

SYNOD OF BISHOPS

II SPECIAL ASSEMBLY FOR AFRICA

***THE CHURCH IN AFRICA
IN SERVICE TO
RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND PEACE***

***"You are the salt of the earth...
You are the light of the world" (Mt 5: 13-14)***

LINEAMENTA

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PREFACE

Twelve years ago, from 10 April to 8 May 1994, the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was held on the topic: "The Church in Africa and Her Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000: 'You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:8)'. The Servant of God, Pope John Paul II, expressed his intention to convene this important meeting for the Church on 6 January 1989 so as to allow a sufficient period of time to prepare for the Assembly. The proceedings for the First Special Assembly were greeted with enthusiasm, engaging all members of the Catholic Church in Africa, namely, in dioceses, parishes and Church movements. They also drew the attention of those from other Churches and Christian Communities, as well as representatives of non-Christian religions, not to mention, in a more expansive way, people of good will from every continent.

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa gathered the results of the synodal process as a whole: from the preparation to the celebration of the Assembly--prayer, exchanges of information, a common sharing of the joys and sorrows of various situations in the Church, culture, society and civil life, and the in-depth reflections on each of the topics which were discussed by the Church's bishops in a climate of tranquil communion, characteristic of the Episcopal College headed by the Bishop of Rome, the President of the Synod and Pastor of the Universal Church. The Apostolic Exhortation was published on 14 September 1995. Since that time, it has guided the pastoral activity of the Catholic Church in Africa.

Pope John Paul II, yielding to the desire of many bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful, announced on 13 November 2004 his intention to convoke a Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI confirmed his predecessor's plan by announcing on 22 June 2005, in the presence of the Special Council for Africa of the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, his decision to convoke in Rome the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.

In collaboration with the above-mentioned Council, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI specified the topic of the synodal meeting: "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: 'You Are the Salt of the Earth... You Are the Light of the World' (Mt 5:13, 14)". The topic continues the great theme of the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops and envisages an evaluation of the accomplishments everywhere, with obvious preference for what has taken place within the Church. Since the last synodal meeting, however, the situation in Africa has changed considerably. This new reality requires a thorough study in view of a renewed evangelisation effort, which calls for a more in-depth analysis of specific topics important for the present and future of the Catholic Church on the great African continent.

Thanks be to God, during these past years, the Catholic Church, the Family of God in pilgrimage in Africa, has witnessed considerable growth throughout the continent, especially in the number of Faithful. According to the 2004 statistics, the Faithful now total 148,817,000, with 630 bishops and 31,259 priests, of whom 20,358 are diocesan and 10,901 religious. Moreover, there are 7,791 lay brothers, 57,475 consecrated women and 379,656 catechists. Missionaries from Africa working in the pastoral programs of other particular Churches in Africa or on other continents are remarkably on the rise. The Church's educational and charitable aid activities have been decisive in many countries affected by different emergency situations. In giving thanks to God for such a favourable situation in the Church, the preparation of the Second Special Assembly should be a propitious occasion for the entire People of God, under the guidance of its Pastors, to devote itself to prayer and in-depth reflection which will, in turn, give rise to initiatives in Africa to make further progress towards holiness, following the saintly example of its many Pastors and African Faithful who of late, through their martyrdom, have reaffirmed their Christian faith and thereby contributed in an exemplary way to making Africa more and more the "Homeland of Jesus Christ". The Gospel that they proclaimed is the real salt of the earth, the guarantee of a deep-rooted evangelisation capable of resisting all adversity. The Good News, accompanied by the unmistakable witness of their ecclesial service, becomes the light of the world which shines in the darkness that can sometimes be thick and dense over most of the African continent.

In union of heart and mind with the Holy Father, the synod fathers will have to confront the complex and not always favourable current situation in Africa, using the tools of light (cf. Rm 13:12) and Christian charity, which are strengthened and animated by the disciples' hope in the Risen Lord Jesus. In addition to the obstacles to evangelisation which can take place for political, religious or social reasons, there are some grave problems which call out to Christians and all people of good will: situations of poverty, injustice, sickness, exploitation, a lack of dialogue, division, intolerance, violence, terrorism and war. Faithful to the command of Jesus Christ, the Church is tireless in proclaiming the Good News so as to offer, through her extended pastoral services, the prospect of ecclesial and social reconciliation in Christ, our Peace, the Source of Real Justice for the entire African continent. Evangelisation, the principal duty in the command of the Divine Master (cf. Mt 28:19), cannot be detached from the commitment of every Church member to become Samaritans to the many brothers

and sisters who are asking for help and compassion (cf. Lk 10:29-37), and to aid so many people who are poor and in need of human warmth, so as to give witness to God's love (Mt 25:31-46). The Church, through her proclamation of the Gospel, programs of education at all levels and her many charitable institutions, is also increasingly active in the promotion of dialogue, peace and justice in the renewal of African society, which is forcefully progressing towards the integral development of the African people, so that they can take the place due them in the international community.

*According to accustomed practice, the Lineamenta, published in four languages - French, English, Portuguese and Italian - are meant to foster extensive discussion on the synodal topic. The Questionnaire at the end of the document can serve as an assistance. Each bishops' conference is to provide translations in the local languages to encourage greater community participation in preparation for the Synod. The responses from the interested Church bodies should be submitted by the end of **October 2008** for the preparation of the Instrumentum Laboris, the working document for the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. We entrust the long and hopefully fruitful synodal process to the motherly protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Africa.*

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General Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. Eleven years after the publication of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*,^[1] the Church in Africa renders thanks to God for the many benefits received in the past decade. In commemorating this event, she feels an urgent need to recommit herself wholeheartedly to the work of reconciliation, justice and peace throughout the continent. In recalling the warm reception given to the publication of *Ecclesia in Africa*, the following questions arise: what is the significance of this anniversary and what form should it take to maintain the potential of the document and to revitalise the communities on the continent for the upcoming Second Assembly? This Assembly could be said to have a dual purpose:

- firstly, to keep alive the synod event. *Ecclesia in Africa* has been given as a legacy. In this regard, each person is invited to take an inventory and make an examination of conscience; in other words, to ask three basic questions:

- What has *Ecclesia in Africa* accomplished?
- What has the Church in Africa done with *Ecclesia in Africa*?
- What remains to be done, using its guidelines in response to the evolving situations on the African continent?

- the second purpose is more practical, namely, to begin a synodal process which seeks ways to overcome the crisis situation in Africa; to assist the Church in her evangelising mission as she confronts the challenges created by dehumanising and oppressive situations which afflict the African peoples; and to arouse renewed interest in the objectives of the Apostolic Exhortation which were proposed and are re-proposed to Christians and all people of good will.

2. In *Ecclesia in Africa*, Pope John Paul II used the end of the Second Millennium to call for an assessment, an evaluation in which he recapitulated the history of the Church's missionary activity in Africa: from the conversion of the minister of the Queen Candace, to the advent of the formation of authentic local African Churches, fully rooted in Catholicism and fully aware of their responsibility towards the unique mission of Christ entrusted to the Church-Family of God. Historically speaking, the Pope looked to the dark moments of slavery and colonisation, and the political, economic and social realities which revealed an alarming yet hopeful situation. At the same time, he tried to indicate "how" these situations came about and, according to the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, to point out ways which remedied these situations: namely, through envisaging the Church as the Family of God in Africa and promoting "an *organic pastoral solidarity* within the entire African continent and nearby Islands",^[2] while searching for solutions and resolutions to the problems and conflicts which affect Africa. This also means choosing the African family as the first place of evangelisation and the place from which the challenges to evangelisation in the Third Millennium will be confronted, namely, the compelling nature of proclaiming the Gospel and calling people to Baptism; the essential need to deepen the sense of faith in those already baptized; the courage to witness to the faith; the choice of forgiveness and reconciliation, even in the most difficult situations, and the commitment to promote justice and peace.

The Apostolic Exhortation presented a kind of pastoral plan of action for the Church-Family of God in Africa, which enabled her to be faithful to her vocation and mission, and to serve "in the flesh" the suffering humanity of Christ in the African peoples. In this way, the document interpreted the dehumanising and oppressive situations afflicting the African peoples as a crisis and a challenge, and proposed that these situations be confronted from the vantage point of the Church as the Family of God.

3. The Church's response in Africa to *Ecclesia in Africa* and the recent developments on the continent have given an urgent character to a Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. In this way, some questions taken up by the First Assembly can be examined in greater detail: specifically, questions relating to reconciliation, justice and peace. With this in mind, Pope John Paul II, with his eyes fixed on Christ and wanting to read the signs of the new times and rekindle hope in Africa, decided to convoke a Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops.

On 13 November 2004, the 1650th Anniversary of Saint Augustine's birth, at an audience granted to the participants of the Symposium of Bishops of Africa and Europe, who gathered to treat the topic, "Communion and Solidarity Between Africa and Europe", Pope John Paul II stated: "Welcoming the aspirations of the Post-Synodal Council, an expression of the hopes of the African Pastors, I take the occasion to announce my intention to convoke a Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. I entrust this project to your prayers, warmly inviting you all to implore the Lord for the precious gift of communion and peace for the beloved land of Africa".^[3] At the beginning of his papacy, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI confirmed that decision and specified the synod's topic: "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace 'You are the Salt of the Earth... You are the Light of the World'" (Mt 5:13, 14).

The Fathers who will meet in synod, therefore, will have to give serious thought to the proclamation of the Gospel at a time when events call for an active response, faithful to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church-Family of God in Africa in these decisive hours of its

history. At this time, the continuity with the First Special Assembly needs to be stressed so that all will strive to appreciate the spiritual and pastoral importance of both these events.

4. The two assemblies have in common an urgent need, at an historic moment, of an on-going, in-depth evangelisation. Furthermore, in proclaiming the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ, a commitment to reconciliation, justice and peace appears to be where this Kingdom of Love is to be realised: "...the Kingdom of God... means righteousness and peace and joy brought by the Holy Spirit" (*Rm* 14:17ff).[4] In Africa's current historical, social, political, cultural and religious circumstances, the Church-Family of God draws her energy from Christ, the ever-living Word of God, so that she can overcome weariness and thoughts of surrender and free herself from all forms of oppression. In fact, Christ invites her to bear the yoke of his love and find refreshment in him for a new life, and to receive the enthusiasm and light to dispel the many dark clouds which hang over the peoples of Africa in these times.

For this light, coming from the Word, to shine fully over the whole of Africa, the Church offers a taste of the Bread of Life[5] through which Christ brings about the transformation of Africa in human hearts. The more the love of Christ takes root in the hearts of the peoples of Africa as well as in African cultures and institutions, the more the continent and its peoples - not to mention the entire world - will enjoy the fruits of reconciliation, justice and peace. Considering the complex nature of the topic, the chapters of the *Lineamenta* will treat the following:

I. Africa at the Dawn of the 21st Century.

II. Christ, the Word of Life and Bread of Life, our Reconciler, our Justice and our Peace.

III. The Church, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa.

IV. The Witness of a Church Reflecting the Light of Christ on the World.

V. The Spiritual Resources for the Promotion of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Africa.

CHAPTER I

AFRICA AT THE DAWN OF THE 21ST CENTURY

5. The First Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa clearly manifested at the tomb of Saint Peter the strength and lively faith of the Church in Africa. The synod fathers rightly described the experience as the "Synod of Resurrection and Hope".[6] More than ten years after the publication of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, the words of Saint Paul ring true, "...this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (*Rm* 5:5). Beyond the sufferings of the present moment, those who have eyes to see and ears to hear can indeed discern the work of Divine Providence in Africa.

I. Africa after the Publication of *Ecclesia in Africa*

1. Some Positive Developments

6. Throughout the turmoil of the sorrowful events that afflict Africa, all can agree with the words of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, namely, that Africa "is the great hope of the Church".^[7] In fact, hopeful signs of a rebirth of a fruitful, dynamic Christianity and the advent of new societies are increasingly evident, namely, the remarkable increase in Africa of the number of Catholics, priests and consecrated persons;^[8] the growing number of African missionaries in Africa and outside the continent and the creation of a continental consultation platform for them; the vitality of African liturgies and living ecclesial communities; the creation and restructuring of dioceses and ecclesiastical territories; the growing role of the Church in promoting the continent's development, especially in education, health, the struggle for the emergence of legally constituted States throughout the African continent; and, lastly, despite her weaknesses, the great credibility which the Church continues to enjoy among the African peoples.

In many countries of Africa, only the Church functions well, enabling people to continue to live and hope in a better future. Furthermore, she provides necessary assistance, is a guarantor of living in harmony and contributes to finding ways and means to rebuild the State. However, she is also the privileged place where the subject of reconciliation and forgiveness can again begin to be treated. This situation is a cause for rejoicing in the Lord (cf. *Rm* 5:3-4) for the wonders he has accomplished in Africa over these past eleven years.

7. From a social vantage point, the following new developments can also be noted: the advent of peace in some African countries; the burning desire for peace throughout the continent, especially in the Great Lakes region; growing opposition to corruption; a deep consciousness of the need to promote African women and the dignity of every human person; the involvement of the laity in "civil life" for the promotion and defence of "human rights"; and the ever-growing number of African politicians who are aware and determined to find African solutions to African problems. The Church encourages the efforts made to bring unity to the whole of Africa, from North to South and East to West. In this regard, it is hoped that the African Union will become more effective and efficient in resolving the conflicts between African nations and ethnic groups.

The new developments which have taken place during these past eleven years offer new opportunities for the Church's mission in Africa. It is necessary to act in such a way that the great spiritual forces of the continent can have an effect everywhere, and that conditions will be created for the rebirth of Africa on the religious, social, economic and political levels.

2. Some Negative Developments

8. In addition to these reassuring prospects, something must also be said, however, about the many worrisome situations decried in the Apostolic Exhortation. Over the years, these have only worsened, foreboding an uncertain future: "the widespread deterioration in the standard of living, insufficient means for educating the young, the lack of elementary health and social services with the resulting persistence of endemic diseases, the spread of the terrible scourge of AIDS, the heavy and often unbearable burden of the international debt, the horror of fratricidal wars fomented by unscrupulous arms trafficking, and the shameful, pitiable spectacle of refugees and displaced persons".^[9] How can the dreadful massacres which have occurred in some places in Africa not be severely condemned?

Numbers and indications are a constant reminder of difficulties, for example, the infant mortality rate continues to grow. After more than ten years, the constant deterioration of revenues persists in some of the poorest countries of Africa. Access to potable water is still very difficult for many. Generally speaking, the great majority of African people live in a state of want for basic goods and services. Today's situation in Africa cannot fail to touch consciences. In these times, Africa more than ever is dependent on rich countries, and is more vulnerable than any other continent to their manoeuvring aimed at giving with one hand and taking back twofold with the other, and at keeping a strong hold on the development of the political, economic, social and even cultural life of African countries. In constructing the world, Africa is deliberately left out, being only remembered when its miseries need to be displayed or exploited. So what must be done to give a glimmer of hope to the barrier which looms in Africa's socio-economic horizon?

3. The Purpose of These Lineamenta

9. In light of the varied situations, it is difficult to speak only one word, just as it is difficult to envisage a single solution which can be applied universally. This is not the aim of the *Lineamenta* nor its purpose. Instead of treating everything, it lists a set of priorities which result from an analysis of activities in the area of reconciliation, justice and peace. The document seeks to raise questions and encourage a shared search for solutions from the vantage point of the synodal process, beginning from the First Special Assembly.

II. Some Priorities

10. An in-depth reflection on the topic of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops - "The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace *"You Are the Salt of the Earth... You Are the Light of the World"* (Mt 5:13, 14) - cannot fail to treat the causes of so much hatred, injustice and war on the continent. In fact, the urgency of this Second Special Assembly is tied to the suffering of the African peoples, and the dehumanising and oppressive situation which persists on the continent. Africa is facing a whole set of conflicts and problems which are central to the challenges to evangelisation in Africa today.

In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II judged that the greatest challenge to achieving justice and peace in Africa consisted in a good administration of public affairs in the two interrelated areas of politics and the economy.^[10] The suffering of the African peoples is linked, to a great extent, to the administration of these two areas as well as that of culture. This is a major challenge to evangelisation in an Africa, where life and humanity itself are defined as "relational" and "bound together" in a fundamentally community perspective. The following lines are an invitation to the local Churches of Africa to meditate on these three dimensions - socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural, and to make suggestions on how to remedy situations through reconciliation, justice and peace.

1. The Socio-Political Aspect

11. One of the major challenges in Africa today is the lack of success of most post-colonial States on the continent. It would be overly simplistic to attribute the cause of this failure in African political life to the multi-ethnic composition of States or the artificial borders from

colonial times. Beyond ethnic differences and rivalries, Africans have a sense of nationalism, otherwise, their sense of belonging to a country with a history could not be explained. The question must be raised: How can pluralism be transformed into a positive, constructive factor and not one which leads to division and destruction? Likewise, with regard to artificial borders, will new "natural" borders not create more problems? Where would such "natural", non-arbitrary, or better still, non-ideological borders be drawn? Who would be the impartial arbiter acceptable to everyone? Isn't it necessary to follow the wisdom of the founding fathers of the Organisation of African Unity who chose in 1963 not to put in question the existing borders? The challenge will probably be met on the part of good governance and the formation of a political class capable of taking the best from the ancestral traditions in Africa and integrating them with the principles for the governance of modern societies. Having said this, we do not underestimate the fact that ethnic pluralism is often the cause of tensions within States in Africa, that those who govern in many countries on the continent lose their legitimacy in the eyes of the people who put into question the usefulness of the State or that those who are supposed to be faithfully serving the State are actually destroying it.

12. In some African countries, persistent social tensions impede progress and give rise to political disturbances and armed conflicts. Tribalism, border disputes and attempts at expansion lead to armed struggles which take a heavy toll in human life and deplete financial resources. Some African countries witness continuous violations of fundamental human rights as well as the related consequences. Peace is often confused with a kind of unanimity or tranquillity imposed by force and keeping power in the hands of a single group to the detriment of the people. In such situations, citizens are unable to take part in public life and popular opinion cannot make a difference. As a result, people tend to withdraw and become disinterested. Until legally constituted States are created in Africa, ones governed by truly democratic Africans, there is a great risk that the fore-mentioned situation will endure.

13. The synod fathers fervently hoped to see "the establishment of a legally constituted State in African countries for the protection of the rights and duties of the citizens".^[11] Regrettably, this hope has not been echoed by the majority of leaders in African countries. This lack of recognition of the individual and the community as well as their mutual needs, produces discord, war and its consequences. The ravages of war are clearly an obstacle to any development process, causing the dramatic situation of refugees, a climate of suffering from conflicts and hunger, nakedness and disease, sorrow and fear, and humiliating situations which destroy the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. In fact, those in authority in most African States severely lack an awareness of the human person and the most fundamental, inalienable rights of each individual. Establishing a true democracy, one which ensures security for persons and property, is an essential condition in the development of African countries.

2. The Socio-Economic Aspect

14. While it is true that Africa has lived a long and sad history of exploitation at the hands of others,^[12] it must also be stated that this situation did not end with decolonization. It still endures today, but in different forms, including the crushing weight of debt, unjust trade practices, the dumping of toxic materials and the excessively severe conditions imposed by programs of structural adjustment.

15. In most African countries, despite recently achieved progress, the rate of literacy continues to be among the lowest in the world. In many places, the educational system is

constantly deteriorating, the health system is in shambles, and social welfare is almost non-existent. With the lack of order, the weak are always the people who are most threatened. Likewise, in the area of demographics, one can't be silent at the imbalance between a population which is witnessing a record rate of annual growth, and resources which remain unutilised, if not being totally depleted.

Africa's immense resources are in direct contrast to the misery of its poor. The situation becomes even more scandalous if consideration is given to the wealth amassed in the hands of a privileged few. In decrying this unacceptable situation, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation referred to "the dishonesty of corrupt government leaders who, in connivance with domestic or foreign private interests, divert national resources for their own profit and transfer public funds to private accounts in foreign banks".^[13] Given this state of affairs, ways and means must be urgently devised to encourage honest politicians who are determined to protect the common patrimony from all forms of waste and embezzlement.

16. Industry largely depends on the importation of industrial products. The number of goods and services actually produced in Africa is limited. To a certain extent, Africa produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce. How can Africa eliminate this paradox? Furthermore, structural adjustments and widespread unemployment are tending to reduce the volume of these goods and services as well as lower their quality! Grave economic injustices in this area are seen in the problem of migratory labour, unjust salaries and imbalanced contracts. Juvenile delinquency, drugs, corruption and unemployment have reached unacceptable proportions in some countries, with these economic injustices as their root-cause.

The ongoing deterioration of the economic and social situation further accentuates the crisis in Africa. Agricultural production techniques are generally rudimentary and agricultural production is still largely dependent on nature - the soil and climate. These factors, further impacting internal political difficulties, could explain why the continent's food production barely covers one-tenth of its needs. The failure of agricultural policies is manifested not only in the lack of a stable food supply for peoples, but also in the massive rural exodus, especially by young people. It is important to draw young people's attention to the fact that urbanisation does not necessarily contribute to personal fulfilment. Consequently, new approaches are urgently needed to enhance village life and make it more appealing to young people.

17. Economic problems are also related to the arms trade, a scandal which "sows the seed of death" in Africa.^[14] This is a glaring sign of the failure of politics in Africa, which are in service no longer to building the *polis* (city) and the search for the common good, but rather to eliminating political adversaries and the city itself.^[15] Those responsible for this destruction are not only the warring parties but also arms traders, whether they be international powers, who are interested in such conflicts as a means to get rich or to fuel an unstable situation for geopolitical goals having nothing to do with people's best interests, or local ideologues, who use people, especially children, as pawns in their thirst for power.

The international arms trade continues to keep Africa in a perpetual state of war. Undoubtedly, death is sowed to a great extent in Africa by very powerful interests, dominant in the world, whose prime agents don't even live in Africa. This situation led the bishops in Africa to coin the phrase "wars by proxy",^[16] as a way of making more intelligible to Africans that they themselves are destroying their countries and killing one another for the

interests and profits of "others". The arms trade continues to spread as a result of ethnic tensions and increasing divisions. Unfortunately, human history attests that war is nothing new. The root-cause of this evil in today's Africa is an angry lashing out, often originating in a desire to destroy and annihilate life. Such conduct manifests an underlying attitude, a "spirit", namely, the breakdown or even the negation of values, particularly the sacred value of human life. Life, a most precious treasure according to African tradition, is destroyed with a disturbing levity and ease - sometimes on a very great scale - and with complete impunity, in many places. This subject, already treated at the preceding Synod, cannot be overlooked, namely, ethnic divisions and tensions^[17] which sometimes lead to disastrous crimes. Oftentimes, some people do not hesitate to exploit African cultures to justify these acts, making it particularly urgent to give added thought to the roots of these cultures from a global perspective.

3. The Socio-Cultural Aspect

18. If economic culture in Africa is to change, doesn't it mean that, instead of depending solely on a world market which virtually excludes the continent, it would be necessary first to organize a sufficient remuneration for work on the land? Culture is the fruit of a process of being and acting which develops with patience. It is not simply the spirit of the group to which a person belongs which accounts for his lofty thoughts or the most basic acts of his existence; it is also the place where the spiritual and creative aspects of being human take place.

19. Economists claim that three elements make production possible - labour, land and capital. Africa does not lack the first nor even the third *a priori*, if one considers that capital can be generated from the clearly abundant natural resources in Africa. What then is the root of poverty in Africa. Cannot the cultural aspect behind these three factors be an important part in the matter? Is not work in Africa approached with insufficient enthusiasm to compete with others who make a real cult out of work? Doesn't the African people's relation to the land account for Africa's low standing? If it is true that the price of what the land produces has a direct relation to the price of the land, then isn't it also true that the land in African countries seems of little worth, because the prices for agricultural products are desperately low? Africa seems to be one of the world's regions where its simple people are neglected.

20. In this era of globalisation, how can one best safeguard African cultures, while integrating the best of what comes from outside the continent? In this regard, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI called on not only Africans but also the Western world to assume its responsibility towards Africa: "Europe exported not only faith in Christ, but also all of the vices of the Old Continent. It exported the sense of corruption, it exported the violence that is currently devastating Africa. And we must acknowledge our responsibility so that the exportation of the faith... is stronger than the exportation of the vices of Europe... We Christians must do much more in these regards so that faith is made present, and with faith, the strength to resist these vices and to rebuild a Christian Africa, destined to be a happy Africa, a great Continent of new humanism".^[18] While the West must search its conscience about its responsibilities, Africans themselves must also see to their responsibilities.

Do the people of Africa always know how to choose what comes from the outside, or do they indiscriminately take everything offered by the mass media, particularly violence, consumerism and moral corruption? How are the basics of African tradition reconciled with

projects for the future? The matter requires not only a profound rooting in the cultural heritage of Africa, but also a discriminating yet creative ability to integrate new contributions to culture, which make cultural development possible. If the truth be told, the history of civilisations is simply a continuous borrowing from one another over the ages, while preserving one's own individuality and original character. This capacity for integration and creativity requires an open yet discriminating spirit. The basic question, then, is how to remain grounded in the community, while fostering the autonomy necessary for a person to become involved on the political, economic and social levels. This matter is of great importance in the desired development of African culture.

21. Personal autonomy is also needed in promoting a culture of literacy. By definition, the ability to write is an individual act in much the same way as reading; they guarantee a person's autonomy and relation to others. What can be done to foster a culture of literacy and establish structures for its use, while maintaining an oral tradition? It must be said that tribalism continues in the countries of Africa because of illiteracy and the denial of participation of the individual. When in peril, such a person is tempted exclusively to rely on tribal solidarity. How can a strong sense of family have a part in proper personal advancement? How can the ability to write and the oral tradition be reconciled in the development of African cultures? No social plan is possible without a solid cultural base.

22. Today, some countries are still witnessing sexual discrimination against women, who are deprived of rights which are due to every human being. Some societies treat women like slaves. This is an affront to not only their dignity but also the best offerings of African tradition, which sees woman as the preeminent symbol of life, a precious gift. Every form of violence against women needs to be condemned. Consequently, disdain for girls from an early age, in some places, by their being relegated to the periphery of society and considered of little value, should be decried.^[19] In other places, girls are mutilated or simply reduced to slavery, thereby seriously offending their dignity and that of the whole Family of God.

Elderly persons, orphans, the sick and people with reduced mobility are subjected to grave injustices by being abandoned more and more by their families and communities. This violates the very basis of African tradition, where a person's value is in *being* in relation to others and not dependent on what he has or can do. Such injustice is a betrayal of Africa's common heritage. In all these situations, the means of social communication exercise a very particular and an extremely important role. An increasingly urgent appeal should be made to the media to respect the best that ancestral traditions in Africa have to offer. The means of social communication is to be in service to life and to the building up of the person, according to the highest of aspirations and the best of cultural values.

23. In Africa, many people are leaving their country of origin seeing it as the only way out of a desperate situation. Consequently, the number of refugees and immigrants can be reckoned in millions on the continent and beyond. The phenomena of refugees, immigrants and the rural exodus go hand-in-hand with a tendency to reject ancestral culture and values. Consequently, the appeal to young people made by Pope John Paul II needs to be recalled: "Dear young people, the Synod asks you to take in hand the development of your countries, to love the culture of your people, and to work for its renewal with fidelity to your cultural heritage, through a sharpening of your scientific and technical expertise, and above all through the witness of your Christian faith".^[20] There can be no economic or technical development without cultural roots. The treatment of reconciliation, justice and peace must consider the factors of culture and religion.

III. Religions in Service to Reconciliation, Peace and Justice in Africa

24. In considering these topics, attention must be given to the opportunities provided by dialogue with some Muslim communities and members of African Traditional Religion (ATR). These religions are open to collaborate in bringing about reconciliation, justice and peace. Undoubtedly, there can be no peace without collaboration among the different religions.

1. African Traditional Religion

25. Oftentimes, African Traditional Religion is for African Christians and Muslims the socio-cultural context for understanding each other. In fact, "African Traditional Religion is the religious and cultural setting from which most Christians in Africa come and in which they continue to live".^[21] As a religion that embraces the totality of life, it is often the basic source of inspiration in understanding and translating the concepts of reconciliation, peace and justice. As such, it can serve as a initial opening for Christians and Muslims in their search for understanding and collaboration.

26. Oftentimes, African religious and cultural traditions understand reconciliation as peace and a return to a state of harmony, manifested in a person's interior and exterior state of being and devoid of a harsh or rough character. It is also beneficial, active goodness which shows care and concern for the well-being of others.

Likewise, traditional African societies have undoubtedly treated a certain form of social justice, which many times is considered a cooperative attitude in possessing, protecting and distributing the goods necessary for survival. Goods are such to the extent that they are useful in developing the life of the community. However, some practices, such as rituals against spells, can evidently produce contrary effects today and accentuate hatred and divisions in society. Consequently, an in-depth reflection is needed to make a distinction between everything in African Traditional Religion which can promote peace, justice and reconciliation, and what stands against these values. In this regard, a reflection in common, much like that in the dialogue with Islam, should underlie any pastoral activity.

2. Islam

27. Islam also figures in the topic of the next Synod on the following subjects: reconciliation, justice and peace. Islam should be understood in its present state which displays certain worrying aspects, such as, religious intolerance. In addition, its political structure is so diverse that a unified, concrete manner of dialogue is difficult to establish, despite the fact that dialogue is essential. Consequently, to foster a dialogue of life, a distinction must be made between Islam's political and religious aspects, and, in turn, between Islam and its followers.

From this vantage point, Islam is often an important yet difficult partner.^[22] Islam is important because, together with Muslims, Christians can draw up plans for a fruitful and peaceful collaboration in all areas related to reconciliation, justice and peace, the promotion of good government in society and finding common-ground on values regarding the general character of a people. The selfless devotion of consecrated persons in their lives is oftentimes greatly valued in Muslim environments. In many countries, Christians and Muslims have created associations for dialogue and the promotion of peace and justice. In some places, Christians and Muslims even have common days of fasting and prayer.

Positive experiences in relations with Muslims in some regions of Africa occasions hope and prayer that these forms of collaboration will increase in number and become even more effective. However, an undertaking of this kind requires efficient, competent structures of collaboration. Some groups of Muslims are often known to be difficult partners, who hinder the common practice of these values.

28. In this regard, the hope expressed by Pope John Paul II is still very timely: "I sincerely hope that if today faithful Muslims rightly find in the countries with a Christian tradition the essential means to satisfy the requirements of their religion, Christians can also benefit from comparable treatment in all the countries with an Islamic tradition. Religious freedom cannot be limited to mere tolerance. It is a civil and social reality endowed with precise rights that enable believers and their communities to give witness without fear to their faith in God and to live all its requirements".^[23] Respect for the principle of reciprocity is a necessary condition for any progress in reconciliation, justice and peace.

3. Collaboration with Other Christians

29. In the commitment to reconciliation, justice and peace, Christians cannot ignore the prayer of the Lord and Master of Life: "May they all be one... so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (*Jn* 17:21). The shared basis of African culture, enriched by the Word of Life, is a great advantage in seeking together ways and means to make the Christian evangelical witness more and more credible. Every Christian is called to promote any initiative that favours unity.

The efforts to find common rules in translating the Bible into the vernacular languages and the common struggle to bring about peace, democracy and respect for human rights, as well as the common commitment in the various processes of reconciliation have greatly contributed to removing prejudice against one another. It must be said, however, that mere human motivation will never be enough to overcome divisions and restore Christian unity. A spiritual renewal is needed in order to understand the Church's true unity. This is why the moments of common prayer, such as the Prayer Week for Christian Unity, take on great importance. As members of the Catholic Church, we have to be convinced that in her the Church is realised in her fundamental structure. We continue to pray to the Lord to stir up faith everywhere in order to form only one Church in Christ.

The Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops will be a providential occasion to present a general picture of the African situation, and the strategies and objectives to be adopted for the Church on the continent to continue to promote effectively the Kingdom of God, which is reconciliation, justice, peace and love. With this in mind, the African religious and cultural setting can be an ally in the dialogue with other religions and other Christians for a profound evangelisation effort and human promotion. These can only be achieved by being deeply united to the One Who is the basis for hope in a rebirth of Africa. This is why a fundamental question rings out at the conclusion of this chapter: How can Africa find the strength and energies needed for this rebirth?

IV. The Perspective, Quo Vadis, Africa?

30. Who will support the drastic changes in conduct which must come about to change Africa's destiny, so that reconciliation will come in the midst of so much hatred and divisions, and peace and justice will finally reign in Africa? What is the work of imagination in plotting

the path into the future? How should the Gospel be proclaimed in an Africa marked by hatred, wars and injustices? How can we tackle the negative aspects of globalisation? In brief, how can the Church remain faithful to the Lord's command and contribute to the promotion of reconciliation, peace and justice? Before these challenges, the Church-Family of God in Africa has no other response than that of Simon Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the message of eternal life" (*Jn* 6:68). These questions are an invitation to the Church to start afresh from Christ, the Fullness of Life, our Reconciler, our Peace and our Justice. Christ is our "Hope" (cf. *1 Tm* 1:1); "For he is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility" (*Eph* 2:14). The whole Church is invited to ponder these truths of the faith, their significance and, above all, their consequences for her mission, that is, the proclamation of the Gospel which is Jesus Christ, the Source of Life's Fullness.

31. There is no easy answer to the above questions. However, the Church-Family of God in Africa holds that the only solution is one Person: Jesus Christ! This is why she invites her members to continue to hope in him, the only one capable of restoring Africa's dignity and true freedom. By again centering her thoughts and deeds on Christ, by making him known and loved, and by embarking on following Christ through the experience of a personal and communal encounter with him, the Church-Family of God in Africa will allow the light of her Trinitarian life to shine. In this way, African history and societies will be transformed in Christ, through him, with him and for him. Through this encounter with the living God in Jesus Christ, Africa will find the much-aspired fullness of life. In and through this encounter with Christ, faith becomes steadfast like that of Moses: "It was by faith... that he held to his purpose like a man who could see the Invisible" (*Heb* 11:27). A faith like this "surmounts all obstacles in order to go and rest in the bosom of infinite Love which can only perform works of love".^[24] The Second Special Assembly aims to enliven this kind of love, faith and hope in Jesus Christ in the thoughts and deeds of the sons and daughters of the Church in Africa.

CHAPTER II

JESUS CHRIST, THE WORD AND BREAD OF LIFE, OUR RECONCILER, OUR JUSTICE AND OUR PEACE

32. "Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest" (*Mt* 11:28). The Church-Family of God in Africa finds confidence in these words and an invitation once again to cast the nets into the deep, because, from the time of the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, she has made a preferential choice for the poor. She thus acknowledged the dehumanising and oppressive situation of the African peoples. In doing so, she came face to face with not only a crisis, in the etymological sense of the word, as a "judgment", but also a challenge. The crisis is one of conversion, holiness and integrity and the challenge is to develop every potential aspect of the Gospel message of divine adoption so as to liberate the African peoples from sin and the "structures of sin",^[25] in short, from the heavy yoke weighing them down. Both the crisis and challenge lead us to turn our eyes toward the One who is our Life and our Liberation: Jesus Christ!

I. The Word of Life in Abundance

33. The Letter to the Hebrews states: "At various times in the past and in different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom

he made everything there is" (*Heb* 1:1-2).^[26] This Son, through whom God speaks to humanity, is the Word made flesh. He is the proof par excellence of the efficacy of the Word of God, as affirmed by the prophet: "So the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do" (*Is* 55:11). In taking flesh, this Word became the origin of what we are and do; It is the foundation of all life. Through It, God begets us to New Life on the condition that we receive It. For those who have received It, "he gave power to become children of God" (*Jn* 1:12). Therefore, on the basis of the Word, African traditions must be understood and ideas of life, the person and family corrected and adjusted. Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, is the source and fulfilment of all our lives.

34. African tradition holds that the word and life are closely related. Effectively, the word can lead to death or give life. The Word of God in becoming man assumes and elevates the sacred meaning of the word in African tradition to give it a saving character and strip it of death, so that no one will perish. However, in light of the fact that the African people are subjected to a manipulation of the word, monopolised by radio, television and political speeches, the word, which the Gospel of Jesus Christ has given a sacred and abundantly life-giving character, can be said to be fully mortal. In line with most African traditions and those of the adjacent islands, the word should correctly correspond to the world. The cultural and religious element ought to enable us better to understand the meaning of this newness begun in the One who is the Word par excellence, and from whom all life comes. This requires a Christian to be familiar with this Word, so that It will have a concrete effect in daily life. Knowledge of this Word, then, is important for the Christian; not a purely intellectual, academic knowledge or "hearing only", but knowledge that springs from a personal encounter with Christ who speaks in Sacred Scripture. Our Christian communities urgently need to become, more and more, places of deep-listening to the Word of God and prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture, as His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI insists: "The reading of Sacred Scripture is prayer, it must be prayer - it must emerge from prayer and lead to prayer".^[27] Through the Church's prayerful reading in common, Christians can encounter the Risen Christ who speaks to them and restores hope in the fullness of life which he gives to the world.

The Dead and Risen Christ is the source and fulfilment of all life. He is the principle of all new life. In him and through him, God gives the world the Word of Life, who reconciles all beings, "when he made peace by his death on the cross" (*Col* 1:20; cf. *Col* 1: 18ff), and is their justification. He gives us this justification and peace in time in the Breaking of Bread, which makes his Word present in us, making it Flesh with our flesh, Body with our body, so that united to him, we will reflect his light and presence in the world, and give the world a divine flavour.

II. Bread of Life

35. Indeed, through the Breaking of Bread, "Christ makes present within time the mystery of his death and resurrection".^[28] In partaking of this Bread, he is received in person as the 'living bread come down from heaven' (*Jn* 6:51), and with him we receive the pledge of eternal life and a foretaste of the eternal banquet of the heavenly Jerusalem".^[29] In this Paschal Banquet, God himself comes to meet us; he comes to look for us in our ordinary, everyday situations to unite us in the mystery of the gift of his love, and thus anticipate our definitive union with him in heaven. The Eucharist directs us towards the future, towards the final coming of Christ. It directs our attention towards the expectation of the Lord's return.

This expectation allows us to enter into a dynamic which stirs and breathes hope into the progression of time.

The One who is awaited, however, is not absent from history, because the Eucharist makes him truly present. In the reality of his Body and Blood, Christ makes his entire self substantially present in our lives,^[30] fulfills his promise to be with us all the days of our lives until the end of time (cf. *Mt* 28:20), and sends us back to our daily realities, so that we can fill them with his presence, as a result of our encounter with Him. This close, mutual relation with Him enables us to anticipate, in some way, heaven on earth. The Eucharist makes abundantly clear that life is a relation of communion with God, our brothers and sisters and the whole creation. The Eucharist makes us, the Church, the sign and instrument of his love, which transforms the world.

36. In the present state of socio-political and economic life on the African continent, what can be more dramatic than witnessing the often-bloody struggle for life and survival? How can the First Special Assembly for Africa (1994) which emphasised the Church-Family of God, contribute to the reconstruction of an Africa which is thirsting for reconciliation and seeking justice and peace? The ethnic and regional wars, the massacres and genocides which have free reign over the continent should cry out to us in a very special way. If belonging to Jesus Christ makes us members of the same family, sharers of the same Word of Life and partakers of the same Bread of Life, and if sharing the Blood of Christ makes us sharers in the same life, because the same Blood of Christ circulates in our veins and makes us children of God, members of the Family of God, then hatred, injustice and fratricidal wars should cease. Thus, the need arises to deepen and incarnate the mystery of Church-Family in everyday life.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH, SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND PEACE IN AFRICA

37. Having been envisioned as a Church-Family, the Church in Africa aims at reminding everyone that they are sisters and brothers (cf. *Mt* 23:8), and that they all have the duty to seek in all things what contributes to building fellowship, peace (cf. *Rm* 14:19) and justice. In God's plan, the Church is not a means which can be used for any ideology whatsoever. On the contrary, in the mystery of the communication of God's love to humanity, she is the sign and instrument^[31] of the communion of the human family with God himself, communion among men and communion with the whole of creation. She bears in her bosom the Word and the Bread of Life, the Word and Bread of Love.

I. The Missionary Perspective of the Reception of the Church-Family of God in Contemporary Africa

38. The sense of fellowship which goes beyond the limits of one's family, tribe or ethnic group is a truly, deeply-grounded value in African societies. Along with solidarity, it serves as the basis of conduct which, in extreme cases, has led to the death of many people who refused to take part in the violence done by their group against others or who protected and defended people who were to be killed by members of their group.

39. From a tradition marked by the sacredness of life, fellowship and a sense of the Word comes the characterisation of the Church as Family of God. She is the place of fellowship; she

receives the fullness of life from Christ, our Older Brother, the First-Born Among the Dead; she lives because of the Living Word of the Everlasting Father. As a Mother who generates us in Baptism to new life in God, she must be the preeminent place of life, not death. Jesus Christ, through the Blood which flowed from his side on the Cross, made us brothers and sisters united by the bond of his Blood, which, from the Eucharist, flows in our veins. The life received in Baptism, which each of us is called, in turn, to make grow through participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, must be everyone's concern and be seen by everyone as sacred. Consequently, that life is to be respected and protected. Since the same Blood of Christ circulates in each of us, and since we are all members of the Church-Family of God in the Body and Blood of Christ, it stands to reason that to shed a brother's or sister's blood is to shed our own blood, the Blood of Christ; this is killing his life in us. No one has the authority to harm life. God alone is the Master of Life. Everyone receives life from him and must return it into his hands. The Eucharist highlights this sacred character of life in a particular way and our shared responsibility towards life.

40. The mission of a Church which wishes to be the Family of God in Africa can only be understood as flowing from this communication of life and the unity-fellowship which comes from the peace given to us by the Blood Christ poured out for us. The proclamation of this peace to peoples torn by conflicts and wars, cries out in this way from our hearts: "You are all brothers and sisters (cf. *Mt* 23:8), stop wars!" This is in agreement with one of the fundamental declarations of the Second Vatican Council: "Missionary activity is closely bound up even with human nature itself and its aspirations".^[32] It further specifies that "the Gospel has truly been a leaven of fellowship, unity and peace".^[33] Consequently, no one can take joy in destroying or killing his sister or brother, despoiling his family or depriving it of what is necessary for life. We can say, then, that if we truly enter into this mystery of the Church-Family of God, and if Africa is afflicted by poverty, corruption, injustice and violence, the Church is to be a community which heals, reconciles, forgives and encourages. In a word, she must be an evangelising Church engaged in human promotion, as His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us so well: "The Church is God's family in the world. In this family no one ought to go without the necessities of life".^[34] The Second Special Assembly ought to enable us to increase awareness of the close connection between the Church's mission and human promotion, if the Church's social doctrine is to be applied to everyday life.

II. The Church's Social Doctrine and her Evangelising Mission

41. For the Church-Family of God in Africa, the connection existing between her evangelising mission and human promotion is an inseparable bond between her vocation and mission,^[35] since the salvation in Jesus Christ which she proclaims concerns man in his entirety. For the Church, "to evangelise is to develop man in all the dimensions of his vocation as a child of God".^[36] This bond is made concrete in committed actions on behalf of human promotion, such as: education, health, aid to the needy, development projects, defence of human rights, and the commitment to bring about democracy and legally constituted States. Separating human promotion from the love that bears it, is to deny the intense unity of the human commitment where the profound Christian identity is revealed in fact.

1. Some Fundamental Principles of the Church's Social Doctrine

a) The Theological and Anthropological Foundation

42. Through her social doctrine, the Church faithfully carries out her specific mission to be the reflection of God's love in the world for every human being. Through the proclamation and realisation of the Gospel, "she bears witness to man, in the name of Christ, to his dignity and his vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches him the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom".^[37] To the person, a being in relation to others, the Church expresses her nearness through her social doctrine.^[38] She reveals to each person that he is a spiritual and corporal being in relation to God, his brothers and sisters in humanity and all of creation. Humanity, therefore, in the course of history, is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine,^[39] which is guided by the principle of the dignity of the human person.^[40]

43. Humanity and all earthly realities are already treated in the initial pages of Sacred Scripture. From the beginning, God created man in his image (cf. *Gn* 1:27), made him the steward of creation (cf. *Gen* 2:15; *Ps* 8; *Wis* 9:1-5; *Sir* 17:1-4). This mission as steward is accompanied by the duty to cultivate the earth. Work is the place where man exercises his role as steward. So Saint Paul could say to the Thessalonians, "Go on making even greater progress and make a point of living quietly, attending to your own business and earning your living, just as we told you" (*1 Thess* 4:11; cf. *Eph* 4:28; *2 Thess* 3:10). Work is stressed as not only a need and a means of providing for one's livelihood and that of others, but also that which gives dignity to man, thus freeing him to be the steward of creation and enabling him to enjoy its fruits (cf. *2 Tim* 2:6). At the same time, the sacred texts draw attention to the temporal character of earthly realities (cf. *1 Tim* 6:6-10; *1 Cor* 7:29-31). This eschatological vantage point serves as the basis for all earthly realities and how man's relation to them are measured and evaluated.

b) Some Fundamental Principles

44. At the heart of this mission as steward and the duty to work and enjoy the fruits of one's labour, the sacred texts emphasise the solidarity of all creation as a fundamental principle which guarantees unity, justice and peace. Saint Paul recalls that everyone is called to put their goods (cf. *1 Tim* 6:17-19) at the disposal of others.^[41] This is not a question of taking away from some what is their due, but rather of seeing that the principle of equity remains at the centre of creation (cf. *2 Cor* 8:13-15), and that the abundance of some compensates for the want of others. While discouraging a type of parasitism, a real culture of work and solidarity should be created.

This principle of solidarity is closely bound to the principle of the universal destination of goods: "God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner".^[42] This principle is the basis of the right to the use of goods. Every human being should have the chance to enjoy the well-being necessary for his full development. The universal destination of goods requires everyone's efforts to ensure that every human person and all peoples will have the necessary conditions for their integral development. Consequently, the Church considers the right to private property as subordinate to the right to common use and the principle of the universal destination of goods.^[43] By this we mean to stress the fact that man should consider the goods he possesses as not only his own property, but also shared in common, in the sense that they can always be useful to others too.^[44] From the vantage point of the principle of the universal destination of goods, the Church highlights her preferential choice for the poor,^[45]

which reminds each Christian of his social responsibilities as a witness to the primacy of Christ's charity. This also holds true with regard to cultural assets.

45. New technology and scientific knowledge should be placed at the service of man's primary needs. The Church in Africa re-echoes the words of Pope John Paul II in calling for an end to "the barriers and monopolies which leave so many countries on the margins of development, and to provide all individuals and nations with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development".^[46] The Church, however, does not deny the right to private property, which ensures that human persons have the necessary space for personal and family autonomy and which can be considered an extension of human freedom. The possession of private property can help stimulate a sense of duty and responsibility.^[47] However, it is not to be considered an absolute good, but relative to the common good.

46. The common good can be understood as the social and community dimension of the moral good. Just as a person's moral action is realised by doing good, social action is fully achieved in realising the common good.^[48] Responsibility for the common good does not rest with the State only, but individuals also.

In fact, the State must guarantee the cohesion, unity and organisation of the society it represents so that all its citizens can contribute to the common good. Thus, it must co-ordinate the many interests of society's various segments and regulate disputes with justice. The just order of society and the State is the essential duty of politics.^[49] To achieve this, it is important for politicians to respect and make respected the fundamental values of social life, like good governance, truth, freedom and justice.

47. To achieve this order calls for the collaboration and participation of all components of society. This is why the Church insists on respect for, and application of the principle of subsidiarity whereby all societies of a higher order should have an attitude of endorsing, support, promotion and aid (*subsidium*) on behalf of societies of a lower order. By this, the Church means to say that, if the State wants to promote the dignity of the human person, it must encourage, support, promote and develop "initiatives arising from the different social forces and combine spontaneity with closeness to those in need".^[50] On the basis of this principle, the Church is opposed to any excessive forms of centralisation, bureaucracy, presence of the State and its administrative structures. On the contrary, some African countries witness the total absence of a State which guarantees security of persons and goods and one capable of supporting and promoting the grass-roots' initiatives.

One of the implications of the principle of subsidiarity is participation. This is expressed essentially "in a series of activities by means of which the citizen, either as an individual or in association with others... contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which he belongs".^[51] No citizen can shrink from this duty of participation in making his own the joys and sufferings of others, nor can the People of God, the Church, avoid this duty of participation.

2. Some Temptations to Overcome

48. From this vantage point, the Church cannot lose sight of the fact that the faithful who make up the Church today are also marked by the spirit of the times. They share the joys and sufferings of people today.^[52] To fulfill her mission, that is, to make the Kingdom of God

present in history, calls for the Church's solidarity with all creation. However, it primarily requires an ongoing conversion. Following Christ's example, we will be faithful to this mission by bringing about an ongoing conversion to the Father, the Source of True Life. He alone is capable of delivering us from evil and all temptations, and keeping us in his Spirit, in the very heart of the struggle against the forces of evil.

49. In the Gospel of Saint Luke, we cannot forget that the first temptation is to transform stones into bread (cf. *Lk* 4:1-5). By becoming involved in the struggle against hunger, we must not let ourselves be deterred from the original course: Christ as the True Bread of Life. While focussing attention on desperate situation with a hope for a better future where want, conflict, dissent and violence will be banished, we must not forget to listen to what is proclaimed as the fundamental form of true liberation: Jesus' call to conversion (cf. *Mt* 4:17). Let us not fall into the temptation of a kind of messianism which magically casts aside want, as if the economy, its hard work and the inventiveness required were only unfortunate accidents of our human condition. May the Second Special Assembly be an intense moment of reflection in finding the ways and means to reestablish our economies, and create a real, solid culture of work done well.

50. The second temptation (cf. *Lk* 4:5-9) refers to our relation to the future of Africa: politics. Jesus' response to this temptation reveals a criticism of politics in presuming to be the exclusive mediator of liberation, and thus to make itself Absolute, excluding any religious dimension. In fact, the State cannot ignore or try to rid itself of religion. A just society cannot be achieved without the component of love. As His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, anyone who wants to eliminate love ends up eliminating man.^[53] African politicians are not spared from this temptation. In fact, a tendency is noted in many politicians to ignore religion or want to get rid of it. Rather than attention to God's truth, what counts are their idols. These idols only have imaginary power or fascination and they show no concern for human beings, since they live only from a deviant and wayward desire. There is only One who guarantees life; he is not an idol in the least, but the true God. Jesus keeps politics from being made a "god", which he condemns as a great temptation. He gives politics its true purpose: to be the privileged vehicle of a reconciled history. Reconciliation is first of all a gift which comes to us from God, the Only One whose workings take place in the innermost depths of our hearts.

The Christian's attitude towards the temptation of a politician who wants to set himself up as the master of life can only be that of the Three Kings (cf. *Mt* 2: 12, 16-18), who had concern for the Child Jesus and his family, and tried to protect his life at all costs. In the same way, Christians oppose the modern sorcerers that sow misery and death everywhere in Africa with their arms and criminal policies. Through Baptism and the Celebration of the Eucharist, Christians receive life from God and pledge to make it grow in not only them but others. This acceptance of Christ's life in us should lead us to resist any message and authority contrary to life. The massacre of the Innocents in Jesus' time, when the Three Kings resolutely protected him, was the result of Herod's bloody decision. And since then, how many martyrs, men and women, in the history of Christianity, have paid with their lives for this resistance out of fidelity to the Gospel and the Person of Christ?

51. Africa's recent history also gives witness to this. We are not only thinking of martyrs such as those from Uganda, Blessed Annuarite Nengapeta and Isidore Bakanja, but also witnesses to the faith like Blessed Cyprian Michael Iwene Tansi, the Servant of God Julius Nyerere, and the many Christians who suffered imprisonment, torture and the privation of their goods for the sake of the Gospel. How can we fail to mention all the victims in the recent history of our

countries, the men and women brutally torn to pieces by the bullets of African and foreign dictators, whose only crime was to cry out for peace, for more justice and human dignity on behalf of their oppressed fellow citizens?

Oftentimes, Christians have a very active role in organising the political and economic destiny of their peoples. Sometimes, however, they are the source of division, inter-ethnic wars, corruption and other evils which trouble the continent. In doing so, they betray not only the Gospel of Christ, but even more, they shame their ancestral tradition which would require everyone to provide for the growth of the life of the individual and the entire community. What can be done to achieve a heightened awareness that the nature of the mission of the Church requires her unity and fidelity to the teaching of the Master?

52. The third temptation (cf. *Lk* 4:9-13) reveals the causes of economic and political illusions: to use divine power for ends that contradict God's will and activity, to construct a divinity according to man's desire. Contrary to this, the Christian logic is to ask oneself about the goal of faith in this world: the Kingdom is present and must be seen and experienced at the present moment. For this reason the Apostolic Exhortation clearly proclaims: "In evangelisation one could or should not ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world".^[54] How, then, are we to understand the coming of the Kingdom as Reconciliation, Justice and Peace?

The Second Special Assembly is an opportunity to reflect and find, in the light of the Spirit, the ways and means for a fruitful, effective Christian witness in the world of politics and economy in Africa. The good functioning of these two areas depends to a great extent on the ability of Africans to be reconciled and reestablish peace and justice. This work is particularly urgent, because, at present, the situation concerning reconciliation, justice and peace in the countries of Africa can be described as worrying in some, and disastrous in others.

CHAPTER IV

THE WITNESS OF A CHURCH REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST ON THE WORLD

53. The Church's mission is to proclaim the good news of salvation, a salvation that frees man, every man, in every way: spiritually, morally, culturally, economically and socially. This is the mission of the Church-Family of God in Africa. All members of the Church are called to this task, whatever their place and circumstances of life.

I. The Church in Her Hierarchical Aspect and Witness in the World

1. The Role of the Bishop and Bishops' Conferences

54. Since the bishop is the first Pastor of the local Church, this responsibility falls primarily on him. He must be watchful in seeking appropriate methods and adapting certain attitudes in teaching and implementing this doctrinal and pastoral message. This requires him to show great solidarity towards others and to exercise extreme sensitivity to problems affecting the life of the People of God entrusted to him.^[55] He is to manifest a genuine determination in finding solutions to problems by detecting their real causes. He is to be ready always to take a stand, when fundamental human rights are violated. Inspired by the Church's social doctrine, he is to seek respect for the principles of good governance on the part of those in the political

life. Consequently, he is to be attentive to forming Christians who are capable of overcoming the dichotomy of individual conscience and belonging to a group.

The bishop is to be a reconciler without any preconceptions. In the conflicts which tear Africa apart, the Church must be an arbitrator with an impartiality beyond question. The positions taken by the bishop have to be impartial with regard to the powers and ideologies of the various associations of a political or tribal character. This kind of impartiality should enable him to be in a favourable position to denounce the abuses of the powers-that-be as well as the manipulation of people by some politicians, and vigourously to defend the "little people" who watch helplessly as their rights are trampled underfoot.

55. The bishop's action will be effective in collegiality and solidarity with his confreres in the episcopacy. Unity within the bishops' conference is of the great importance, especially in social and political crisis. This unity will give the Church's action more credibility and give promise to her message for a better future. This kind of unity is not limited to one country only; it should also characterise the relations with the bishops' conferences at the regional and continental levels. This requires each bishop to have a deep, authentic ecclesial sense and an unswerving fidelity to the Gospel in his search for solutions to common problems.

56. Bishops' conferences should re-establish and make truly operational the various Justice and Peace Commissions. Furthermore, they should support them and endow them with everything necessary to exercise their role effectively. These Commissions should be places of study for problems facing African societies and subsequently contribute to finding suitable solutions to them. Therefore, it is necessary for bishops and bishops' conferences to raise awareness and teach people to discuss society's problems with the assistance of the Word of God, the Church's social doctrine and papal messages, for example, the Messages for the World Day of Peace. This requires that pastoral workers receive a suitable formation for this task.

From this vantage point, each bishops' conference will have to exercise particular pastoral care in responding to the needs of the various segments of society: the armed forces, the armed movements and the militia, politicians, intellectuals and public officials, refugees abroad and displaced persons within the country. Given the role which each segment of society is to exercise, at present or in the future, in bringing about peace and justice in Africa, it is absolutely essential that the Pastors of the Church give them greater attention. Each bishops' conference ought to consider forming groups of experts to draw up sound pastoral programs which respond to the needs of each of these segments of society. It will also be necessary for these groups of experts to have sufficient ways and means to work well.

2. The Justice and Peace Episcopal Commissions

57. Each bishops' conference, and, if necessary, each diocese ought to have a Justice and Peace Episcopal Commission. It should be the watchful eye of the local Church within society for all the burning issues which affect it, particularly those related to social justice, equality, human rights, promotion of the common good, democratic coexistence, reconciliation and development. It ought to be a body of study and reflection among the general pastoral as given by the bishops' conference, and be in contact with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. As such, this commission should be viewed as an ecclesial body thinking in and for the Church. It is meant to be a commission for the promotion of justice and peace according to

the spirit of the Gospel and the Church's teaching on these values. It is an essential instrument in a pastoral program on behalf of reconciliation, justice and peace.

3. Priests, Consecrated Persons and Formation Institutions in the Church

a) Priests

58. The specific mission of priests in the Church, as the Second Vatican Council reminds us, is not political, economic or social in nature, but religious.^[56] Nevertheless, according to their ministry, they can and must contribute to setting up a more just secular order. In fact, the word of the Gospel which priests proclaim in the name of Christ and his Church, the efficacious grace of the sacraments they administer and the witness of their charity, must contribute to freeing man from his personal and social selfishness and promote the conditions of justice among men, which are signs of the charity of Christ present in our midst.^[57] Pastoral workers will contribute towards progress in reconciliation, peace and justice in Africa through their preaching, catechesis, pastoral letters and, especially, a pastoral care of the family which is well-suited to today's challenges.

b) Consecrated Persons

59. In the same way, consecrated persons are called to work for the advent of reconciliation, justice and peace in Africa by living their charisms and fully embracing the evangelical counsels in their own communities and the world. In fact, through the witness of a life of service, the acceptance of diversity, forgiveness and reconciliation, they will be a "sign" and "instrument" in the world of the Kingdom to come. Through their simple chaste life - a visible sign of their total self-giving to Christ and his Church -, their evangelical spirit of detachment and honesty in the use of the goods of this world and their obedience to their superiors, they will give witness to "the marvels wrought by God in the frail humanity of those who are called to follow in a uniquely special manner".^[58] The commitment to reconciliation, justice and peace is intrinsic to their vocation. As a matter of fact, consecrated persons ought to be in some way the living memory of the conviction that every Christian does not have "a stable, definitive city" on earth (cf. *Heb* 13:14), or better, that he does not belong to any tribe, race or people on earth. As a result, consecrated persons are simply citizens who seek the definitive realisation of the Kingdom of God, for which they pray constantly, "Thy Kingdom Come".

c) Formation Institutions in the Church

60. Proper preparation is extremely important for not only those who will have future involvement in the Church's pastoral programs but also those who are formed in the Church's Institutions (Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes, etc.). Consequently, courses and teaching seminars on peace and justice need to be introduced into formation programs for pastoral workers and consecrated persons, as well as those in Church educational institutions. This means providing them with useful tools in analysing the socio-political realities of the places where they will be working.

Catholic educational institutions are called to make a valuable contribution to formation by promoting a fruitful encounter between the Gospel and the different branches of knowledge.^[59] Consequently, the formation of lay Christians must primarily seek to make them capable of facing their daily tasks in cultural, social, economic and political settings, in effect, by developing their sense of duty in service to the common good. A second aspect is

formation of a political conscience to prepare lay Christians to exercise political power.[60] They should acquire keen knowledge of the Church's teaching and her pastoral activity in the society, as well as an acute interest in the social questions of our times.

II. The Commitment of All the Faithful in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace

1. The Identity and Mission of the Laity in the Church and the World

61. The time has come for lay Christians in Africa to make a large-scale, resolute commitment to Church and the State. The mission of the laity pertains to the very nature of the Church. This is particularly important and needed in Africa today. The meaning and need of the laity's presence is not to be found so much in the growing conviction of their responsibility and participation in the Church's activity in the world, as in an awareness of the real nature of the Church's mission in the world.

To understand better the current meaning and need for the laity's mission in the single mission of the Church, we have to return to the idea of the Church as a family, a place "where help is given and received, and at the same time, a place where people are also prepared to serve those who are in need of help".[61] The family is a community of life in which there is a diversity of talents, charisms, ministries, functions, duties and services all of which contribute, each in its own way, to fulfilling the shared task. The Church is comprised of many members, but she is united; she is the Body of Christ, the People of God.

62. On the basis of this reference to Christ and God, whom Christ reveals as love, everything is understood and justified. Everyone is at his service; each in his own way contributes to building up his Body. At his service are the gifts received from God (cf. *1 Cor* 7:7; *Eph* 4: 13, 16) and from the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. *Eph* 4:7). Through them, each member takes part in his own way in the power and mission of Christ.[62] Without harming this basic inner unity, the Church must always act in a specific manner when faced with various historical situations; yet, she must be constantly aware of her single mission[63] to reveal the mystery of God and offer the world salvation in Jesus Christ. In union with all her members, she must carry out her mission. If we wish to speak of the layperson's service to the world, it must be said that his being in the world makes him a specialist in this mission.

The laity's secular character determines the specificity of their mission.[64] They exercise their Christian mission in the midst of the world, in the ordinary conditions of family life and society.[65] Each is a Christian in the world. Certainly, clerics and consecrated persons are also in the world, but their Christian mission does not directly affect the building up of earthly realities. The laity, on the other hand, have earthly life as their specific mission. The role of the laity, therefore, is to bring about the Kingdom of God in the administration and organisation of earthly realities according to the divine plan. Guided by the spirit of the Gospel, they must be in the world like leaven in the dough,[66] salt and light (cf. *Mt* 5:13, 14).

63. Consequently, the laity's service in the world is not purely and simply an earthly service; it is a saving service which is also an ecclesial service. Since the Church is in and for the world, the laity's earthly service is, at one and the same time, an ecclesial service. Through them, the Gospel and the saving reality of Christianity not only become present in the world but the world becomes present in the Church. Through them, the integration of Christianity and culture is achieved and an incarnation of Christianity in the world of our times also takes

place. Thus, the secular service of the laity shares in the sacramental character of the Church as the Sacrament of Salvation.

On the basis of this concept of the laity in the Church, we can conceive of the Church-world relation on two levels: the place of the laity in the Church, and the laity as messengers of the Good News in the world. They are called to be witnesses in married life and the family, at work and in the various professions, in science and the economy and in culture and politics. They are called, precisely on the basis of their lay character,^[67] to sanctify the world and imbue it with the spirit of the Gospel.^[68] This is the place where the laity are to make their commitment, in the name of the Gospel, in service to reconciliation, justice and peace.

64. Because the laity have a major role in the Church's mission to the world, their contribution to the work towards reconciliation, peace and justice is essential. If they are to be successful, they must commit themselves wholeheartedly: to fight all forms of discrimination; to build society on the principle of equality and equity; to give the ethnic group its proper significance; to keep alive the memory of everything in African traditions that contributes, from the past and present, to promoting peace, justice and reconciliation; to get involved in the dynamics of reconciliation; and to take the way of non-violence. This mission of the laity in the world requires them to have a good intellectual, doctrinal and spiritual preparation.

2. The Importance of Formation of the Laity

65. The history of the evangelisation of Africa illustrates an important missionary commitment to education. Schools were among the more important institutions - very often *the* most important - in missionary pastoral activity. The case of the Belgian Congo is very illuminating. The Belgian government entrusted the entire task of education to the Catholic Mission. This produced many positive effects. It should be acknowledged that the rapid development of many countries of Africa is due to the work of those missionaries. At the same time, however, it must be recognized that the post-colonial period has allowed the good foundations which they laid gradually to deteriorate. Even in periods of crisis, education in many African countries was only able to function, to a great extent, through ecclesial institutions. A humble recognition of achievement should not excuse us from taking a hard look at ways and means to reestablish the educational system in these countries.

66. The particular Churches in Africa have to ask themselves what efforts can be made to ensure that the laity are more aware of their responsibility in economic and political life. They also have the duty to set up the instruments of formation which the laity need so that their temporal commitments will be inspired by the Gospel and the Church's social doctrine. It is regrettable that in some places the Church has long neglected the formation and education of the laity to equip them to exercise their civic, political and social rights in the case of oppression or contestation of these same rights. While, on the one hand, it is true that today, in some countries, after the initial impulse given by the Second Vatican Council, we find the Church giving greater attention to the formation of the laity and the creation of professional schools and Catholic universities, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged that very little attention is given to the formation of competent Catholics, that is, people faithful to Christ and highly committed to society.

To contribute effectively to an authentic, dynamic rebirth of Africa, the Church needs to evaluate her programs to see how to improve them, manage them and maintain them and thus

strengthen her effectiveness and capability in forming a group of Catholics capable of exerting a strong influence in the transformation of Africa for the better. This must be done with the firm conviction that it will contribute something new in the formation of the laity. It is not enough to form people; it is also necessary to devise and, if possible, create jobs. In fact, the Church "wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly".^[69] The aim is to succeed in not only educating people capable of thought but also providing instruction which will prepare Africans themselves to produce better materials and living conditions and to survive, and even to prosper, in the world of science and technology.

This kind of formation cannot neglect some fundamental elements such as: mutual respect and acceptance, the need to incarnate the realities of faith in the cultures of the African peoples, the link between poverty and violence, the need for a good administration of African resources, the recognition of minorities and the subjective and psychological sources of wars.

3. Some Aspects Requiring Particular Attention

a) Mutual Respect and Acceptance

67. Undoubtedly, one remedy against the deadly "virus" of discrimination is a strong conviction and adherence to the culture of mutual respect and acceptance. The laity are primarily called in this area to be messengers and committed witnesses in the search for ways and means to convince every African that the ethnic group, region and ideology are not absolute values, and, therefore, should not be the principal reference points for their conduct and activity. Every African Christian is invited to support any initiative aimed at favouring mutual acceptance and peaceful coexistence in mutual respect.

This view of Christianity requires a break from negative forms of solidarity: that is, those which originate precisely in the overemphasis on the ethnic group. This means to have solidarity with those from one's own ethnic group in what is good, but not to have solidarity with them in evil. These positive forms of solidarity among members of a same ethnic group and those who belong to different ethnic groups are grounds for optimism in breaking the mechanism of hatred and self-destruction of peoples. The testimonies made in times of crisis, when people from one tribe saved others from an enemy tribe, ought to inspire optimism for the present and the future. Reinforcing these positive kinds of solidarity will restore social values, particularly justice, equity, mutual respect and peaceful living to their proper place. Cultural roots, when lived in a positive way, can enrich the work of reconciliation, justice and peace.

b) Reconciliation and Forgiveness

68. The term 'reconciliation' can mean many things. In South Africa, for example, a dual connotation of the term can be found: on the one hand, the term tends to simply mean an agreement, a consensus or the resolution of a problem or dispute; on the other hand, it refers to the elimination of animosity or an end to violence. The term, however, does not necessarily include the reestablishment of peace in hearts. What is important is to reestablish a normal relationship, resume communication and go beyond the dispute. From this vantage point, reconciliation has a pragmatic character; it is a language of learning to live with others, in

pluralistic society, and to manage conflicts peacefully. In this regard, His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI's statement is particularly appropriate for reconciliation in Africa: "Bloodshed does not cry out for revenge but begs for respect for life, for peace!"^[70] At this point, the subtle difference between reconciliation and forgiveness should be noted.

Forgiveness refers more to the work within a person to regain peace and to heal the wound. In each case, it is a matter of memory. In forgiveness the possibility is offered for a real purification of memory and solid peace. "Asking for forgiveness, and granting forgiveness... are indispensable elements for peace. In this way our memory is purified, our hearts are made serene, and our gaze is clearly fixed on what the truth demands if we are to cultivate thoughts of peace. Here I would recall the illuminating words of John Paul II: 'There can be no peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness.'"^[71] On the Church's part, this calls for energetic pastoral activity to bring those at fault to a process leading to conversion and recognition of their errors or crimes. The Church must also help the victims generously to offer their forgiveness, even in the cases where the ones responsible for the crimes are rightly punished by the competent courts.

69. Therefore, to accept to follow the path of reconciliation does not mean to renounce honouring the collective memory of innocent victims. But such recollection does not necessarily oblige us to constantly stir up rancour. In fact, this would be a harmful use of memory. Instead, it is necessary to free oneself from the hurt and forget, following the example of the Master of Life who freely forgave his executioners from the Cross: "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (*Lk* 23: 34).

If Jesus Christ is the Fullness of Life, he unites ethnic groups and peoples and reconciles them in his Blood. He made them into a single family which lives in testimony to his final word: "Love one another; just as I have loved you" (*Jn* 13:34; cf. 15: 12). It is his Blood poured out into our hearts which can reconcile us with one another. To take away the grief caused by so much hostility means reconciliation. This is an arduous task, and it will not be easy. After the horrific and dramatic events which Africa has recently experienced, it is necessary for Africa to rediscover the profound meaning of the "Our Father". "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". Naturally, forgiveness in today's Africa, which is dominated by so much violence, is not easy. But, God asks us to forgive. He does not ask us simply to forget the offense but to be reconciled with those who do us violence. Only the victim can take the first step; only the victim can forgive. Forgiveness is something divine; therefore, a person perhaps resembles God most, when he forgives.

70. Associated with reconciliation is healing, a subject which has great importance in Black Africa. In Africa, illness is thought to be related to a lack of harmony in a person's relationships with others. More work needs to be done in this regard, if health is to be restored. Much depends on the quality of relationships within the community.

c) Reconciliation and Healing

71. Today, we observe the great attraction of all kinds of new religious movements and independent African Churches, due in part to the fact that people feel they are given more attention in these Churches and new religious movements, especially in the area of healing. The Gospels attest to Jesus' ministry as a "Healer". He healed the sick and, through these healings, manifested the coming of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, the mission he entrusted to his disciples, according to Saint Luke, is to "proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal" (*Lk*

9:2). Throughout the ages, the Church has always taken the pastoral care of the sick as one of her fundamental concerns. The Second Vatican Council highlighted the holistic aspect of salvation in Jesus Christ and provided the basis for the close connection between eschatological salvation and physical healing: "For the human person deserves to be preserved; human society deserves to be renewed. Hence, the focal point of our total presentation will be man himself, whole and entire, body and soul, heart and conscience, mind and will".^[72] This vantage point also determines the Church's approach in Africa.

- Healing in its socio-religious and spiritual dimension

72. In Africa, the Church wants to be fundamentally a family. The salvation she proclaims encompasses man in his totality and cannot be reduced to the salvation of the soul alone. From a human and relational vantage point, it must be said that the Church's degree of holiness depends on the quality of the interpersonal relations within her family. In a community lacking understanding, where everyone is fighting, people become sick and look to sorcerers. Hence, the importance of rediscovering Christ the Healer, as the Life-Giving Word who calls for reconciliation and intervenes with effective medicines, notably the sacraments, which create family unity. Speaking about the sacraments does not only refer to the Sacrament of Penance; all the sacraments are involved in the process of healing. Christ intervenes everywhere as a healer not only for spiritual health, but bodily health as well. The sacraments, specifically the Eucharist, are signs and instruments which free us from the evils that test the members of the community and make the Church an Ambassador of Reconciliation (cf. 2 Cor 5:20).

73. The Church's role in a divided African is to draw people together as brothers and sisters, including the non-baptized, under Christ, the Tree of Life and the Word of Reconciliation. In this way, she will be able to show that Jesus Christ died "to gather together in unity the scattered children of God" (Jn 11:52), and that he is the preeminent Word of Life who gives abundant life and reconciles everything through the Blood of his Cross (cf. Jn 1:10 and Col 1:20). Following the example of Christ, the Word of Life, Christians are called to speak only life-giving words that take flesh, create unity and make the world more human. Indeed, in Africa, life is in the word. The word can kill; and the word can give life, reconcile and build unity.

- Healing in its relation to politics, the economy and culture

74. Christ heals and sends us, in turn, to save and heal others (cf. Lk 9:6; Mk 16:15-20), not to transmit spiritual goods only, but to save the body along with the soul. The mission of Christ and Christians, as we have already said, is to save the whole person (cf. Lk 4:18ff). Precisely in today's Africa, each person must be saved through not only liberation of the spirit but liberation from war - internal and external -, economic exploitation, hunger, sickness, tribalism, injustices, dictatorship and corruption of all kinds. The problems of healing are not limited to the religious sphere alone; they also include and presuppose the political, economic and cultural spheres.

There are various kinds of healing. In a political commitment, as in any commitment to improve living conditions, health and peoples' culture, we bring about a kind of healing. In fact, Christ cannot be seen as a Healer unless Christians commit themselves to liberate modern Africa from all the evils which are suffocating the continent, particularly the evil of war.

d) Violence and Poverty

75. Violence oftentimes is caused by poverty as a reaction to growing social isolation and an increasingly unjust, discriminating society. If this is untrue, how can we explain the drama of child soldiers or child sorcerers? Violence will not be eradicated, until we change the social structures which cause the growing impoverishment of people, the scandalous enrichment of others, the rural exodus and unemployment.

76. Obviously, the real solution to violence is not found in social justice alone. Violence is also a cultural element. Efforts must be made to recreate a culture of peace. In fact, violence and war are a bi-product of culture which originates in the everyday life of society from a model of hostility which educates people to violence.

Even though violence begins with people, they need not be condemned to continue it nor does violence have to become an unchanging fate. Non-violence and peace are cultural entities; therefore, they must be built, taught and learned. Non-violence and peace have something to do with not only politics, the economy and the structures of society, but also education and religion. Peace will not be achieved, if it does not become the collective action of everyone in the community: peace *for* all and peace *by* all. Peace requires a ministry of the Word: Christ, the Prince of Peace, who is our Peace (cf. *Eph* 2:14). This Word of God is given to us in and through the Church. As a matter of fact, peace results in and with the Church, because peace is primarily a gift from God. Therefore, within the People of God, individual and collective criteria must be devised to bring about Christian affirmation and activity on behalf of peace. If the Church has the vocation to be the sign and sacrament of peace in and for the world, she must be involved in educating people on how to achieve peace.

77. The non-violent resolution of conflicts is not a utopian ideal nor a fiction. It does not mean submission, passivity or resignation.^[73] It entails setting up a real consultation, that is, a conscious decision to start from a dialogue and a serious, on-going search for consensus. Dynamics of this kind presuppose the ability to forgive and an ethical-moral vision of forgiveness as a choice of the heart, a personal choice before a social fact. Pope John Paul II stressed that no development of peoples is possible without peace, and that real peace is not possible except through forgiveness.^[74] In the short term, this may seem like weakness, but in the long term, it is really an enormous gain. Far from lessening a person, forgiveness adds to his stature.

e) To Put an End to the Arms Trade and the Savage Exploitation of African Resources

78. For the Church-Family of God in Africa, the call for peace means demanding a stop to the arms trade in areas of conflict. Everyone knows how the parties in conflict are supplied with arms. This is a great injustice and thievery: the resources of poor countries are systematically plundered to fuel the arms trade. The material force of arms needs to be replaced by the moral force of law.

Giving laws a chance implies that they have first to be created. In fact, while laws in many of African States have been set down, the independent institutions capable of making them justly respected are often lacking. The institution of laws implies recognition of the right to dissent: that is, the theoretical and practical faculty of conscientious objection of a civil kind and practising civil disobedience to some laws or totalitarian ideologies, by invoking the principle,

"It is better to obey God than men" (Acts 5:29), by the having a right to hold a particular view on the world and to enjoy the freedom to pursue an education.

f) The Recognition of Minorities

79. The call for peace also means requiring that the right of minorities be recognized. Wars often arise from a lack of respect for minorities, or the assumption of power by some minorities who believe they are superior to others. The universal obligation to understand and respect the variety and riches of other peoples, societies, cultures and religions is based on two fundamental principles. The first is the inalienable dignity of every person, regardless of national, cultural, ethnic or racial origin or religious belief. This dignity means that when people are united in groups, they have the right to a collective identity. Minorities then have the right to exist within a country with their own language, culture and traditions, and the State is morally obliged to make a place for these particular identities and expressions. The second principle is the basic unity of the human race which finds its origin in God, the Creator of all things. This unity implies that no group can feel superior to another. At the same time, it follows that integration can be built on an effective solidarity without any kind of discrimination. Consequently, the State has the duty to respect and defend the differences which exist among its citizens, and to allow their diversity to serve the common good. In fact, experience proves that peace and security can only be guaranteed in respecting the rights of all those for whom the State is responsible.

80. From this vantage point, the freedom of individuals and communities to profess and practice their religion is an essential element for living in peace. Freedom of conscience and freedom to seek truth and act in accordance with one's personal religious belief are so fundamental for a human being that any effort to restrict them leads inevitably to unrelenting conflicts.

When relations have broken off between groups in a nation, dialogue and reconciliation are the obligatory paths to peace. Only a sincere dialogue, open to the legitimate claims of all parties involved, can create an environment of real justice, where everyone is able to work for the true good of the homeland and their people. Reconciliation, based on justice, and respect for the legitimate aspirations of all segments of society, must be the rule. The guarantee of minorities to participate in political life is a sign of a morally adult society and brings honour to the countries in which all citizens are free to take part, in a climate of justice and peace, in the life of a nation.

g) The Subjective and Psychological Sources of War

81. Without ceasing to treat the objective causes of conflicts and general dissatisfaction, it seems necessary to discover the subjective and psychological sources of war. We mention, among others, the traditional conflicts between tribes, the absence of great causes to bring people together, projecting personal dissatisfaction and resentment on others and distrust taken to an extreme. Frustration is also at the origin of social upheaval: inequality in access to education, a lack of rightful participation in economic or political power, a lack of identity and consideration by society and the thirst for human warmth, love and fellowship.

The solution to this situation requires a spiritual transformation. To be a peacemaker, one must possess peace interiorly. Peace in the world passes through personal conversion.

CHAPTER V

THE SPIRITUAL RESOURCES FOR THE PROMOTION OF RECONCILIATION, JUSTICE AND PEACE IN AFRICA

I. The Basic Character of a Christian's Way of Life in the World

82. "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world" (*Mt* 5:13, 14). The Lord calls his disciples to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. He explains the mission of his disciples in the world: they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. To do this requires the indwelling of the real presence of the living God, who gives himself in the Body and Blood of the One who is the Word of Life. Since the Word of God is faithful and efficient, a disciple finds there not only savour and light, but also a pledge of salvation.

83. When speaking about light, Jesus uses an ancient image: Sion, the city on the mountain (cf. *Is* 2:1ff). Attracted by the light, the people flock there from all sides. From the land of the shadow of death and wars (cf. *Is* 9:1ff), they come streaming towards Sion to obtain the life and peace set forth by the Lord.

In the presence of a disciple, others are to feel at ease, that is, being able to find in their world, Light, salvation, wisdom and liberation from darkness, liberation from all forms of isolation and comfort and consolation for wounded hearts. The evangelist places an emphasis on "all" disciples: "In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven" (*Mt* 5:16). This is the fundamental vocation of every Christian in the world: to make the Light of Christ inside shine forth into the world. Light leads to action; it produces works, good works. With a commitment of this kind, Christian enthusiasm and the Light of Christ can be given to the world of Africa. Such action calls for a full spirituality of Christian involvement in politics, the world of work and professional life. Such a spirituality has its basis in the priestly ministry of all the faithful.

II. The Liturgical Life as the Focus of Christian Spirituality

84. The Church's purpose for being in the world is to make visible the real presence of God's saving action in time and space. It is to open the world to God's action, to God's life in us. Precisely speaking, the Eucharistic presence teaches and actualises the fact that the departure point of salvation is the gratuitous acceptance, in a full act of love, of every man and every reality, as a gift of God. His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us of this: "The new worship was based on the fact that, in the first place, God makes a gift to us, and, filled with this gift, we become his: creation returns to the Creator".^[75] This Gift makes a Christian someone who lives on the love received from the One and Triune God.

From faith in solely one God in the Trinity of Persons, a Christian draws the conviction that all are brothers and sisters, without distinction of race or sex, social class or culture, and that the mystery of every human being's identity lies in relation to this. This conviction is

confirmed and explained ultimately in the Eucharistic Mystery, which is primarily acceptance of God's life in us, the gift of his very Being, given us in Jesus Christ. Jesus, who was sent as the supreme presence of the Father's love for the whole of humanity, expresses and totally realizes in the Eucharist this logic of self-giving, acceptance and listening. Consequently, all Christian action and thought can only be understood on the basis of this mystery of accepting God's gift.

85. Christian witness is not only coherence, but also the anticipation and realisation, in time and space, of God's gift, transforming the world. Therefore, the *diakonia* ("service") which the Church must exercise in the world is first of all a service of welcoming and listening to the needs of all, particularly those who have no voice to make themselves heard or no political significance to assert themselves. The Church has experience in welcoming and listening to her Saviour, who gives himself in the silence of the Eucharist. Rather than depriving herself of goods and means, she expresses her poverty in her ability to listen to all human needs - no matter how humble - and brings them to the Father, the Source of All Good. In doing so, she achieves the fundamental twofold movement of the Eucharist: elevation of humanity and his world to God, in, within and through Christ, and God's gift to the world, in, within and through Christ. This explains the need and urgency of the Eucharist in a Christian's daily life. In fact, through and in the Eucharist, a Christian realizes his deepest self each day, namely, to be a gift for the men and women of our times. In the celebration of the Eucharist the fundamental realisation of this gift takes place in four ways: adoration, thanksgiving, propitiatory prayer and the prayer of supplication.

86. In adoration, a Christian expresses most clearly his total dependence on God whose absolute sovereignty is proclaimed as the source of all good and all life. At the same time, Christian worship in adoration also gives value to the person, because to adore God is to glorify him. The glory of God is the person fully alive.^[76] In fact, adoration of God expresses God's fidelity to mankind, his will to deliver humanity from humiliating and downgrading dependencies. The Eucharist becomes the clearest expression of the synthesis: glory of God - liberation - elevation of humanity.

The Eucharist, on the one hand, gives a believer the conviction that he is plunged, as it were, into a universe of gratuitousness: everything is grace, because everything is a gift of the Father of all that is good. On the other hand, the believer is aware that he is called by the Father to bring forth the positive values contained in everything he has received, so as to give witness to, and make perceptible, the goodness and gratuitousness of the divine gifts. To put this into action, a Christian must use the gifts he has received according to God's same logic of gratuitousness. A man who uses things with an attitude of selfishness does not give thanks to God. Eucharistic spirituality gives rise to a humanity where all are seen as brothers and sisters.

87. By highlighting the very close relation uniting God's glory to the fulfilment of all created reality, the Eucharist confirms the Christian idea that sin always has both a vertical (offense against God) and a horizontal (worldly disorder) dimension. The Eucharist also teaches that propitiation implies both the proper acknowledgement of divine sovereignty and an appeal to reform the world and history. Consequently, Christian penance and the commitment to conversion demand the elimination of evil as well as a constant effort to progress towards the good.

The renewal each day of the appeal of the Eucharistic is not intended to bend the divine will through the insistence of our request, but rather to patiently open our intelligence and hearts to gradually understand the real gift, Christ, the Fullness of Life, and to commit our will to love and want what God loved and wanted in Christ. In this sense, the demands of daily Eucharistic prayer, the regular recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours and the constant, frequent recourse to the sacraments and sacramentals, are far from being a futile attempt to leave the solution of our problems to God's almighty power. On the contrary, such actions are a serious part of an ever-deepening commitment to transforming every aspect of daily living into offerings pleasing to God in Christ.

III. Towards a Spirituality of Commitment in the World

88. When the Fathers of the Church speak about the priestly ministry of faithful believers, they mean the Christian life as worship, that is, a life consisting of a total orientation of one's being to God and neighbour.^[77] Sometimes, this can entail the supreme offering of one's life in martyrdom. In summarising the patristic tradition, Saint Thomas Aquinas states that the sacramental character received in Baptism and Confirmation is to be seen as a sharing in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and the ability to offer worship. The idea of worship is to be understood as "worship through a Christian life".^[78] For Saint Thomas, worship is not a question of exterior ritual or structures but of leading a truly Christian life. Above all, every Christian is called to bear witness not so much in what he says and does as in what he is and how he lives, namely, based on his relationship to Christ which, in turn, determines what is said and done. The words and deeds of the Christian must be an expression of gratitude to the Father, who, in Jesus Christ, is the source of everything that is good.

1. A Spirituality of Work Done Well, Deeply Grounded in Love of God and Neighbour

89. This feeling of gratitude is also expressed in a person's care of creation through work which is done well, ongoing, industrious and arduous. In fact, God made the world as a thing of great beauty for Adam, so that he could work in it and be its steward (cf. *Gen* 2:15). Such an understanding results in the full conviction that man is realised through assiduous work, done well (cf. *Job* 5:7) and sharing in God's creative power. This sharing in God's creative power requires a Christian to be conscientious in carrying out his individual tasks, that is, love must sanctify his tasks, even to the smallest detail.

In this way, professional work becomes a light illuminating those around us and those whom we meet, and giving savour and joy to those who partake of the fruits of our work. Therefore, each Christian is called to learn his trade well and practice it with care; the sanctification of work consists in this. The sanctification of everyday work is for the Christian the cardinal point, so to speak, of a true spirituality in the temporal order. This sanctification is only possible when we dedicate ourselves through love to our professional duties, when we carry out everything well through love, as His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us: "They must be persons moved by Christ's love, persons whose hearts Christ has conquered with his love, awakening within them a love of neighbour".^[79] This path will lead us to contemplate the wonders flowing from work - precisely because of love, even if we have to endure the bitter taste of incomprehension, injustice, ingratitude and even human failure. These are flavourful fruits and the seeds of eternity! A second characteristic element of this spirituality is Christian freedom.

2. Christian Freedom and the Sense of Family as the Distinctive Signs of this Spirituality

90. Today, the Christian finds himself at the crossroads of heavenly and worldly realities with consequent tensions and struggles and all which this implies. Christian existence takes place in this context, where tension is at play because of martyrdom, dialogue, being open to the world and bearing witness as a sign of contradiction which comes from the Crucifixion. Living such a life requires a discernment of spirits. The best service the Church can offer is an adequate formation of conscience and formation in the faith. As a matter of fact, much confusion comes from a lack of sufficient formation in the faith and the want of a good conscience. Interior renewal and a heightened ongoing catechesis for adults is essential for renewal in the Christian's apostolic life and spirituality.

The Bible and Church Fathers provide the third aspect, namely, the communion of members in the one Body of Christ. We become Christians only through union with other Christians in the great Communion of Saints. This highlights the community dimension of freedom and commitment. No one is saved alone; Christ saves humanity as a whole so as to make it the family of God united in his Body and Blood. Communion refers to communication. This is possible on several levels: in work groups, meetings, moments of discussion and sharing, associations, the family, the workplace and circles of friends. A Christian is someone who knows how to work in a team, in collaboration and sincere friendship with others. Wherever a Christian is at work, he tries to create a family atmosphere. The family is always the basic place where this community aspect is expressed.

CONCLUSION

FOR A SPIRITUALITY ORIENTATED TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY FOR SERVICE TO THE WORLD

91. In Africa today, a significant role is being exercised by some spiritual movements and living ecclesial communities, providing a source of hope for the Church. Though difficulties exist in transforming living ecclesial communities into real instruments of reconciliation, justice and peace, they are nonetheless important signs of the presence of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Communion. They are concrete examples of the apostolate which the laity are called to undertake today. These communities come to grips with the real problems of reconciliation, justice and peace, and gradually work out solutions to these problems. In fact, in these communities, the commitment and responsibility of the laity take place in a more intense way.

Spiritual movements are also small centres from which the Gospel emanates into the world and its realities. The laity are invited to be attentive to the gifts of the Spirit who inspires and prompts new initiatives in his Churches which are incarnated in the world's realities to face the great contemporary challenges. Africa should profit from the spiritual movements which the Spirit himself has stirred into action in other cultural contexts. Africa should also be equipped to form and propagate them in the whole Church as a sign of its spiritual maturity and of its attentive listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.

92. "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world" in Africa and the world. The Lord's words are an invitation incumbent on all his disciples in the rich diversity of their vocations. They are to be the workers of reconciliation and peace and promoters of justice:

from bishops to lay persons, with the assistance of the complementary structures comprising the Church. This means working for the coming of the Kingdom of God and contributing to the coming of a new Africa so that, with the help of God's grace, justice, peace and the common good of people and nations will always prevail.

93. The Spirit acts in such a way that Christians and people of good will, through their daily actions - individual or collective - will reject selfishness, sin and every violation of peace and justice, and work actively for reconciliation with God and our brethren. Mary, the Temple of the Spirit, the Queen of Peace and Protectress of Africa, shows us Christ, Our Reconciliation, Our Justice and Our Peace, so that under her maternal protection, the Church in Africa will increasingly make shine the light which comes forth from the Glory of the Father - Christ. To her we entrust the preparation and the fruits of the work of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops:

94. Holy Mary,
Mother of God, Protectress of Africa,
You have given the world the true Light, Jesus Christ.
Through your obedience to the Father and the grace of the Holy Spirit
You have given us the source of our reconciliation and our joy.

Mother of Tenderness and Wisdom,
Show us Jesus, Son of God and your Son.
Guide our path of conversion,
so that Jesus will let his Glory shine in and on us,
in all the places of our personal, family and social life.

Mother, filled with Mercy and Justice,
Through your docility to the Spirit of Consolation,
Obtain the grace for us to be the witnesses of the Risen Lord,
So that we will increasingly become the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

Mother of Perpetual Help,
To your maternal intercession we entrust
The preparation and fruits of the Second Synod for Africa.
Queen of Peace, pray for us!
Our Lady of Africa, pray for us!

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

1. What are the lessons learned from *Ecclesia in Africa*, in both its preparation and implementation, in the lives of particular Churches in Africa and the peoples of the continent?
2. In light of the new, present state of Africa, what remains to be done?

Chapter I

3. What positive developments have resulted in the Church and society since *Ecclesia in Africa*?

- a) In relation to reconciliation?
- b) In relation to justice?
- c) In relation to peace?

4. What difficulties have your particular Church and society-as-a- whole had to face in your region?

- a) On the socio-political level?
- b) On the socio-economic level?
- c) On the socio-cultural level?
- d) On the ecclesial level?
- e) In collaboration with Muslims on questions of justice, peace and reconciliation?
- f) In collaboration with the followers of A.T.R. on questions of justice, peace and reconciliation?
- g) In collaboration with other Christians?

5. How have you faced difficulties caused by Africans themselves and those resulting from international disorders?

Chapter II

6. What impact does your faith in Christ have on your daily life?

7. Is the Word of God really at the heart of your family's life? your living ecclesial community? or your parish?

8. How has faith in Christ the Saviour helped to promote actions useful to the Church and society?

Chapter III

9. Is the Church really a family in your living ecclesial community?

10. What are you doing in your community to achieve and live this family dimension which transcends and unites all tribes and races?

11. How does the Eucharist help us to live our commitments to peace, reconciliation and justice, and make the needed sacrifices. (cf. *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, 26 and 27)?

12. Has the image, taken from *Ecclesia in Africa*, of the Church-Family of God helped us to be a witness to reconciliation, justice and peace? How can your particular Church give this same witness? How is it working for reconciliation, justice and peace?

13. Is the Church's social doctrine sufficiently known in your particular Church? Are there any initiatives for disseminating it and making it better known? What are they?

Chapter IV

14. How do we all respond (bishops, priests, consecrated persons, laypersons and ecclesial formation institutions) to the call to holiness?

15. Do Justice and Peace Commissions exist in your particular Church? Are they effective?

16. Do formation programs exist in your particular Church?

17. What is the specific contribution of the bishop, bishops' conferences, priests, consecrated persons, religious institutes, Catholic universities, major seminaries and catechists in matters related to reconciliation, justice and peace?

18. What is the specific responsibility of the laity in these areas? In politics, the military life, the world of economy, the education of youth, healthcare, the family, culture, the mass media, international bodies and on the level of the universal Church?

19. In the current situation on the African continent, what do Jesus' words mean to you: "You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world"?

20. Describe the present state of affairs in your particular Church (diocese and country) as regards:

a) Health, education and social structures?

b) Human rights and democracy?

c) Relations between different ethnic and religious groups?

21. How can your Church help in making school and healthcare systems more efficient?

22. What can your Church do to improve the situation of human rights and promote democracy?

23. To prepare Christians for civil and political life?

24. What initiatives have been undertaken in your region concerning violence and hatred caused by wars?

25. What are the profound causes of this violence and hatred; of these outrages against human rights?

26. To face these challenges, what forms of collaboration are possible with the Churches of other continents, with other believers on the African continent, and with the followers of new religious groups or movements?

27. What positive experiences in your region concerning reconciliation, justice and peace would be helpful to share with other continents?

28. What resources do you find in African cultures which help you face the following challenges: ethnic and religious tensions; corruption; contempt for life; offences to women's dignity; the employment of children in armed conflicts; the situation of refugees and migrants, etc.?

29. How would you evaluate evangelisation on the African continent, concerning both its extensiveness and quality?

Chapter V

30. How would you promote, where you live, a sound culture of working hard and well?

31. In your region are there any other questions or experiences related to reconciliation, justice and peace which you would like the Synod to treat?

In General

32. In your estimation, what other important points on the chosen topic would merit the Synod's attention?

[1] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14.09.1995): AAS 88 (1996) 5-82.

[2] *Ibid.*, 5: AAS 88 (1996) 7.

[3] John Paul II, *Discourse to the Participants at the Symposium of Bishops of Africa and Europe* (13.11.2004), 5: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 24.11.2004, p. 5.

[4] The exercise of charity is a constitutive character of the Church in the same way as the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 32: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VII.

[5] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, (07.10.2004), 2: AAS 97 (2005) 337.

[6] Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Message*, 2: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 11.05.1994, p. 6.

[7] Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the Clergy of the Diocese of Rome* (02.03.2006), 9, *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 15.03.2006, p. 7.

[8] From 1978 to 2004, the number of African Catholics went from 55,000,000 to 149,000,000. Likewise, vocations to the priesthood and religious witnessed a remarkable increase in the same period: cf. Secretaria Status Rationarium Generale Ecclesiae, *Annuarium Statisticum Ecclesiae* (Statistical Yearbook of the Church) 2004, Vatican City 2006, p. 18.

[9] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14.09.1995), 114: AAS 88 (1996) 68.

[10] Cf. *ibid.*, 110: AAS 88 (1996) 65.

[11] Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Proposition*, no. 56.

[12] Cf. John Paul II, *Opening Homily of the Synod Assembly* (10.04.1994), 7: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 13.04.1994, p. 8.

[13] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14.09.1995), 113: AAS 88 (1996) 67.

[14] *Ibid.*, 118: AAS 88 (1996) 70.

[15] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 28a: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VII.

[16] Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (S.E.C.A.M.), *Church-Family of God: Place and Sacrament of Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Peace in Africa, "Christ is our Peace" (Eph 2:14)*: <http://www.sceam-secam.org/english/story.asp?ID'6>.

[17] Cf. Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 118; John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, 51, 117: AAS 88 (1996) 32, 69.

[18] Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the Clergy of Rome* (13.05.2005): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 18.05.2005, p. 4.

[19] Cf. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace* (08.12.1994), 8: AAS 87 (1995) 363.

[20] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14.09.1995), 115: AAS 88 (1996) 69.

[21] Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Lineamenta*, 69.

[22] Cf. Synod of Bishops, Special Assembly for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 97.

[23] John Paul II, *Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps* (13.01.1990): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14.01.1990, p. 5. On the need to promote religious freedom and the principle of reciprocity, cf. Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps* (09.01.2006): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 11.01.2006, p. 4: "No Government can feel free to neglect its duty to ensure suitable conditions of freedom for its own citizens..."

[24] Blessed Elisabeth of the Trinity, *Spiritual Writings. I. Heaven in Faith, The Complete Works*, Vol. I, Critical Edition of Conrad De Meester, Kilmarnock (UK), 1984, p. 111.

[25] John Paul II, *Discourse at the Second Session of the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops*, Johannesburg (South Africa), (17.09.1995), 3: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 27.09.1995, p. 6.

[26] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum*, 2.

[27] Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Chrism Mass* (13.04.2006): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 19.04.2006, p. 3.

[28] John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, 3 (07.10.2004): AAS 97 (2005) 338.

[29] *Idem.*

[30] Cf. *Ibid.*, 16: AAS 97 (2005) 344.

[31] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 1.

[32] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad Gentes*, 8.

[33] *Idem.*

[34] Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 25b: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VI.

[35] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican City 2004, n. 66.

[36] Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar - S.E.C.A.M., Proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Assembly, Kinshasa 1984; *The Voice of S.E.C.A.M.*, Accra, 1987, p. 133.

[37] Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 2419.

[38] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (01.05.1991), 54: AAS 83 (1991) 859.

[39] Cf. *Ibid.*, 11: AAS 83 (1991) 807.

[40] Cf. Blessed John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15.05.1961): AAS 53 (1961) 453, 459.

[41] The notion of "community of goods" deserves mention and the willingness of the first Christian communities to share freely: Didachè, I, 5: SC 248, 144; "Give to anyone who asks;" cf. *Letter of Barnabas*, XIX, 8; SC 172, 206; Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Precept 4-5: SC 53, 146-148; Tertullian, *Apologeticum* XXXIX, 11: rec. P. Frassinetti, *Augustae Taurinorum*, 1965, p. 92.

[42] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 69.

[43] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14.12.1981), AAS 83 (1981) 616, 14.

[44] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 69.

[45] Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (06.01.2001), 49-50: AAS 93 (2001) 302-303; Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30.12.1987), 42: AAS 80 (1988) 572.

[46] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (01.05.1991), 35: AAS 83 (1991) 837.

[47] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 71.

[48] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican City, 2004, n. 164.

[49] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 28a: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VII.

[50] *Ibid.*, 28b: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, VIII.

[51] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican City, 2004, n. 189.

[52] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 1.

[53] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 28b: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VIII.

[54] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14.09.1995), 68: AAS 88 (1996) 42-43.

[55] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 32: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, IX.

[56] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 42.

[57] Cf. *ibid.*, 58; cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 29: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VIII.

[58] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* (25.03. 1996), 20: AAS 88 (1996) 393; cf. *ibid.*, 26: AAS 88 (1996) 399-400.

[59] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican City, 2004, n. 532.

[60] Cf. *ibid.*, n. 531.

[61] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 32: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, IX.

[62] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: for the bishop, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 21; for the priest, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 21; and for the laity, Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 29 and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 30ff.

[63] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 41 and the Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2.

[64] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 31; Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2, 4, 7; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 43; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (08.12.1975), 70-72: AAS 68 (1976) 59-61.

[65] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 29: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VIII.

[66] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 31, 36; Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2, 5, 7.,

[67] Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (30.12.1988), 15-17: AAS 81 (1989) 413-421.

[68] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree on the Lay Apostolate *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 4; John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (30.12.1988), 44: AAS 81 (1989) 479-480.

[69] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 28a: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, VII.

[70] Benedict XVI, *Discourse to the Diplomatic Corps* (09.01.2006): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 11.01.2006, p. 4-5.

[71] *Idem*.

[72] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 3.

[73] Cf. Paul VI, *Message for the World Day of Peace* (08.12.1968): AAS 60 (1968) 771; *Message for the World Day of Peace* (08.12.1974): AAS 67 (1975) 65; *Message for the World Day of Peace* (08.12.1977): AAS 70 (1978) 49..

[74] Cf. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Peace*, "No peace without justice; no justice without forgiveness" (08.12.2001): AAS 94 (2002) 132-140.

[75] Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Chrism Mass* (13.04.2006): *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 19.04.2006, p. 2-3.

[76] Cf. Saint Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. Haereses*, IV, 20, 7: SC 100/2, p. 648, 180-181.

[77] Cf. Saint Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 10, 5.6; PL 41, 283; Saint Leo the Great, *De natali ipsius*, *Sermo* 4, 1: SC 200, 266.

[78] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* III, q. 63, a. 1-6.

[79] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25.12.2005), 33: *L'Osservatore Romano: Weekly Edition in English*, 01.02.2006, Supplement, IX.

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