

“Come” and “Go” — Being Renewed in Faith for the New Evangelization  
The Year of Faith

I. Introduction

- A. Today, one month into the Year of Faith and twelve days after Pope Benedict brought to a close the Synod on the New Evangelization, we're going to talk about being renewed in faith for the New Evangelization. These two realities, the Year of Faith and the New Evangelization are intimately and integrally related, like two sides of the same coin.
- B. There were two main verbs in Jesus' vocabulary, “Come,” and “Go.” Jesus was constantly calling us to come to him, to come and see where he dwells, to come and follow him along the way, to come with him to a faraway place to rest with him, to come to him with all our labors and burdens so that he can refresh us, to let the little children come to him, to come with him to the other side, to come to him even walking across stormy seas, to come out to meet Him the Bridegroom, to come and have breakfast, to come to the banquet he has prepared, and to come and inherit the kingdom. In each of these invitations, Jesus was inviting the first Christians and each of us to an encounter, to an adventure, to a journey of faith. And so in this Year of Faith, Jesus is likewise calling each of us with greater insistence to get up from where we presently are and to follow him to where he wants to lead us. His earthly vicar is calling us to remember that the life of faith is a continuous pilgrimage from baptism to the fulfillment of baptism in heaven, from the trickle of water flowing from the eastern side of the Temple of Christ's body, to a thousand cubits more in which we're ankle deep, then knee deep, then waist deep, until finally we're immersed in that living water as it gives life not only to us but to the desert and revivifies even the Dead Sea. That's what the Year of Faith is about, to come to Christ more fully in all the parts of our life so that we may be able to say with St. Paul that it is no longer even I who live, because the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.
- C. The second great verb in Jesus' vocabulary is “go,” and this points to the New Evangelization to which the popes have been incessantly summoning us since the 1970s. After the first followers of Jesus had come and followed him, he started to send them out. “Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel” (Mt 10:6) “Go to the sea and cast a hook” (Mt 17:27). “Go and tell John what you see and hear” (Lk 7:22). “Go and work in the vineyard and I will give you what is just” (Mt 20:4). “Go and let be it done for you according to your faith” (Mt 9:29). “Go and show yourself to the priest” (Lk 17:14). “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord in his mercy has done for you” (Mk 5:19). “Go and proclaim the kingdom of God” (Lk 9:60). “Go in peace.” “Go quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame” (Lk 14:21). “Go, call your husband, and come here” (Jn 4:16). “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). “Just as the Father sent me, so I send you!” (Jn 20:21). So Jesus, after calling us to come to Him, turns us outward, to take him to others, so that others may have this same life-changing encounter with him. Come and Go. The Christian life involves both. It means being a devout disciple and an ardent apostle. It means being a good sheep and a good shepherd. Faith and Evangelization are interconnected.
- D. In his letter announcing the Year of Faith, *Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict pondered St. Paul's expression in his letter to the Romans, “Man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved” (*Rom* 10:10). This expression summarizes the interconnection between being evangelized in faith and evangelizing others. We do not just believe with the head, but believe with the heart, entrusting ourselves to the one who reveals himself to us and loves us to the extreme. But faith cannot stop there as a private act. When it's real, when we grasp the treasure of faith, we can't refrain from sharing it by confessing it with our lips. Woe to me, we say to ourselves, if we do not share the Gospel. Likewise it's not enough merely to confess with our lips. Jesus said that those in his day who sat

on Moses' seat did that, but they didn't practice what they were teaching, they didn't live by it, when it came down to it they didn't really believe it. Likewise today there is a crisis of faith not just among Christians as a whole but also among what sociologists call "Church professionals," those priests, religious, consecrated men and women and lay people who carry out the Church's work. You see it in priests and bishops who never themselves go to confession or who are living double-lives. You see it in women's religious communities that stop celebrating the Eucharist because they have ceased to share the Church's faith in the Sacrament of Holy Orders. You see it in so many dedicated lay people who have begun just going through the motions in prayer, and who often begin to believe that the Church's faith and the Church's command to love as God loves are in opposition, rather than in complete harmony.

- E. What I'd like to do today in this first talk is to spend some time talking about the Year of Faith and then, this afternoon, to turn to the New Evangelization to try to show how believing in the heart and confessing with the lips are basically two different moments of the same true faith working through love.
- F. This morning I'd like to start by three preliminary dangers with regard to the Year of Faith so that we can avoid them over the course of the Year.
- G. Then I would like to accent a few of the things Pope Benedict has said to us about Faith in his *Porta Fidei* as well as his new catecheses on faith begun on October 17.
- H. And then, I'd like to take up various suggestions on how to live the Year of Faith well, as priest, disciples and apostles.

## II. Three Dangers

### A. The Crisis of Lukewarmness

1. We're living at a time in which, in western society, faith as a whole is getting weaker. The deep faith of grandparents and their generation has been getting attenuated by the generation. We see signs of it in terms of Mass attendance, where only 24% come to worship God each Sunday. We see it in terms of the decreased numbers of vocations to marriage, and relative to the past, the priesthood and religious life. We see it in terms of our needing to merge parishes and close parish schools in many parts of the country. We see it in the few people who examine their conscience, repent and come to receive the Lord's absolution in confession. We see it in how faith is treated by Hollywood in movies and on television. We see it in many instances of social regress with regard to abortion, the redefinition of marriage, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, the push to give doctors permission to prescribe lethal poisons to patients who request it, to parental rights in public schools — things that would never be allowed were people living their faith as a defining reality of their life.
2. But there is also a crisis that passes under the radar that is very much related to the ones that get all the attention. It's the first danger I want to speak about: It's a crisis of tepidity in so many who still practice the faith. Thanks be to God, they're showing up, but they're not all there. Pope Benedict talked about this yesterday in his address to the bishops and other experts from around the world at the beginning Synod on the New Evangelization in the Vatican. He said: "There's a passion of ours that must grow from faith, which must be transformed into the fire of charity. Jesus said: I came to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled. Origen has conveyed us a word of the Lord: "Whoever is near me is near the fire." The Christian must not be lukewarm. The Book of Revelation tells us that this is the greatest danger for a Christian: not that he may say no, but that he may say a very lukewarm yes. This being lukewarm is what discredits Christianity. Faith must become in us a flame of love, a flame that really fires up my being, becomes the great passion of my being, and so it fires also my neighbor. ... The Year of Faith is not just for the fallen away, for "others." The Year of Faith is for all of us. We all need it. And those of us who don't think we need it need it most of all.
3. The Holy Father has not chosen an official theme for the Year of Faith, but I'm convinced that if he does, the best candidate would be, "Auge nobis fidem!," "Lord, increase our faith" (Lk 17:5), the plea the apostles made to Jesus after they realized how much they needed his help in

order to live up to his call to forgiveness. There are no plateaus in the spiritual life; we're either going up hill or sliding down hill, and hence this upcoming holy year is an opportunity for each of us to look candidly at the vitality of our faith and ask the Lord's assistance that this great gift may grow.

4. The greatest compliments Jesus ever gave were about faith. "O Woman, great is your faith," Jesus said to a pagan woman in Tyre after she with beautiful perseverance begged Jesus to heal her daughter. Jesus publicly marveled about the deep faith of a Roman centurion who showed total confidence that Jesus could heal his servant simply by saying a word a great distance away. He likewise praised the faith of his own mother as one who heard, believed into practice the Word of God (Lk 11:28), indicating, as the early saints of the Church beautifully noted, that before she had conceived the Word of God in her womb, she had already conceived him in faith in her heart.
  5. In contrast to these great icons of faith, there are also figures of little or no faith. Jesus reproved the apostles on four occasions because of their "little faith." Jesus wasn't able to work miracles in various places, including his hometown of Nazareth, because he was amazed at their lack of faith. He candidly called out many of his contemporaries for being a "faithless and perverse generation" (Mt 17:7). And forebodingly, Jesus wondered aloud about his second coming: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (Lk 18:8).
  6. At the beginning of this Year of Faith, it's important for us to ask: Would the Lord compliment us for our "great faith" or reprove us for our "little faith"? If he were to come today, would he find faith in us? All of us this year in the Church — whether we're fervent or tepid — need to imitate the apostles and beg, "Lord, increase our faith!" Even better, we should say with the father of the stricken boy, "Lord, I do believe. Help my unbelief!"
- B. The Stakes of the Year of Faith
7. The question of lukewarmness in the Church leads us to the question about the stakes of the Year of Faith. In many places in the Church, the Year of Faith hasn't generated much excitement. One commentator said to call a Year of Faith is a little like celebrating a Year of "Water," something ubiquitous, uninspiring, something at least in our culture easily taken for granted. Because we're always at least supposed to be focused on faith, walking by faith, living by faith, to some it seems like we're having a special holy year dedicated to the "same old, same old." That's why I think it's key for us to grasp the stakes of the Year of Faith.
  8. Over the course of my 13 years as a priest, many people have come to me discouraged that, no matter how much they pray for patience, it seems that they're always losing it. I generally ask them, "How do you think God responds to such prayers for patience? Do you think he responds by removing you from whatever would try your patience or rather by giving you his grace but then providing challenging opportunities to grow in that virtue?" Most recognize it's the latter. "The next time you find yourself in a situation that puts your patience to the test," I counsel them, "try to remember that it's an answer to your prayer to grow in patience. God is with you to help you to respond patiently."
  9. In a similar way, when we this year pray for an increase in faith, the Lord is going to respond probably by permitting us — individually and together as a Church — to have our faith tested, so that, in responding well in those trials, our faith may grow. I say "may," because whether our faith grows depends on how we respond to the situations that put our faith to the test. We have to be ready for those trials.
  10. The last time the Church had a Year of Faith, many in the Church just looked at it as an occasion for a few pious events. It remained on the periphery of most of the Church's life. And when the tests came, many in the Church were caught off guard, with disastrous consequences.
  11. Back in 1967, Pope Paul VI called a Year of Faith ostensibly to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the martyrdoms of SS. Peter and Paul. But the Pope saw some portentous signs on the horizon and called the holy year specifically to strengthen his brothers and sisters in the faith before, somewhat literally, all hell would break loose.

12. Just look at what happened in 1968: the multiple assassinations, riots across the globe, the excesses of the sexual revolution, the terrible destruction of the war in Vietnam, and the massive crisis of faith after the pope published *Humanae Vitae* reaffirming the Church's teaching on the sinful character of contraceptive use by married couples. And that was just the beginning. Within a few years, thousands of priests and religious abandoned their vocations, while many others remained within but were consciously unfaithful to their promises and vows, most notoriously the priests who began the cycle of abuse of minors that eventually came to light in 2002. There was also the publication of the Dutch Catechism, in which the bishops of Holland officially proposed as authentic Catholic doctrine things that were heresies.
13. Rather than a palpable increase of faith, Paul VI would say in 1972, that the "smoke of Satan" had entered the Church. "There is doubt, uncertainty, problematic, disquiet, dissatisfaction, confrontation," he went on. "There is no longer trust of the Church; they trust the first profane prophet who speaks in some journal or some social movement, and they run after him and ask him if he has the formula of true life. . . . Doubt has entered our consciences, and it entered by windows that should have been open to the light."
14. Paul VI could see many of these problems on the horizon. He tried to get the Church ready to meet these challenges with faith. Paul VI was ready. But most of the Church was not. When the faith of the Church and so many individuals was challenged, they did not walk or live by faith, they did not renew their trust, but so many went the way of the world.
15. I bring this up because what Pope Benedict and the Church are facing today is far more daunting than what Paul VI faced 45 years ago.
16. I tend to think that if faithful Catholics and Church leaders could have foreseen what would follow the 1967 Year of Faith, they would have lived the year with much greater insistence and fervor. A Year of Faith is always a good thing, particularly with regard to those who really respond to the graces of the year to grow in faith; doubtless 1967's insistence on faith would have lessened some of the damage of the years that were to come. But it was, in some ways, a missed opportunity because it remained fundamentally a thing for some pious events and the publication of Paul VI's *Credo of the People of God*, not something that impacted the lives of Catholics across the globe and increased their faith. We need to try to ensure that the same thing doesn't occur this time around. We may not be able to influence the way the Church universal marks this year, but we can make a real difference in buttressing the faith of each other and all those others we serve in our immediate ministries.
17. I tend to think that the same Holy Spirit that inspired Paul VI to read the signs of the times in 1967 and declare a Year of Faith has inspired Benedict XVI. Both of them had received the mission — with the personal prayers of the Lord Jesus — to strengthen their brothers and sisters in the faith. We may have some intense crises on the way. And this is a year to get ready for them.

#### C. Evangelized

1. The third danger I'd say about the Year of Faith has to do with the way many have understood the purpose of this Year. Because it was called on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, many have looked at it fundamentally as a "catechetical year." This is a particular temptation in an age of widespread religious illiteracy. But even a superb Catechetical Year would not necessarily be a Year of Faith. Something more is needed.
2. To illustrate this point, I'd like to turn to something Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, the Archbishop of Dublin, brought up last year in one of his prophetic talks with regard to the state of the Church in Ireland. He said that Ireland was probably the most catechized country on earth, but the least evangelized. Everyone knows the truths of the faith, but many know them only at a superficial level, at the level of trivia, rather than allowing those truths to transform their lives. Being catechized and being evangelized are two different things, and we shouldn't confuse them.

3. There's a classic distinction about faith that goes back to St. Augustine, which Pope Benedict mentioned in his catechesis on October 17. It's the distinction between *fides quae* and *fides qua*. *Fides quae* refers to the content of the faith. *Fides qua* refers to the act of entrustment to God and to the Church on the basis of which we believe. Every act of faith is a belief in something on the basis of a trust in someone.
4. The real goal of a year dedicated to increasing our faith ought to be focused on both the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*. We need to focus on both, but if we're going to give priority to one of the two, I believe that priority should be given to the *fides qua*, which I think is the great crisis today. Yes, there is a real issue with religious illiteracy, but I think that that's because of a lack in the *fides qua*, a lack of a total entrustment to Christ. While it's clear that many don't know the "why" behind the "what" of the content of the Christian faith, I think in most circumstances, they do know the "that." Many who know, for example, that Jesus and the Church speak very forcefully about the meaning of marriage as an indissoluble union of one man and one woman from the beginning, that he speaks about forgiving 70x7, that he eagerly desires to eat the Passover of the Eucharist with us at least each Sunday, that he established the Sacrament of Penance on Easter Sunday Evening, still nevertheless — and not out of weakness but out of choice — decide to divorce and remarry, to support husbandless or wifeless pseudomarrriages, to hold grudges and seek revenge, to put work, sports, sleep and so many other things above Sunday Mass, to avoid the Sacrament of Penance for years. I think the deep reason for this is not ignorance, but connecting these truths to their faith in Jesus and trusting Jesus enough to recognize that to believe in him means to believe in what he said and did. I think our real goal for the Year of Faith is to collaborate with the Holy Spirit to strengthen the *fides qua*, so that people may have a hunger to know and to live the *fides quae*.
5. Pope Benedict stressed this point as the conclusion of his first catechesis in the Year of Faith. He said that all the catechesis we do with the help of the Catechism or the Documents of the Second Vatican Council is meant to lead to an encounter with Christ: "I would like it to be clear that this content or truth of faith (*fides quae*) bears directly on our life; it asks for a conversion of life that gives life to a new way of believing in God (*fides qua*). Knowing God, meeting him, deepening our knowledge of the features of his face is vital for our life so that he may enter into the profound dynamics of the human being."

### III. Porta Fidei

- A. We don't have the time tonight to go too much in depth through Pope Benedict's *Porta Fidei* announcing the Year of Faith, but I would like to cover a few of its central themes, to help us to think, and pray, and more effectively talk about it with others.
- B. The purpose of the Year of Faith
  1. The purpose is the renewal of the Church, which is always in need of reform. The reform happens through conversion from a dead faith to a life-giving faith in which faith working through love becomes the criterion of a person's existence. This renewal happens one act of faith at a time, in response to the Lord's gift of faith.
  2. This renewal will bring with it the rediscovery of the precious gift of our faith, so that we may profess it with renewed conviction, confidence and hope; celebrate it in the liturgy, witness it in the moral life and pray in accordance with it.
- C. Passing through the door
  1. I was a guide for many years to the major Churches of Rome. The doors were always important. They showed a transition from something into something else. Depicted on doors were the Cross, or the Sacraments, or the major episodes of conversion, or Christ himself. To enter through those doors means to embrace those realities.
  2. Pope Benedict says that the door of faith is always open for us ushering us into the life of communion with God and with his Church.
  3. We're called to enter through the door and not merely remain close to the door. That's where many people stay, in order to keep their options open and leave in case the

commitment becomes too demanding. For us it's very important to enter through the door of faith and to continue to go more deeply into a life of faith, to make our dwelling place totally on the other side of the door, in communion with God and others.

4. Hence there's a theological and ecclesiological purpose to the Year of Faith, so that we may enter into communion with God and with others. That's the renewal.
- D. Faith as a journey not just following Christ but becoming one with him.
1. Pope Benedict stresses that faith is a journey that lasts a lifetime that is meant to encompass eternity. We need to rediscover, he says, the faith as a dynamic interior journey, an exodus out of ourselves, a Passover together with Christ. Pope Benedict says that Christ wants to lead us out of the spiritual desert toward deep friendship with him, a friendship with him that will bring us the fullness of joy, as we become more and more united with him in love.
  2. The journey of faith leads us not to an encounter with an idea or with a project of life, but with a living Person who transforms our innermost selves, revealing to us our true identity as children of God (Oct 17).
  3. Because of secularization and widespread nihilism, the Pope says, many are lost, wandering in the desert, living frivolously, with no clear ideals or well-founded hopes, and within fluid and temporary social ties. Relativism has led many to have no reference points, to be suspicious and hesitate to commit, to live life as a series of brief experiments without the assumption of responsibility. As we'll talk about a little later, Christ is the answer to this lack of direction and meaning, but it begins by evangelized Christians becoming attractive sign-posts leading others to join them on the pilgrimage with Christ at the head.
- E. Not just personal but communitarian renewal
1. It is the Church that is the primary subject of faith.
- F. Retracing the history of our faith as it's been lived in the saints so that we might in turn learn how to live it with greater vitality.
1. He encourages us to focus on "the examples of faith that have marked these two thousand years of our salvation history."
  2. In a fitting sequel to the great "cloud of witnesses" of Heb 11 that illustrates how "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen", he mentions:
    - Abel
    - Enoch
    - Noah
    - Abraham
    - Sarah
    - Isaac
    - Jacob
    - Joseph
    - Moses
    - The Israelites who crossed the Red Sea
    - Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets
  3. And Pope Benedict mentions a New Testament "cloud of witnesses":
    - a. By faith, Mary ...
    - b. By faith, **the Apostles ...**
    - c. By faith, **the disciples ...**
    - d. By faith, the **martyrs ...**
    - e. By faith, **men and women have consecrated their lives to Christ, leaving all things behind so as to live obedience, poverty and chastity with Gospel simplicity, concrete signs of waiting for the Lord who comes without delay.**
    - f. By faith, **countless Christians** have promoted **action for justice** so as to put

into practice the word of the Lord, who came to proclaim deliverance from oppression and a year of favour for all (cf. *Lk* 4:18-19).

g. By faith, across the centuries, **men and women of all ages**, whose names are written in the Book of Life (cf. *Rev* 7:9, 13:8), **have confessed the beauty of following the Lord Jesus** wherever they were called to bear witness to the fact that they were Christian: in the family, in the workplace, in public life, in the exercise of the charisms and ministries to which they were called.

h. By faith, we too live: by the living recognition of the Lord Jesus, present in our lives and in our history.

4. This points to the importance of saints in showing what faith is, who en flesh the Gospel and the joy that it bears with it, who introduce us to how God lives in a human being and a human being in God. They demonstrate for us faith working through love. They inspire us to live the faith with love. To keep our faith in the midst of suffering.

5. That comment leads us directly to the New Evangelization, which is one of the most important ways faith works through love, since the greatest gift we can ever give to another is the gift of the Lord.

#### IV. The Note from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

A. In early January, the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a list of recommendations for the universal Church, national bishops' conferences, dioceses, parishes and individuals to grow in their knowledge of the Catholic faith during the upcoming Year.

B. Pope Benedict had announced in *Porta Fidei* that the CDF would be giving us a document and I had looked forward to it with great anticipation. When it eventually came out, many commented that they were somewhat underwhelmed. The recommendations are rather basic. Nevertheless, perhaps that's their genius. Perhaps they're like the instruction of Elisha to the leper Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan (2 Kings 5). Naaman was disappointed because he had anticipated he'd be asked to do something harder or more adventurous. But after friends insisted, he bathed seven times in the Jordan as was completely cured. Likewise growth in the knowledge of the faith doesn't require that we enroll in a special program in a desert monastery conducted in Latin. It requires that we take advantage of the basics that are already, by God's providence and mercy, very available to us.

C. The CDF gave 10 recommendations each at the level of the universal Church, episcopal conferences, dioceses and parishes. Many of them overlap. I'd like to summarize them into what I think would be the ten most relevant indications for those of us with the care of souls:

1. **(One) Study the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the documents of the Second Vatican Council** — The Year of Faith will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of Vatican II and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of the Catechism. Like Sacred Scripture, however, these tremendous texts remain unknown to the vast majority of Catholics. They are the most logical place to start growing in knowledge of the faith. For those looking for a sprint rather than a marathon, they could begin with the recently published YouCat for young adults, the most accessibly-written Catechism the Vatican has ever produced.
2. **(Two) Go on Pilgrimage** — The Congregation recommends pilgrimages to the great shrines of Christianity in the Holy Land, in Rome and various Marian sanctuaries. A pilgrimage is a privileged opportunity to encounter God and his message in the significant places where he has come or sent others to preach that message. Just as happened with the wise men after their journey to Bethlehem, pilgrims almost always return home "by another route," strengthened in the knowledge and living of the faith. Interior pilgrimages are also a means.
3. **(Three) Increase one's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary** — Mary is the model of faith, of someone who yearns for and assimilates what God has revealed and treasures it within. The Congregation in particular urges the faithful to "recognize the special role of Mary in the mystery of salvation, love her and follow her as a model of faith and virtue."
4. **(Four) Grow in friendship with the holy heroic witnesses of the faith** — The Saints and the Blessed in general, but particularly those of a particular country or region, are great examples of

men and women who have lived by faith and spent their lives seeking to pass it on as of first importance to others. For those of us in the United States, two new Americans will be canonized on October 21, Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha and Blessed Mother Marianne Cope. It would be beneficial to get to know their inspiring lives of faith more intimately during this upcoming year.

5. **(Five) Read the writings of the Holy Father** — We are privileged as Catholics to be living at a time when one of the greatest minds in the history of the papacy sits on the Chair of St. Peter. Through his homilies, messages, encyclicals, exhortations and other writings, Pope Benedict applies his own deep knowledge of the faith to the various challenges we and other Catholics face. He makes conceptually simple theological ideas that took centuries to distill. This great gift should not be wasted. On a previous retreat to priests I was surprised at how few priests read the encyclicals.
6. **(Six) Attend missions and days of recollection, conferences and study day** — The Congregation says such spiritual occasions are great opportunities for the faithful “to rediscover the gift of Baptismal faith and the task of giving witness.” In most, it’s a chance to learn the faith better and to examine how one is living it. People need to show up for these. Retreats like these fall into this category. Likewise, there are various men’s and women’s conferences, adult education opportunities and other offerings by parishes, dioceses and regions to help to grasp their faith better. In many places, the offerings have decreased because of poor attendance. The Year of Faith is an opportunity to begin a momentum in the other direction, producing greater offerings because of excellent attendance.
7. **(Seven) Celebrate the faith more intensely during Mass** — In Mass, the faith of the Church is proclaimed, celebrated and strengthened,” but we need to receive the seeds God implants on good soil and allow him to water them and help them grow. At the same time the Congregation urges priests and deacons to focus on the faith more in homilies, it encourages faithful to pay even closer attention.
  - a. *The Mass*
    1. The Mass is the Source and Summit of the truly Christian life. We’re called to live off the Eucharist.
    2. This is a supreme aspect of the fides quae, that Jesus really is the Eucharist, where we meet him and he meets us.
    3. My own faith grew exponentially when, as a freshman in college, I recognized it was really Jesus.
    4. Rom 12:1-2. Our logike latreia.
    5. We need to teach a new spirituality of the Mass. Praise and Thanksgiving. Not in a rush.
    6. See those who have been martyred for their belief in the Eucharist and travelled miles of dangerous road to attend Holy Mass.
    7. Jn 6. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life. We have come to believe that you are the Holy One of God. *Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius. Nil hoc verbo veritatis verius.*
    8. This is the supreme fides qua!
8. **(Eight) Examine your conscience on sins against the faith** — The Congregation urges parishes and dioceses to organize penitential celebrations, particularly during Lent, so that all can ask for God’s forgiveness, particularly for sins against the faith. Sins against faith include voluntary doubt, the neglect of revealed truth or willful refusal to assent to it, and the extreme sins of heresy, apostasy and schism. In an age in which many look to public opinion polls or worldly gurus for truth rather than to what God has revealed and the Church he founded teaches, there is ample matter for examination and confession, which will open penitents up anew to the graces for progress in faith.
  - a. *Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation*
    1. JP II once told young people that the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is the greatest means to maturity, to see who we are in the face of God and how much we need him.

2. For many, this is a paramount fides qua, to trust that Jesus knew what he was doing when he established the sacrament.
  3. Problems with faith are often moral problems.
  4. But our faith will often remain superficial, egocentric, etc., unless we drop to our knees, recognize that we need to grow in faith, and come with faith to receive the Father's forgiveness and help.
  5. Story of Simon the Pharisee versus the publicly sinning woman: The one who is forgiven much loves much, but the one who is forgiven little, loves little and takes Jesus for granted.
  6. It is one of the greatest antidotes against pride and greatest means to grow in humility and the virtues of the Christian life. It also teaches us about perhaps the most important aspect of the fides quae, that God not only exists, but loves us and loves us with all the mercy of the Father of the Prodigal Son.
  7. If we can't get people to seek to encounter the love of the Lord in the sacraments, we really can't be talking about living lives of faith.
9. **(Nine) Give added attention to teaching the faith in Catholic schools, religious education programs and homes**—Catholic schools and parish catechetical programs are geared not merely toward instruction but education, helping the young to grow in faith in head and heart so that they may live by faith for a lifetime. In the midst of a culture that seeks to inculcate categories and practices incompatible with the faith, there's a need for Catholic schools, religious education programs and parents to pass on the faith in a more powerful and life-changing way. This Year of Faith can be a time in which, through adult witness, the young can be assisted to make their inherited values more personal and influential.
- a. A more beautiful catechesis geared toward life*
1. Communicating the beauty of the faith and how it's supposed to be acted upon.
  2. Changing from information to education.
  3. Working with parents to help them try to learn how to do this as well. Coming up with means to pass on this formation to them.
  4. Connecting everything to Jesus, so that the fides quae comes from the fides qua.
  5. B16 at Catholic University in April 2008:
    - a. Education is integral to the mission of the Church to proclaim the Good News. First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth (cf. Spe Salvi, 4). This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church.
    - b. A university or school's Catholic identity is not simply a question of the number of Catholic students. It is a question of conviction - do we really believe that only in the mystery of the Word made flesh does the mystery of man truly become clear (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 22)? Are we ready to commit our entire self - intellect and will, mind and heart - to God? Do we accept the truth Christ reveals? Is the faith tangible in our universities and schools? Is it given fervent expression liturgically, sacramentally, through prayer, acts of charity, a concern for justice, and respect for God's creation? Only in this way do we really bear witness to the meaning of who we are and what we uphold.
    - c. From this perspective one can recognize that **the contemporary "crisis of truth" is rooted in a "crisis of faith"**. Only through faith can we freely give our assent to God's testimony and acknowledge him as the transcendent guarantor of the truth he reveals. Again, we see why fostering personal intimacy with Jesus Christ and communal witness to his loving truth is indispensable in

Catholic institutions of learning. Yet we all know, and observe with concern, the difficulty or reluctance many people have today in entrusting themselves to God. It is a complex phenomenon and one which I ponder continually. While we have sought diligently to engage the intellect of our young, perhaps we have neglected the will. Subsequently we observe, with distress, the notion of freedom being distorted. Freedom is not an opting out. It is an opting in - a participation in Being itself. Hence authentic freedom can never be attained by turning away from God. Such a choice would ultimately disregard the very truth we need in order to understand ourselves. A particular responsibility therefore for each of you, and your colleagues, is to evoke among the young the desire for the act of faith, encouraging them to commit themselves to the ecclesial life that follows from this belief. It is here that freedom reaches the certainty of truth. In choosing to live by that truth, we embrace the fullness of the life of faith which is given to us in the Church.

- d. Truth means more than knowledge: knowing the truth leads us to discover the good. Truth speaks to the individual in his or her entirety, inviting us to respond with our whole being. This optimistic vision is found in our Christian faith because such faith has been granted the vision of the Logos, God's creative Reason, which in the Incarnation, is revealed as Goodness itself. Far from being just a communication of factual data - "informative" - the loving truth of the Gospel is creative and life-changing - "performative" (cf. Spe Salvi, 2). With confidence, Christian educators can liberate the young from the limits of positivism and awaken receptivity to the truth, to God and his goodness. In this way you will also help to form their conscience, which, enriched by faith, opens a sure path to inner peace and to respect for others.
6. We obviously have many challenges here but the Year of Faith is a great time for an examination with our catechists about whether we're preparing people for a life of faith, whether we're preparing them to remain faithful under trial.
7. Japanese martyrs
  - a. On Nov 24, Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins beatified 188 Japanese martyrs from the early 17th century, a small part of the 35,000 Japanese Christians (of the 300,000) who died for the faith between 1597 and 1639.
  - b. I was moved by the example of one mother, Tecla Hashimoto, pregnant with her seventh child, who was crucified together with her three year-old daughter, Luisa. A pile of wood at the bottom of their joint cross was set on fire to increase their agony, as her other children were suffering the same fate nearby. "Lord Jesus," she prayed aloud, "receive these children." When her eldest daughter cried out that she could no longer see her on account of the flames engulfing them, Tecla answered joyfully, "Don't worry! In a little while you will see everything clearly."
  - c. Accounts of the martyrdom of children are the most moving of all. After watching his father be beheaded, five year-old Peter Hatori ran over to his father's lifeless body, removed his kimono, knelt down, joined his hands in prayer and presented his uncovered neck to the executioners. They were so stunned by the boy's actions that they misfired on their intended lethal blow, instead cutting through the boy's shoulder and sending him to the ground. Without complaining about what must have been enormous pain, Peter just lifted himself up on his knees and continued praying. He extended his neck once again and was killed, while calling on the names of Jesus and Mary.
  - d. How did such holy audacity ever become so routine among even the youngest generations of Japanese Catholics? It was because, from the beginning, they knew the cost of discipleship and never sought to water it down. Christ called them to love as he had loved them, and so they were willing to be crucified just

as Christ was. They believed in his promises, not just that if others hated him they would hate them as well but also that if they lost their lives for his sake they would gain them anew forever.

- e. It was also because priests would explicitly prepare parents, and parents their children, for martyrdom.
  - f. That preparation began with prayer. Kids learned that when they made the Sign of the Cross, they were expressing their unity with Christ on the Cross and preparing themselves to pick up their crosses and follow him first to death and then to resurrection. They understood that the Eucharist was not just a liturgical rite, but a true participation in Christ's passion, death and resurrection. When they prayed the mysteries of the Rosary, they saw that before they could share in the glorious mysteries, they first needed to enter into the sorrowful ones.
  - g. The preparation extended to practical instruction as well. Mothers trained their kids how to be faithful at the supreme hour. They taught them how to uncover their necks, fold their hands and look to heaven, as well as what to pray when their own hour came. They breast-fed them the stories of the heroic deaths of the apostles, the early Christian martyrs, and the Japanese martyrs before them, and inspired them to strive for similar greatness.
  - h. We live in an age rather scant on the Christian realism, courage and faith in which these Japanese Christians excelled. That's one of the things that can be worked upon in this Year of Faith.
10. **(Ten) Communicate your experience of faith to peers** — As teachers readily admit, one of the best ways to learn a subject is to have to instruct others about it. Likewise, one of the best ways to grow in our knowledge of the faith is through cooperating with the Holy Spirit in sharing it with others. We live in an emotivist age, in which people are moved less by teachers than by witnesses. Catholics are called to give a witness in their body language to the way the truths of the faith set us free. One of the greatest alms we can give to others is the spiritual work of mercy of “instructing those who don't know the faith.”
- a. *Apologetics*
    1. More effective evangelization in catechesis leads to the next topic, a proper apologetics.
    2. One of the reasons why many people have doubts today is because they share many of the assumptions those with no faith have with regard to some of the Church's teachings in controversial areas as well as in areas that challenge the scientific empiricism and materialism of the age.
    3. For us to help people grow in faith, we need to give a reason for the hope that's within us. We need to take up these topics and demonstrate the reasonableness of Church teaching with regard to other proposals, we need to show that many attacks against the Church's teaching are against strawmen. We need to help them to see that Jesus Christ is a more trustworthy expert on marriage than Dr. Ruth.
    4. Credo ut intelligam.
    5. I've found that in my priesthood, it's occasionally hard to get people to attend all types of good offerings, like Bible Studies, Nights of Recollection, and so on. But I've never struggled to get people to come to sessions in which we tackle controversial issues. They're attacked and ridiculed on them often as well. They want to be able to defend their faith, not simply out of love for Christ, but so that they won't look stupid. These are tremendous opportunities for us to increase their fides qua and fides quae.
    6. We've got to address the weeds.
    7. Otherwise we're not really speaking their language.
      - a. We've also got to address the biggest subjects of all — which go far beyond contraception or same-sex marriage. We've got to address the problem of evil. Suffering. Death. These are the things that get people to doubt. We need to help them.

- b. These are all straightforward recommendations, but I think they constitute a “wish list” that would be on any pastor’s hoped for to-do list. I’m not really sure they describe a list of priorities for the upcoming Year of Faith that would be much different from the typical pastoral goals we’d have for any calendar year. And for that reason, I think they may remain somewhat uninspiring for pastors and uninspiring for people who otherwise would be motivated to doing something new, to making a greater commitment toward a high goal this year. The Church as Magistra must not only instruct but inspire in order to educate and evangelize.
- c. So I’d like to give a shot to some other recommendations for the Year of Faith building on these that might give some indication of how to do things differently this upcoming year. They are a radical response to some of the spiritual cancers plaguing the Church and the world. I base a lot of these recommendations on what Pope Benedict has been saying and doing throughout his pontificate in order to bring people to a greater fides qua so that they will be inspired to learn and live the fides quae.

V. Concrete pastoral suggestions

A. (One) The beauty of our faith

1. The first two suggestions I’d recommend come from one of the most insistent thoughts of our Holy Father, something he said to the world for the first time back in the 1985 Ratzinger Report interview with Vittorio Messori, but something he has repeated very often in his talks to priests and other writings.
2. Ratzinger Report
  - a. The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely the saints the Church has produced and the art which has grown in her womb.
  - b. Better witness is borne to the Lord by the splendor of holiness and art which have arisen in the community of believers than by clever excuses which apologetics has come up with to justify the dark sides which, sadly, are so frequent in the Church’s human history. If the Church is to continue to transform and humanize the world, how can she dispense with beauty in her liturgies, that beauty which is so closely linked with love and with the radiance of the Resurrection? No. Christians must not be too easily satisfied. They must make their Church into a place where beauty—and hence truth—is at home. Without this the world will become the first circle of hell.
  - c. He then spoke of a famous theologian who admitted he was a barbarian. Ratzinger commented: “A theologian [and we could add, a priest, a pastor, a bishop] who does not love art, poetry, music and nature can be dangerous. Blindness and deafness toward the beautiful are not incidental: they necessarily are reflected in his theology [and preaching!]
3. In Rimini in 2002 at the annual meeting of Communion and Liberation that draws 700,000 people but outside of Italy for some strange reason never hits the ecclesiastical radar, he built upon these points in ways that are helpful for us to hear.
4. Being struck and overcome by the beauty of Christ is a more real, more profound knowledge than mere rational deduction. Of course we must not underrate the importance of theological reflection, of exact and precise theological thought; it remains absolutely necessary. But to move from here to disdain or to reject the impact produced by the response of the heart in the encounter with beauty as a true form of knowledge would impoverish us and dry up our faith and our theology. We must rediscover this form of knowledge; it is a pressing need of our time. ...
5. Of course, this is not just, or principally, a theological problem, but a problem of pastoral life that has to foster the human person’s encounter with the beauty of faith. To admire the icons and the great masterpieces of Christian art in general, leads us on an inner way, a way of overcoming ourselves; thus in this purification of vision that is a purification of the heart, it reveals the beautiful to us, or at least a ray of it. In this way we are brought into contact with the power of

the truth. I have often affirmed my conviction that the true apology of Christian faith, the most convincing demonstration of its truth against every denial, are the saints, and the beauty that the faith has generated. Today, for faith to grow, we must lead ourselves and the persons we meet to encounter the saints and to enter into contact with the Beautiful.

6. To round out this most important point, I'd like to mention also what he said off the cuff in a question and answer with the priests of Bressanone in the Dolomites in northern Italy on August 6, 2008:
  - a. I once said that to me art and the saints are the greatest apologetic for our faith. The arguments contributed by reason are unquestionably important and indispensable, but then there is always dissent somewhere. On the other hand, if we look at the saints, this great luminous trail on which God passed through history, we see that there truly is a force of good which resists the millennia; there truly is the light of light.
  - b. Likewise, if we contemplate the beauties created by faith, they are simply, I would say, **the living proof of faith.** If I look at this beautiful cathedral—it is a living proclamation! It speaks to us itself, and on the basis of the cathedral's beauty, we succeed in visibly proclaiming God, Christ and all his mysteries: Here they have acquired a form and look at us. All the great works of art, cathedrals—the Gothic cathedrals and the splendid Baroque churches—they are all a luminous sign of God and therefore truly a manifestation, an epiphany of God. And in Christianity it is precisely a matter of this epiphany: that God became a veiled Epiphany—he appears and is resplendent.
  - c. We have just heard the organ in its full splendor. I think the great music born in the Church makes the truth of our faith audible and perceivable: from Gregorian chant to the music of the cathedrals, to Palestrina and his epoch, to Bach and hence to Mozart and Bruckner and so forth. In listening to all these works—the Passions of Bach, his Mass in B flat, and the great spiritual compositions of 16th-century polyphony, of the Viennese School, of all music, even that of minor composers—we suddenly understand: It is true! Wherever such things are born, the Truth is there. Without an intuition that discovers the true creative center of the world such beauty cannot be born. **For this reason I think we should always ensure that the two things are together [truth and beauty]; we should bring them together.** When, in our epoch, we discuss the reasonableness of faith, we discuss precisely the fact that reason does not end where experimental discoveries end—it does not finish in positivism; the theory of evolution sees the truth but sees only half the truth: It does not see that behind it is the Spirit of the creation. We are fighting to expand reason, and hence for a reason, which, precisely, is also open to the beautiful and does not have to set it aside as something quite different and unreasonable.
  - d. Christian art is a rational art—let us think of Gothic art or of the great music or even, precisely, of our own Baroque art—but it is the artistic expression of a greatly expanded reason, in which heart and reason encounter each other. This is the point. **I believe that in a certain way this is proof of the truth of Christianity: Heart and reason encounter one another, beauty and truth converge, and the more that we ourselves succeed in living in the beauty of truth, the more that faith will be able to return to being creative in our time too, and to express itself in a convincing form of art.**

#### 7. Applications

In this Year of Faith, dedicated to being evangelized so that our faithful may be able to bring the faith to others, we have to prioritize beauty, because that's what will capture the heart in an emotivist age.

##### a. The first beauty is the saints

1. The Church should be judged on those who live by her teachings, not those who don't, and the example of the saints is quite beautiful. Who isn't touched by the charity of Blessed Mother Teresa, or St. Martin de Tours, or St. Vincent de Paul? Who isn't moved by the example of St. Maximilian Mary Kolbe's taking the place of Franciszek Gajowniczek? Who isn't touched by the simplicity and purity of a Bernadette Soubirous or

Therese Lisieux or Antonietta Meo? What mothers are not inspired by Gianna Molla? Which young people are not inspired by the example of Pier Giorgio Frassati in his work for the SVDP chapter? Who doesn't grow to love our faith more when we focus on the happy saints, like Philip Neri, John Bosco, and Teresa of Avila? Another inspiring thing is to focus on the defects of saints, so that we don't consider them unattainable extraordinary superheroes of the faith, but people who needed to go through many of the same struggles, but responded to the grace of God.

2. Abraham remains our great father in the faith, showing us the trust — the fides qua — involved in faith. This might be a great interreligious objective of the year, something that, to a large degree unites us with our Jewish older siblings and even with Muslims.
  3. I'd recommend planning a series on the great heroes of faith. Pope Benedict mentioned several in *Porta Fidei*. We now have a growing list of Americans.
  4. 100 Saints in 100 days series at St. Anthony's — People all signed up and wrote on one saint depicted in the Church and what that saint has to teach us about living the Christian life. It was sent out by email, put on a website and FaceBooked much to the edification of fellow parishioners. The exercise of study, writing, applying, also helped out so many more.
  5. Such a series could be done for all 408 days of the Year of Faith.
  6. But we don't necessarily have to focus merely on those who are canonized and certainly in heaven. One of the things I'm planning to do in my new parish, which is easier than encouraging my new parishioners to write 750 word entries on the saints, is to share at least one story of a person who inspired them to love and live the faith more seriously. I anticipate I'm going to get very inspiring — very BEAUTIFUL stories — of parents and godparents, friends, spouses, religious, priests and more, that will convey a contagious beauty of our faith and inspire people, beginning with the heart, to try to do for others what these people have done for fellow parishioners.
- b. The second beauty is art, by which Pope Benedict means all types of art: architecture, stained glass, paintings, sculptures, music, poems and other works of literature, even inspiring homilies that touch logos, ethos and PATHOS.
1. Pilgrimages to the beautiful Churches our faith has produced, both locally as well as nationally and internationally. This is also an opportunity to form people.
  2. If you have a beautiful Church, do a catechesis on the elements of the Church in detail and the faith of the Church that is expressed.
    - a. SE 18: How many images in a church no longer say anything to some people? The original meaning is no longer generally understood. Even terms that are still barely familiar to the middle generation, like tabernacle and so forth, have become foreign words. Nevertheless, the predominant mentality is still that we already know all about Christianity and are now in search of something different. ... It would be very important for preachers to show the way out of this feeling of staleness, this feeling that we are already long familiar with this, to create curiosity about the richness hidden in Christianity, so that this richness is regarded, no longer as a matter of burdensome systems, but as a living treasure that is worth knowing."
  3. Virtual pilgrimages via the internet, since so much is now available. We don't even have to travel from our parish to do it.
  4. Listening to and commenting on the great works of Sacred Music. NBSO "catecheses" on Mozart's Requiem, Handel's Messiah, etc. Gregorian Chant. Palestrina. Bring them into a culture that can start to give them a new aesthetics that can buttress them against some of the sirens of the modern world.
  5. Study of the poems of John of the Cross, of Francis Thompson, of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Study of the great allegories of CS Lewis.

## B. (Two) Sacred Scripture

1. I admit to being rather shocked that the CDF didn't give greater weight to studying Sacred Scripture in a Year of Faith, considering that faith comes "ex auditu," and we're called to hear the Word and live by it.
2. 2008 Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church asks for the whole Church to live a Biblical Apostolate.
3. When we study the Word of God, and especially when we interiorize it through meditation or lectio divina, there's a much deeper bond formed than, I believe, when we study the catechism. We are in contact with the words of God and for that reason it's much easier to come into contact with the Word of God who can transform us. It helps our fides qua to grow.
4. I'd like to mention a few things Pope Benedict said in his apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini*
  - a. 24. The word of God draws each of us into a conversation with the Lord: the God who speaks teaches us how to speak to him. ... In this way our word to God becomes God's word, thus confirming the dialogical nature of all Christian revelation, and our whole existence becomes a dialogue with the God who speaks and listens, who calls us and gives direction to our lives. Here the word of God reveals that our entire life is under the divine call.
  - b. 25. "'The obedience of faith' (*Rom* 16:26; cf. *Rom* 1:5; *2 Cor* 10:5-6) must be our response to God who reveals. By faith one freely commits oneself entirely to God, making 'the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals' and willingly assenting to the revelation given by God". In these words the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* gave precise expression to the stance which we must have with regard to God. *The proper human response to the God who speaks is faith*. ... It is the preaching of the divine word, in fact, which gives rise to faith, whereby we give our heartfelt assent to the truth which has been revealed to us and we commit ourselves entirely to Christ: "faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the word of Christ" (*Rom* 10:17). The whole history of salvation progressively demonstrates this profound bond between the word of God and the faith that arises from an encounter with Christ. Faith thus takes shape as an encounter with a person to whom we entrust our whole life.
5. 2012 Synod Proposition on the prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture (11). God has communicated himself to us in his Word made flesh. This divine Word, heard and celebrated in the Liturgy of the Church, particularly in the Eucharist, strengthens interiorly the faithful and renders them capable of authentic evangelical witness in daily life. The Synod Fathers desire that the divine word "be ever more fully at the heart of every ecclesial activity" (*Verbum Domini*, 1). The gate to Sacred Scripture should be open to all believers. In the context of the New Evangelization every opportunity for the study of Sacred Scripture should be made available. The Scripture should permeate homilies, catechesis and every effort to pass on the faith. In consideration of the necessity of familiarity with the Word of God for the New Evangelization and for the spiritual growth of the faithful, the Synod encourages dioceses, parishes, small Christian communities to continue serious study of the Bible and *Lectio Divina*, the prayerful reading of the Scriptures (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 21-22).

C. (Three) Homilies

1. Following upon Sacred Scripture, I'd like to say a word about our preaching, which should be different during the Year of Faith.
2. Some will encourage it to be more catechetical, but, again, I think we need to prop up the fides qua before we can get people to grow in the fides quae on their own. There would be a lot of opportunities — bulletin, video series, adult ed — to focus on the fides quae, but I'd encourage you to consider working in something about the act of faith into EVERY homily you preach over the course of the year, not just Sundays and solemnities, but daily Mass homilies, funerals, weddings, baptisms and more.

3. Describe how God is calling us to trust in him and in the word he's giving us today in the readings. If it's hard, say it, but mention that God himself knows it's not easy for us and is giving us the grace, he's giving us his body and blood, to help us along the way, as his beloved children.
4. Over the course of a year, it would make a dramatic impact in helping people to see the type of abandonment we're called to make in faith to God who comes to us at every moment and says "follow me" and helps us to "do" the will of God by "believing in the One" the Father has sent.
5. SE 161: "The fact that there is so much weariness among Christians, at least in Europe, does show that a new tone is needed. ... I read the story of a ... priest who said, 'I have tried so hard, but the people simply don't listen to me; they go to sleep, or simply don't come at all. So, something must be wrong with the delivery.' That is an example of experiences that others have too. The important thing is that the preacher himself must have an inward relationship with Holy Scripture, with Christ, out of the living Word, and that as a man of this time in which he lives and which is his, and from which he cannot escape, he inwardly assimilates the faith. And then, when he can really speak the faith out of a personal depth, then the new tone will come entirely by itself."

D. (Four) A real commitment to teaching prayer

1. Prayer, Pope Benedict says, is faith in action.
2. If we're going to help people grow in faith, we need to help them not only make the time for prayer but to teach them how to pray. This is perhaps our greatest pastoral priority in any year, but we need to focus on it with renewed freshness in this Year of Faith.
3. NMI 34. It would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life. Especially in the face of the many trials to which today's world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but "Christians at risk". They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of "substitutes", accepting alternative religious proposals and even indulging in far-fetched superstitions. It is therefore essential that education in prayer should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning
4. NMI 32. This training in holiness calls for a Christian life distinguished above all in the art of prayer.... We well know that prayer cannot be taken for granted. We have to learn to pray: as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray!" (Lk 11:1). Prayer develops that conversation with Christ which makes us his intimate friends: "Abide in me and I in you" (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life. Wrought in us by the Holy Spirit, this reciprocity opens us, through Christ and in Christ, to contemplation of the Father's face. Learning this Trinitarian shape of Christian prayer and living it fully, above all in the liturgy, the summit and source of the Church's life, but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity.
5. B16's catechesis on prayer is his leading by example.
6. Faith is a gift and hence we need to pray for it!
7. As priests and future priests we need to become models, masters and teachers of prayer.
  - a. LW 141: It is sad that there are what you might call professional Catholics who make a living on their Catholicism, but in whom the spring of faith flows only faintly, in a few scattered drops. We must really make an effort to change this.
  - b. The faithful expect only one thing from priests: that they be specialists in promoting the encounter between man and God. The priest is not asked to be an expert in economics, construction or politics. He is expected to be an expert in the spiritual life. ... In the face of the temptations of relativism or the permissive society, there is absolutely no need for the priest to know all the latest, changing currents of thought; what the faithful expect from him is that he be a witness to the eternal wisdom contained in the revealed word. (Warsaw, May 25, 2006)

- c. I have the impression that people understand and also appreciate it when a priest is with God, when he is concerned with his office of being the person who prays for others: "we", they say, "cannot pray so much, you must do it for us: basically, it is your job, as it were, to be the one who prays for us". They want a priest who honestly endeavours to live with the Lord and then is available to men and women - the suffering, the dying, the sick, children, young people (I would say that they are the priorities) - but also who can distinguish between things that others do better than him, thereby making room for those gifts. (Priests of the Diocese of Bolzano-Bressanone, August 6, 2008)
- 8. In the midst of an activist culture that is often tempted to put everything at the horizontal level of "best practices," it's important for us to bring people to greater faith by prayer.
  - a. Bishop Quinn in Winona starting every major meeting with a holy hour of all the participants.
  - b. Cantalamessa on subordination:
    - 1. One thing that mostly needs to be revived in the life of priests and that is the relationship between prayer and action. We have to change from a relationship of *juxtaposition* to one of *subordination*. Juxtaposition means that first you pray, and then you move on to pastoral action; subordination means that first you pray, and then you do what the Lord has shown in prayer! Apostles and saints did not simply pray before doing something; they prayed to learn what to do!
    - 2. For Jesus, prayer and action were not two separate or juxtaposed things; He prayed during the night to implement His Father's will as He had understood it during the day: "In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles" (Lk 6:12-13).
    - 3. If we really believe that God guides the Church with His Spirit and answers our prayers, we should take prayers before pastoral meetings very seriously, it is an important decision; we should not be happy with a hasty Hail Mary and sign of the cross to then move on to the agenda, as if this were the real serious business. Sometimes it may seem that everything goes on as before and that no answers came out of our prayers, but it is not so. By praying we "put the question to God" (cf. Ex 18:19); we rid ourselves of any personal interest and ambition of deciding on our own.

#### E. (Five) Charity

- 1. The fruit of faith is always charity, acting on Christ's command to love others as he has loved us, to seek to serve rather than to be served.
- 2. This has been a means for so many to grow in faith, both in terms of their self-giving, as well as in terms of encountering great faith in the poor.
- 3. Story of Winston, the bus driver, in St. Lucia. A Christian woman gave all her collected rain water to fix his overheated transmission.
- 4. Story of Bishop O'Malley's bringing in the Missionaries of Charity to the Diocese of Fall River after the scandals.
- 5. Faith without works is dead. Our lives of faith must inspire these works. This is the most effective means, I think, with many young people, to offer them opportunities for service and love of others. This is the way their faith grows.

#### F. (Six) Spiritual Poverty and Detachment

- 1. We're living in a world that is so materialistic and a culture that is so consumerist.
- 2. We are bombarded by advertisements that all communicate that we will never be happy, we will never be all that we can be, unless we buy what they're selling. It's an age in which many parents seek to show their love for their kids principally by the toys and gadgets they give. It's an age in which more people line up to buy lottery tickets than process to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. It's an age even when some Church leaders have been tempted to prioritize the

- financial assets of the their dioceses over the good of protecting children from the incalculable harm of abuse.
3. While the consumerism of our day has clearly accentuated materialistic impulses, greed for money and what money can buy is nothing new. Even in Jesus' much simpler, much poorer age, there was a problem with materialism. Jesus needed to accentuate that we cannot serve both God and mammon. We shouldn't store up for ourselves treasure on earth but treasure in heaven. That we shouldn't be fools and build grain bins for our harvest when we're going to die and can't take any of it through the needle's eye. The love of money or avarice or material acquisitiveness or possessiveness, St. Paul would write a couple of decades later, was the root of all evil then and now.
  4. Catholics would pack the Churches if they'd receive a million but find something "more important" to do when all that's being offered is the eternal Son of God.
  5. For us to live the faith and proclaim it to others, we need to become more like Christ, who, as St. Paul tells us, "Though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). We need to be poor in spirit, placing our true treasure in God and helping others to do the same.
  6. Spiritual poverty and detachment is a direct response to the materialistic modern world, to the idolatry of money.
  7. Are we able to choose Christ in faith or do we hold on to our things?
  8. Problem in the priesthood. Priests with fancy cars, stereo systems. Accumulators of Nativity sets. Who can't really relate to the poor.
  9. PDV 30: Poverty for the priest, by virtue of his sacramental configuration to Christ, the Head and Shepherd, takes on specific "pastoral" connotations...: "Priests, following the example of Christ who rich though he was became poor for love of us (cf. 2 Cor 8:9), should consider the poor and the weakest as people entrusted in a special way to them and they should be capable of witnessing to poverty with a simple and austere lifestyle, having learned the generous renunciation of superfluous things."
  10. It also allows greater interior freedom and availability:
    - a. **PDV 30.** The interior freedom that is safeguarded and nourished by evangelical poverty will help the priest to stand beside the underprivileged, to practice solidarity with their efforts to create a more just society, to be more sensitive and capable of understanding and discerning realities involving the economic and social aspects of life, and to promote a preferential option for the poor. The latter, while excluding no one from the proclamation and gift of salvation, will assist him in gently approaching the poor, sinners, and all those on the margins of society, following the model given by Jesus in carrying out his prophetic and priestly ministry (cf. Lk 4:18).
    - b. **PDV 30.** Poverty alone ensures that the priest remains available to be sent wherever his work will be most useful and needed, even at the cost of personal sacrifice. It is a condition and essential premise of the Apostle's docility to the Spirit, making him ready to "go forth", without travelling bag or personal ties, following only the will of the Master (cf. Lk 9:57-62; Mk 10:17-22).
  11. The deepest reason for spiritual poverty was expressed by John Paul II in a beautiful 1986 document called *Redemptoris Donum*. It says that spiritual poverty is essential for us to know and live the faith.
    - a. **RD 12.** How very expressive in the matter of poverty are the words of the second letter to the Corinthians which constitute a concise synthesis of all that we hear on this theme in the Gospel! "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."
    - b. According to these words poverty actually enters into the interior structure of the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ.
    - c. **Without poverty it is not possible to understand the mystery of the gift of divinity to man,** a gift that is accomplished precisely in Jesus Christ. **For this reason also it is found**

at the very center of the Gospel, at the beginning of the message of the eight beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Evangelical poverty reveals to the eyes of the human soul the perspective of the whole mystery, "hidden for ages in God."

- d. **Only those who are "poor" in this way are also interiorly capable of understanding the poverty of the one who is infinitely rich. The poverty of Christ conceals in itself this infinite richness of God; it is indeed an infallible expression of it. A richness, in fact, such as the Divinity itself could not have been adequately expressed in any created good. It can be expressed only in poverty.** [Priceless] Therefore it can be properly understood only by the poor, the poor in spirit.
- e. Christ, the God-man, is the first of these: He who "though he was rich became poor" is not only the teacher but also the spokesman and guarantor of that salvific poverty that corresponds to the infinite richness of God and to the inexhaustible power of His grace. And thus it is also true as the Apostle writes--that "by his poverty we have become rich." It is the teacher and spokesman of poverty who makes us rich.
- f. For this very reason He says to the young man of the synoptic Gospels: "Sell what you possess and give...and you will have treasure in heaven." In these words there is a call to enrich others through one's own poverty, but in the depths of this call there is hidden the testimony of the infinite richness of God which, transferred to the human soul in the mystery of grace, creates in man himself, precisely through poverty, **a source for enriching others not comparable with any other resource of material goods**, a source for bestowing gifts on others in the manner of God Himself. This giving is accomplished in the context of the mystery of Christ, who "has made us rich by his poverty."
- g. We see how this process of enrichment unfolds in the pages of the Gospel, finding its culmination in the paschal event: Christ, the poorest in His death on the cross, is also the One who enriches us infinitely with the fullness of new life, through the resurrection.
- h. Dear brothers and sisters, ... receive into the whole of your life **this salvific profile of the poverty of Christ.** Day by day seek its ever greater development! Seek above all "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" and the other things "shall be yours as well." May there be accomplished in you and through you the evangelical blessedness reserved for the poor, the poor in spirit!

G. (Seven) Free and total obedience

1. We live in a culture that cherishes freedom. Once upon a time, everyone knew what freedom was and what it cost. Our country was founded by pilgrims who came here for the freedom to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, against the state religion. They understood that freedom was geared toward doing what they believed God called them to do; their freedom was bound to God. Our country was made great by so many who learned the precious cost of freedom, that freedom, as the veterans' saying goes, doesn't come free. They also fought for a cause greater than themselves, and, if not outright for the truth, they were at least fighting against evil. And yet these men who gave their youth, and many of their lives for freedom, didn't feel that there was anything incompatible with following the ordinary commands of their sergeants, not to mention generals. They were fighting for a freedom that was geared toward service in love of their families, their nation, even innocent people under oppression in other nations.
2. Now we have many people who have forgotten the true meaning of freedom. They think freedom signifies the ability to do whatever they please. They'll often claim they're following their conscience, but, while subjectively they may believe that to be true, what they're really following is their own sense of what they want and the ways things should be. There's no real room for God. They look at the commandments as ten forms of restricting their freedom rather than the conditions for true freedom. Rather than using their freedom to give their lives out of

- love for others, to fight against evil and for the good, now they claim that they can use their freedom even to kill smaller, more vulnerable, weaker, younger children in the womb.
3. John Paul II said in 1986: “This essential bond between Truth, the Good and Freedom has been largely lost sight of by present-day culture. As a result, helping man to rediscover it represents nowadays one of the specific requirements of the Church's mission, for the salvation of the world. ... Man is no longer convinced that only in the truth can he find salvation. The saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone, uprooted from any objectivity, is left to decide by itself what is good and what is evil. This relativism becomes, in the field of theology, a lack of trust in the wisdom of God, who guides man with the moral law. Concrete situations are unfavourably contrasted with the precepts of the moral law, nor is it any longer maintained that, when all is said and done, the law of God is always the one true good of man.”
  4. In response to this tendency, first in faith and then living and proclaiming this faith, we need, as St. Paul says, to “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2).
  5. We're not going to give here a whole description of Veritatis Splendor on the relationship between Freedom and Truth, but for us to live by faith, we must live by obedience, by attentive listening to the Word of God.
    - a. VC 91. [In response to the distorted notions of human freedom and its intrinsic connection to the truth] **An effective <response> ... is the <obedience which marks the consecrated life>.** In an especially vigorous way this obedience repropose the obedience of Christ to the Father and, taking this mystery as its point of departure, testifies that there is <no contradiction between obedience and freedom>. **Indeed, the Son's attitude discloses the mystery of human freedom as the path of obedience to the Father's will and the mystery of obedience as the path to the gradual conquest of true freedom. .... By obedience [the consecrated] intend to show their awareness of being children of the Father, as a result of which they wish to take the Father's will as their daily bread** (cf. Jn. 4:34), as their rock, their joy, their shield and their fortress (cf. Ps. 18:2). **Thus they show that they are growing in the full truth about themselves, remaining in touch with the source of their existence and therefore offering this most consoling message: "The lovers of your law have great peace; they never stumble"** (Ps. 118:165).
  6. Obedience is essential to understand and live the faith. We return once more to Redemptionis Donum:
    - a. **RD 13.** Christ, "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."
    - b. Here, in these words of the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians, **we touch the very essence of the Redemption.** In this reality is inscribed in a primary and constitutive way the obedience of Jesus Christ. Other words of the Apostle, taken this time from the letter to the Romans, confirm this: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."
    - c. The evangelical counsel of obedience is the call which derives from this obedience of Christ "unto death." **Those who accept this call, expressed by the words "Follow me,"** decide as the Council says--to follow Christ "who, by an obedience which carried Him even to death on the cross, redeemed humanity and made it holy."
    - d. By living out the evangelical counsel of obedience, **they reach the deep essence of the entire economy of the Redemption.** By fulfilling this counsel they desire to gain a special sharing in the obedience of that "one alone" by whose obedience all "will be made righteous."

- e. It can therefore be said that those who decide to live according to the counsel of obedience are **placed in a unique way between the mystery of sin and the mystery of justification and salvific grace.**
- f. They are in this "place" with all the sinful background of their own human nature, with all the inheritance "of the pride of life," with all the selfish tendencies to dominate rather than to serve, and precisely by means of the vow of obedience they decide to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, who "redeemed humanity and made it holy by his obedience."
- g. In the counsel of obedience **they desire to find their own role in the Redemption of Christ and their own way of sanctification.**
- h. This is the way which Christ marked out in the Gospel, speaking many times of fulfilling the will of God, of ceaselessly searching for it.
1. "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn 4:34).
  2. "Because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 5:30).
  3. "He who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him" (Jn 8:29).
  4. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 6:38).
- i. This constant fulfilling of the will of the Father also reminds us of that messianic confession of the psalmist in the Old Testament: "Behold, I come; in the written scroll it is prescribed for me. To do your will, O my God, is my delight, and your law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:7).
- j. This obedience of the Son--full of joy--reaches its zenith in the face of the passion and cross: "Father, if it is your will, take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done." From the prayer in Gethsemane onwards, Christ's readiness to do the will of the Father is filled to the very brim of suffering, becoming that obedience "unto death, even death on a cross" spoken of by St. Paul.
- k. Through the vow of obedience consecrated persons **decide to imitate with humility the obedience of the Redeemer in a special way.** For although submission to the will of God and obedience to His law are for every state a condition of Christian life, nevertheless, in the "religious state," in the "state of perfection," the vow of obedience establishes in the heart of each of you, dear brothers and sisters, the duty of a particular reference to Christ "obedient unto death."
- l. **And since this obedience of Christ constitutes the essential nucleus of the work of the Redemption,** as is seen from the words of the Apostle quoted above, therefore, also in the fulfilling of the evangelical counsel of obedience we **must discern a particular moment in that "economy of the Redemption" which pervades your whole vocation in the Church.**
- m. From this derives that **"total availability to the Holy Spirit"** who is at work above all in the Church ... and who is likewise manifested in the constitutions of your institutes. From this derives that **religious submission** which in a spirit of faith consecrated persons show to their legitimate superiors, who hold the place of God.
- n. In the letter to the Hebrews we find on this theme a very significant indication: "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account." And the author of the letter adds: "Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you.
- o. On the other hand, superiors will bear in mind that they must exercise in a spirit of service the power conferred on them through the ministry of the Church, and they will show willingness to listen to their brothers or sisters in order to discern more clearly what the Lord asks of each one. At the same time they retain the authority proper to them to decide and order what they consider appropriate.

- p. Hand in hand with submission-obedience thus conceived goes the attitude of service which animates your whole life after the example of the Son of Man, who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
  - q. And His **Mother**, at the decisive moment of the Annunciation-Incarnation, entering from the very beginning into the whole salvific economy of the Redemption, said: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word."
  - r. Remember also, dear brothers and sisters, that the obedience to which you committed yourselves by consecrating yourselves without reserve to God through the profession of the evangelical counsels is a particular expression of interior freedom, just as the definitive expression of Christ's freedom was His obedience "unto death": "I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."
6. The great 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian apologist C.S. Lewis wrote that there are really only two types of people in the world, "those who say to God 'thy will be done' and those to whom God says 'thy will be done.'" These are the two groups, he confidently asserted, who will end up on the opposite sides of the great eschatological divide. Those who wish to end up on Christ's eternal right need to follow Christ in trustingly and lovingly saying to the Father, "Not my will but thine be done" (Lk 22:42).

#### H. (Eight) Wholehearted chastity

1. We have been created in the image and likeness of God whom St. John tells us is love. We have been created by love, in love, for love. Our fulfillment is to love God and others as Christ has loved us first. To be fully evangelized we must have received God's love, remain in it, and lavishly share it. To live by faith and to preach the new evangelization means to live in this love and preach it.
2. It should come as no surprise that the evil one, if he wishes to blow up God's plan for every human being, is going to try to corrupt love. He attacked the family at the beginning of time, such that with the Fall, lust was introduced into the world. If he can take our desire and our need for love and corrupt it, by having us seek counterfeit versions of it, his desire for our destruction will be closer to achievement.
3. We live in an age in which the notion of love has been largely degraded and, as a result, those who involve themselves in these counterfeits, lose their meaning. Lust changes the entire meaning of a human person. We see it in pornography, in fornication, in various illicit sexual practices, even in marriage, in same-sex relations. Part of the Year of Faith toward a new evangelization is to rediscover and to re-evangelize about the real meaning of love so that man and woman are able once again to love in the truth.
4. In order to for this to occur, we need the virtue of chastity, which helps us to love for real. But we first need to understand what it is.
5. Even among clergy, religious and catechists, chastity is regularly confused with continence (abstinence from sexual activity) or celibacy (the state of being unmarried). When the Catechism emphasizes that "all Christ's faithful are called to lead a chaste life in keeping with their particular states of life," and that "married people are called to live conjugal chastity," many married couples are left scratching their heads, wondering how they can be both "chaste" and start a family. The reason for the confusion likely stems from the fact that when the term "chastity" is most often used, it's employed in the context of the sexual education of teenagers (who are called to continence in chastity) or in the description of the promises or vows professed by priests and religious (who are called to celibate continence in chastity). The confusion points to the urgency and importance for all in the Church to understand what chastity is and how all the baptized — married couples, singles, priests, religious, those with same-sex attractions and opposite-sex attractions — are called to it no matter what their state of life.
6. Blessed Pope John Paul II, both prior to and during his papacy, has provided the clearest, deepest, most practical and most enlightening articulation of what the virtue of chastity is. In his 1960 work, "Love and Responsibility," he wrote that chastity is the moral habit that raises one's attractions to

another to the dignity of that person as a whole. There is a temptation — which we see in lust in general and in pornography in particular — to “reduce” another to the values of the body or, more specifically, to the erogenous zones. There is, moreover, the further temptation to “use” another — either intentionally in one’s mind or physically through their body — for one’s own sensual or emotional gratification; many people in our culture consensually use each other sexually in this way. This mutual utilitarianism, however, is not love, but the opposite of love. Harmonious egoisms or reciprocal narcissisms don’t lead to the formation of a loving “we,” but just two even-more-isolated-egos. Love, rather, always seeks the true good of the other for the other’s sake. When a person loves genuinely, he is willing to sacrifice his pleasure or even his life for the one loved. Chastity makes this possible, because it is the virtue that trains a person’s vision as well as his will to keep his attraction to the other person up to the level of the person’s true good rather than “consume” the other to satisfy one’s sexual appetites.

7. In his papal catecheses on “Human Love in the Divine Plan,” popularly called the Theology of the Body, Pope John Paul II went even further in his teaching on chastity. He described that the virtue of chastity isn’t so much bound to the virtue of temperance — the virtue that helps us to master our appetites rather than be mastered by them — as to the virtue of piety. Piety is the habit that helps us to revere others according to their true dignity, according to the image of God in them. St. Paul wrote to husbands and wives, “Be subordinate to each other out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21), calling them to recognize and revere Christ in each other and mutually lay down their lives for each other out of love for the Lord they recognize dwelling in the other. Linked to piety, chastity helps us to see the other as sacred subject instead of a sexual object, to treat the other with reverence rather than randiness.
8. Chastity is a direct response to the hedonistic culture that degrades sexuality. It reorients disordered human love back to its original purpose, by helping one receive the self-mastery, strength and discipline necessary to love with the love of Christ, which was always chaste. He calls us to follow him in the path of celibate chastity for the sake of the kingdom and he gives us the gift so that we can live it, but we need to receive that gift with faith and respond to it.
9. **PDV 29.** Referring to the evangelical counsels, the Council states that “preeminent among these counsels is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father (cf. Mt 19:11; 1 Cor 7:7) in order more easily to devote themselves to God alone with an undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor 7:32-34) in virginity or celibacy. ... While in no way interfering with the discipline of the Oriental Churches, the Synod, in the conviction that perfect chastity in priestly celibacy is a charism, reminds priests that celibacy is a priceless gift of God for the Church and has a prophetic value for the world today. ... The Synod would like to see celibacy presented and explained in the fullness of its biblical, theological and spiritual richness, as a precious gift given by God to his Church and as a sign of the Kingdom which is not of this world, a sign of God's love for this world and of the undivided love of the priest for God and for God's People, with the result that celibacy is seen as a positive enrichment of the priesthood.”
10. **PDV 29.** In virginity and celibacy, chastity retains its original meaning, that is, of human sexuality lived as a genuine sign of and precious service to the love of communion and gift of self to others. This meaning is fully found in virginity which makes evident, even in the renunciation of marriage, the “nuptial meaning” of the body through a communion and a personal gift to Jesus Christ and his Church which prefigures and anticipates the perfect and final communion and self-giving of the world to come: “In virginity or celibacy, the human being is awaiting, also in a bodily way, the eschatological marriage of Christ with the Church, giving himself or herself completely to the Church in the hope that Christ may give himself to the Church in the full truth of eternal life”.... It is especially important that the priest understand the theological motivation of the Church’s law on celibacy. Inasmuch as it is a law, it expresses <the Church's will,> even before the will of the subject expressed by his readiness. But the will of the Church finds its ultimate motivation in the <link between celibacy and sacred Ordination,> which configures the priest to Jesus Christ the Head and Spouse of the Church. The Church, as the Spouse of Jesus Christ, wishes to be loved by the priest in

the total and exclusive manner in which Jesus Christ her Head and Spouse loved her. Priestly celibacy, then, is the gift of self <in> and <with> Christ <to> his Church and expresses the priest's service to the Church in and with the Lord.

11. It's fundamentally a yes (chastity), not a no (continence).
12. For priests and future priests, the key importance is that when we look at others, we see not just God but our relationship to them as spiritual fathers. The violation of chastity is spiritual incest, and incest is never attractive.
13. I hope that seminarians aren't engaging in relationships with others. If you are, you need to have at least the integrity to bring it up with your spiritual director. The more subtle temptations of the eternal saboteur is pornography, fantasy and masturbation. These are all inconsistent with one's or another's genuine good, accepting the other in his or her totality, and treating oneself and others with the reverence befitting a temple of the Holy Spirit. Pornography or porno-vision is the opposite of chastity, abstracting a person's sexual values from the person's overall good. Lust changes the entire intentionality of a human being from a lover to a luster. The redemption of the body is through purity — Blessed are the Pure of Heart — through life according to the Spirit.

#### I. (Nine) Sacred Suffering

1. We're living in a world that finds no meaning in suffering. That runs away from it. That thinks that the merciful response to those who are suffering chronic pain is to facilitate their committing suicide. It's a real test of faith, as it was for Jesus during his Crucifixion, when he had the sensation of being totally abandoned by the Father even though he knew he would never be abandoned, as Psalm 22 ends.
2. Pope Benedict talks about how suffering can help us to grow in faith, but we need to live this and patiently proclaim this.
3. Suffering is ontological evil but by Christ's suffering he's made a moral good that helps us to do penance and to unite ourselves more and more to his will and make up what is lacking in his sufferings for the sake of the salvation of the world.
4. The best description of the meaning of suffering — one of the most profound things John Paul II ever wrote and then put into his own body language about 20 years later — is found in his 1984 apostolic exhortation *Salvifici Doloris*:
  - a. SD 29: Following the parable of [the Good Samaritan in] 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.

#### VI. Conclusion

- A. We've covered a lot of ground. The suggestions given are food for thought. I hope that we will try to do a few and, with God's help, to do them as well as we can.
- B. I'd like to finish with an exhortation the future John Paul I, Albino Luciani, gave the priests of his diocese of Vittorio Veneto in 1967 in preparation for the last Year of Faith. He was a man who always recognized the importance of a catechesis that was true evangelization, using the great heroes of the faith, history and literature to convey essential truths, as he did in *Illustrissimi*. His words have lost none of their relevance 45 years later:

1. Try to have your faithful live the “Year of Faith” by speaking to them with enthusiasm about the Word of God, Jesus, and the Church more than about errors. And don’t be satisfied when your listeners are convinced: once they are convinced, they must act, they must act! Like Paul, strive so that “the word of God may make progress and be hailed by many others” (2 Thes. 3:1). Show by ardent words and actions, with a pure and charitable life, that you are “racing to grasp [Christ] since you have been grasped by Him” (cf. Phil. 3;12). When you talk about the Church, say that Christ loved her and “handed himself over for her ... to sanctify her ... in order to present to himself the Church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle ... that she might be holy and without blemish” (cf. Eph. 5:25-27).
2. The Year of Faith also means shedding light on the faith. Now, faith is saying “yes” to God, clinging to Him with our whole spiritual being and making our own the truths that He has revealed to us and set before us by means of the Magisterium of the Church. Explain it to the faithful: this “yes” is an act of loving trust in God and at the same time an acceptance of His truths. We do not believe because we like these truths or because they are convenient to us, or because they are in agreement with scientific data or the fashion of the day, but because they have been revealed by Him who loves us and neither can nor will deceive us. If it were not for Him, we would not believe.