heb 1:3), "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). Christ is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). Consequently the decisive answer to every one of man's questions, his religious and moral questions in particular, is given by Jesus Christ, or rather is Jesus Christ himself, as the Second Vatican Council recalls: "In fact, 'it is only in the mystery of the Word incarnate that light is shed on the mystery of man.' For Adam, the first man, was a figure of the future man, namely, of Christ the Lord. It is Christ, the last Adam, who fully discloses man to himself and unfolds his noble calling by revealing the mystery of the Father and the Father's love" (2)
  - Jesus Christ, the "light of the nations", shines upon the face of his Church, which he sends forth to the whole world to proclaim the Gospel to every creature (cf. Mk 16:15). Hence the Church, as the People of God among the nations,[3] while attentive to the new challenges of history and to mankind's efforts to discover the meaning of life, offers to everyone the answer which comes from the truth about Jesus Christ and his Gospel. (2)
  - They are some of the commandments belonging to the so-called "second tablet" of the Decalogue, the summary (cf. Rom 13:8-10) and foundation of which is "the commandment of love of neighbour:" "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 19:19; cf. Mk 12:31). In this commandment we find a precise expression of "the singular dignity of

the human person," "the only creature that God has wanted for its own sake". The different commandments of the Decalogue are really only so many reflections of the one commandment about the good of the person, at the level of the many different goods which characterize his identity as a spiritual and bodily being in relationship with God, with his neighbour and with the material world. As we read in the "Catechism of the Catholic Church," "the Ten Commandments are part of God's Revelation. At the same time, they teach us man's true humanity. They shed light on the essential duties, and so indirectly on the fundamental rights, inherent in the nature of the human person".

- Assisted by the Holy Spirit who leads her into all the truth (cf. Jn 16:13), the Church has not ceased, nor can she ever cease, to contemplate the "mystery of the Word Incarnate", in whom "light is shed on the mystery of man". The Church's moral reflection, always conducted in the light of Christ, the "Good Teacher", has also developed in the specific form of the theological science called "moral theology", a science which accepts and examines Divine Revelation while at the same time responding to the demands of human reason. Moral theology is a reflection concerned with "morality", with the good and the evil of human acts and of the person who performs them; in this sense it is accessible to all people. But it is also "theology", inasmuch as it acknowledges that the origin and end of moral action are found in the One who "alone is good" and who, by giving himself to man in Christ, offers him the happiness of divine life. (28-29)
- Rational reflection and daily experience demonstrate the weakness which marks man's freedom. That freedom is real but limited: its absolute and unconditional origin is not in itself, but in the life within which it is situated and which represents for it, at one and the same time, both a limitation and a possibility. Human freedom belongs to us as creatures; it is a freedom which is given as a gift, one to be received like a seed and to be cultivated responsibly. It is an essential part of that creaturely image which is the basis of the dignity of the person. Within that freedom there is an echo of the primordial vocation whereby the Creator calls man to the true Good, and even more, through Christ's Revelation, to become his friend and to share his own divine life. It is at once inalienable selfpossession and openness to all that exists, in passing beyond self to knowledge and love of the other. Freedom then is rooted in the truth about man, and it is ultimately directed towards communion. (86)

#### On the relationship between faith and reason

- Encyclical "Fides et Ratio," (On Reason and Faith), September 14, 1998.
  - (In describing how revelation assists reason in grasping the mysteries of the faith): In a sense, then, we return to the *sacramental* character of Revelation and especially to the sign of the Eucharist, in which the indissoluble unity between the signifier and signified makes it possible to grasp the depths of the mystery. In the Eucharist, Christ is truly present and alive, working through his Spirit; yet, as Saint Thomas said so well, "what you neither see nor grasp, faith confirms for you, leaving nature far behind; a sign it is that now appears, hiding in mystery realities sublime". He is echoed by the philosopher Pascal: "Just as Jesus Christ went unrecognized among men, so does his truth appear without external difference among common modes of thought. So too does the Eucharist remain among common bread". In short, the knowledge proper to faith does not destroy the mystery; it only reveals it the more, showing how necessary it is for people's lives: Christ the Lord "in revealing the mystery of the Father and his love fully reveals man to himself and makes clear his supreme calling", (18) which is to share in the divine mystery of the life of the Trinity.

#### On the defense and promotion of human life

- Encyclical "Evangelium Vitae" (The value and inviolability of human life), March 25, 1995.
  - In a special way, believers in Christ must defend and promote this right [to life], aware as they are of the wonderful truth recalled by the Second Vatican Council: "By his incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being". This saving event reveals to humanity not only the boundless love of God who "so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (<Jn> 3:16), but also the <incomparable value of every human person>. The Church, faithfully contemplating the mystery of the Redemption, acknowledges this value with ever new wonder. She feels called to proclaim to the people of all times this "Gospel", the source of invincible hope and true joy for every period of history. <The Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single and indivisible Gospel>. For this reason, man--living man--represents the primary and fundamental way for the Church (2)
  - The first and fundamental step towards this cultural transformation consists in <forming consciences> with regard to the incomparable and inviolable worth of every human life. It is of the greatest importance <to re-establish the essential connection between life and freedom>. These are inseparable goods: where one is violated, the other also ends up being violated. There is no true freedom where life is not welcomed and loved; and there is no fullness of life except in freedom. Both realities have something inherent and specific which links them inextricably: the vocation to love. Love, as a sincere gift of self, is what gives the life and freedom of the person their truest meaning.

- Mary thus helps the Church to <realize that life is always at the centre of a great struggle> between good and evil, between light and darkness. The dragon wishes to devour "the child brought forth" (cf. <Rev> 12:4), a figure of Christ, whom Mary brought forth "in the fullness of time" (<Gal> 4:4) and whom the Church must unceasingly offer to people in every age. But in a way that child is also a figure of every person, every child, especially every helpless baby whose life is threatened, because--as the Council reminds us--"by his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every person". It is precisely in the "flesh" of every person that Christ continues to reveal himself and to enter into fellowship with us, so that <rejection of human life>, in whatever form that rejection takes, <is really a rejection of Christ>. This is the fascinating but also demanding truth which Christ reveals to us and which his Church continues untiringly to proclaim: "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me" (<Mt> 18:5); "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (<Mt> 25:40).

### Human Work and Social problems and the economy

- Encyclical "Laborem Exercens" (On human work and social problems), September 14, 1981.
  - I wish to devote this document to human work and, even more, to man in the vast context of the reality of work. As I said in the encyclical "Redemptor hominis," ... man "is the primary and fundamental way for the Church", precisely because of the inscrutable mystery of redemption in Christ; and so it is necessary to return constantly to this way and to follow it ever anew in the various aspects in which it shows us all the wealth and at the same time all the toil of human existence on earth. ... Work is one of these aspects, a perennial and fundamental one, one that is always relevant and constantly demands renewed attention and decisive witness. (2-3)
  - The church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth (14)
  - Man ought to imitate God, his creator, in working, because man alone has the unique characteristic of likeness to God. Man ought to imitate God both in working and also in resting, since God himself wished to present his own creative activity under the form of work and rest. This activity by God in the world always continues, as the words of Christ attest: "My father is working still" (114)
  - The truth that by means of work man participates in the activity of God himself, his creator, was given particular prominence by Jesus Christ--the Jesus at whom many of his first listeners in Nazareth "were astonished, saying, 'Where did this man get all this? What is the wisdom given to him? . . . Is not this the carpenter?'"[40] For Jesus not only proclaimed but first and foremost fulfilled by his deeds the "gospel," the word of eternal wisdom that had been entrusted to him. Therefore, this was also "the gospel of work," because he who proclaimed it was himself a man of work, a craftsman like Joseph of Nazareth. (118).
- Encyclical "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" (True development of man and society), December 30, 1987.
  - The Church has confidence also in man, though she knows the evil of which he is capable. For she well knows that in spite of the heritage of sin, and the sin which each one is capable of committing there exist in the human person sufficient qualities and energies, a fundamental "goodness" (cf. Gen 1:31), because he is the image of the creator, placed under the redemptive influence of Christ, who "united himself in some fashion with every man", [86] and because the efficacious "fills the earth" (Wis 1:7). (47)
- Encyclical "Centesimus Annus" (The social question, one hundred years after "Rerum Novarum"), May 1, 1991.
  - The main thread and, in a certain sense, the guiding principle ... of all of the Church's social doctrine, is a correct view of the human person and of the person's unique value, inasmuch as the human being "... is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself." God has imprinted his own image and likeness on human beings (cf. Gen 1:26), conferring upon them an incomparable dignity, as the encyclical frequently insists. In effect, beyond the rights which one acquires by one's own work, there exist rights which do not correspond to any work performed, but which flow from one's essential dignity as a person. (11)
  - The concept of alienation needs to be led back to the Christian vision of reality, by recognizing in alienation a reversal of means and ends. When man does not recognize in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person, he effectively deprives himself of the possibility of benefitting from his humanity and of entering into that relationship of solidarity and communion with others for which God created him. Indeed, it is through the free gift of self that one truly finds oneself. This gift is made possible by the human person's essential "capacity for transcendence." One cannot give oneself to a purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia. As a person, one can give oneself to another person or to other persons, and ultimately to God, who is the author of our being and who alone can fully accept our gift. A person is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself and to live the experience of self-giving and of the formation of an authentic human community oriented towards his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer this gift of self and to establish this solidarity between people. (41)

### On the missionary dimension of Catholics in the World

- Encyclical "Redemptoris Missio" (The mission), December 7, 1990.

- For this reason the Council, after affirming the centrality of the Paschal Mystery, went on to declare that "this applies not only to Christians but to all people of good will in whose hearts grace is secretly at work. Since Christ died for everyone, and since the ultimate calling of each of us comes from God and is therefore a universal one, we are obliged to hold that the Holy Spirit offers everyone the possibility of sharing in this Paschal Mystery in a manner known to God." (10)
- Christ not only proclaimed the kingdom, but in him the kingdom itself became present and was fulfilled. This happened not only through his words and his deeds: "Above all,...the kingdom is made manifest in the very person of Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, who came 'to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mk 10:45)." The kingdom of God is not a concept, a doctrine, or a program subject to free interpretation, but it is before all else a person with the face and name of Jesus of Nazareth, the image of the invisible God. If the kingdom is separated from Jesus, it is no longer the kingdom of God which he revealed. The result is a distortion of the meaning of the kingdom, which runs the risk of being transformed into a purely human or ideological goal, and a distortion of the identity of Christ, who no longer appears as the Lord to whom everything must one day be subjected

### On ecumenism

- Encyclical "Ut Unum Sint" (The commitment to ecumenism), May 25, 1995.
  - "Ecumenical" prayer, as the prayer of brothers and sisters, expresses all this. Precisely because they are separated from one another, they meet in Christ with all the more hope, <entrusting to him the future of their unity and their communion>. Here too we can appropriately apply the teaching of the Council: "The Lord Jesus, when he prayed to the Father <'that all may be one ... as we are one'> (<Jn> 17:21-22), opened up vistas closed to human reason. For he implied a certain likeness between the union of the Divine Persons, and the union of God's children in truth and charity". (26)
  - If prayer is the "soul" of ecumenical renewal and of the yearning for unity, it is the basis and support for <everything the Council defines as "dialogue">. This definition is certainly not unrelated to today's <personalist way of thinking>. The capacity for "dialogue" is rooted in the nature of the person and his dignity. As seen by philosophy, this approach is linked to the Christian truth concerning man as expressed by the Council: man is in fact "the only creature on earth which God willed for itself"; thus he cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself". Dialogue is an indispensable step along the path <towards human self-realization>, the self-realization both of <each individual> and <of every human community>. Although the concept of "dialogue" might appear to give priority to the cognitive dimension (<dia-logos>), all dialogue implies a global, existential dimension. It involves the human subject in his or her entirety; dialogue between communities involves in a particular way the subjectivity of each. This truth about dialogue, so profoundly expressed by Pope Paul VI in his Encyclical <Ecclesiam Suam>, was also taken up by the Council in its teaching and ecumenical activity. Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way it is always an "exchange of gifts". (28)
  - RH 7: The life of Christ speaks, also, to many who are not capable of repeating with Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."(35) He, the Son of the living God, speaks to people also as Man: it is His life that speaks, His humanity, His fidelity to the truth, His all-embracing love.
  - RH 11: Seeds of the word in other religions. ... All of us who are Christ's followers must therefore meet and unite around Him.

### In the arts

- Letter to Artists, April 4, 1999
  - Human beings, in a certain sense, are unknown to themselves. Jesus Christ not only reveals God, but "fully reveals man to man". In Christ, God has reconciled the world to himself. All believers are called to bear witness to this; but it is up to you, men and women who have given your lives to art, to declare with all the wealth of your ingenuity that in Christ the world is redeemed: the human person is redeemed, the human body is redeemed, and the whole creation which, according to Saint Paul, "awaits impatiently the revelation of the children of God" (Rom 8:19), is redeemed. The creation awaits the revelation of the children of God also through art and in art. This is your task. Humanity in every age, and even today, looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and its destiny.

### On the priesthood and priestly formation

- Apostolic Exhortation, "Pastores Dabo Vobis," March 25, 1992.
  - Human maturity, and in particular affective maturity, requires a clear and strong <training in freedom> which expresses itself in convinced and heartfelt obedience to the "truth" of one's own being, to the "meaning" of one's own existence, that is to the "sincere gift of self" as the way and fundamental content of the authentic realization of self. Thus understood, freedom requires the person to be truly master of himself, determined to fight and

overcome the different forms of selfishness and individualism which threaten the life of each one, ready to open out to others, generous in dedication and service to one's neighbour. This is important for the response that will have to be given to the vocation, and in particular to the priestly vocation, and for faithfulness to it and to the commitments connected with it, even in times of difficulty. On this educational journey towards a mature, responsible freedom the community life of the Seminary can provide help. (44)

- As one who shares in the prophetic mission of Jesus and is part of the mystery of the Church the Teacher of truth, the priest is called to reveal to others, in Jesus Christ, the true face of God, and as a result the true face of man. This demands that the priest himself seek God's face and contemplate it with loving veneration (cf. Ps 26:7; 41:2). Only thus will he be able to make others know him. (72)

### On the office of the bishop

- Apostolic Exhortation, "Pastores Gregis", October 16, 2003
- Christ is in fact the heart of evangelization and, as I myself have often insisted, is the very programme of the new evangelization, which "ultimately has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a programme which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This programme for all times is our programme for the Third Millennium". From Christ, the heart of the Gospel, all the other truths of faith are derived, and hope shines forth for all humanity. Christ is the light which enlightens everyone, and all those reborn in him receive the first fruits of the Spirit, which enable them to fulfil the new law of love. (27)

### On the Eucharist

- Encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia" (On the Eucharist and Its Relation to the Church), April 17, 2003.
  - To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the "programme" which I have set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium, summoning her to put out into the deep on the sea of history with the enthusiasm of the new evangelization. To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize him wherever he manifests himself, in his many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of his body and his blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by him she is fed and by him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a "mystery of light". Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "their eyes were opened and they recognized him" (Lk 24:31). (6)
  - By proclaiming the Year of the Rosary, I wish to put this, my twenty-fifth anniversary, under the aegis of the contemplation of Christ at the school of Mary. Consequently, I cannot let this Holy Thursday 2003 pass without halting before the "Eucharistic face" of Christ and pointing out with new force to the Church the centrality of the Eucharist. (7)
  - RH 20: In the mystery of the Redemption, that is to say in Jesus Christ's saving work, the Church not only shares in the Gospel of her Master through fidelity to the word and service of truth, but she also shares, through a submission filled with hope and love, in the power of His redeeming action expressed and enshrined by Him in a sacramental form, especially in the Eucharist.

### On human suffering

- Apostolic Exhortation, "Salvifici Doloris," February 11, 1984.
  - A Good Samaritan is one who brings help in suffering, whatever its nature may be, help which is, as far as possible, effective. He puts his whole heart into it, nor does he spare material means. We can say that he gives himself, his very "I," opening this "I" to the other person. Here we touch upon one of the key points of all Christian anthropology. Man cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself." A Good Samaritan is the person capable of exactly such a gift of self. Following the parable of the Gospel, we could say that suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order to unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions. The person who is a "neighbor" cannot indifferently pass by the suffering of another: this in the name of fundamental human solidarity, still more in the name of love of neighbor. He must "stop," "sympathize," just like the Samaritan of the Gospel parable. The parable in itself expresses a deeply Christian truth, but one that at the same time is very universally human. It is not without reason that, also in ordinary speech, any activity on behalf of the suffering and needy is called "Good Samaritan" work. (28-29)
  - Suffering RH 7: Furthermore, His death on the cross speaks - that is to say the inscrutable depth of His suffering and abandonment. The Church never ceases to relive His death on the cross and His resurrection, which constitute the content of the Church's daily life.

### On the Renewal desired by the Jubilee Year

- Apostolic Letter "Tertio Millennio Adveniente," November 14, 1994.
  - Christ, the redeemer of the world, is the one mediator between God and men, and there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved (cf. Acts 4:12). As we read in the Letter to the Ephesians: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the richness of his grace, which he has lavished upon us. For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight ... his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (1:7-10). Christ, the Son who is of one being with the Father, is therefore the one who reveals God's plan for all creation, and for man in particular. In the memorable phrase of the Second Vatican Council, Christ "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear." He shows us this calling by revealing the mystery of the Father and his love. As the image of the invisible God, Christ is the perfect man who has restored to the children of Adam the divine likeness which had been deformed by sin. In his human nature, free from all sin and assumed into the divine person of the Word, the nature shared by all human beings is raised to a sublime dignity: "By his incarnation the Son of God united himself in some sense with every man. He labored with human hands, thought with a human mind, acted with a human will and loved with a human heart. Born of Mary the Virgin he truly became one of us and, sin apart, was like us in every way."(4)
  - Recalling that "Christ ... by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear," two commitments should characterize in a special way the third preparatory year: meeting the challenge of secularism and dialogue with the great religions. With regard to the former, it will be fitting to broach the vast subject of the crisis of civilization, which has become apparent especially in the West, which is highly developed from the standpoint of technology but is interiorly impoverished by its tendency to forget God or to keep him at a distance. This crisis of civilization must be countered by the civilization of love, founded on the universal values of peace, solidarity, justice and liberty, which find their full attainment in Christ. On the other hand, as far as the field of religious awareness is concerned, the eve of the year 2000 will provide a great opportunity, especially in view of the events of recent decades, for interreligious dialogue, in accordance with the specific guidelines set down by the Second Vatican Council in its declaration <Nostra Aetate> on the relationship of the church to non-Christian religions. (51-52)
- Apostolic Letter "Novo Millennio Ineunte," January 6, 2001
  - "Your face, O Lord, I seek" (Ps 27:8). The ancient longing of the Psalmist could receive no fulfilment greater and more surprising than the contemplation of the face of Christ. God has truly blessed us in him and has made "his face to shine upon us" (Ps 67:1). At the same time, God and man that he is, he reveals to us also the true face of man, "fully revealing man to man himself". Jesus is "the new man" (cf. Eph 4:24; Col 3:10) who calls redeemed humanity to share in his divine life. The mystery of the Incarnation lays the foundations for an anthropology which, reaching beyond its own limitations and contradictions, moves towards God himself, indeed towards the goal of "divinization". This occurs through the grafting of the redeemed on to Christ and their admission into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life. The Fathers have laid great stress on this soteriological dimension of the mystery of the Incarnation: it is only because the Son of God truly became man that man, in him and through him, can truly become a child of God.
  - Stake everything on charity — Beginning with intra-ecclesial communion, charity of its nature opens out into a service that is universal; it inspires in us a commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being. This too is an aspect which must clearly mark the Christian life, the Church's whole activity and her pastoral planning. The century and the millennium now beginning will need to see, and hopefully with still greater clarity, to what length of dedication the Christian community can go in charity towards the poorest. If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt 25:35-37). This Gospel text is not a simple invitation to charity: it is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ. By these words, no less than by the orthodoxy of her doctrine, the Church measures her fidelity as the Bride of Christ. Certainly we need to remember that no one can be excluded from our love, since "through his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every person". Yet, as the unequivocal words of the Gospel remind us, there is a special presence of Christ in the poor, and this requires the Church to make a preferential option for them. This option is a testimony to the nature of God's love, to his providence and mercy; and in some way history is still filled with the seeds of the Kingdom of God which Jesus himself sowed during his earthly life whenever he responded to those who came to him with their spiritual and material needs.
  - We contemplate the face of a "son," a face of sorrow, a face of one who is Risen

### Conclusions

- 25 years contemplating Christ and man, from various angles. Christ reveals man fully to himself and makes his supreme calling clear, and man, to find and fulfill himself, must give himself away out of love to God and to others.
- This is what JP II has done, his entire pontificate, guiding us not just by his thought but by his example.
- The greatest way we could honor him is to take this vision out to the world and incorporate it into our lives.
- Let's get to work!