

**PORTADA:**

**PILGRIMS THROUGH GRACE**

**2004**

**Compostellan Jubilee Year  
A Route with a Destination  
Cathedral of Santiago, Spain**

**PASTORAL LETTER  
OF THE  
ARCHBISHOP OF SANTIAGO  
IN THE  
COMPOSTELLAN HOLY YEAR  
2004**

**PÁGINA de TÍTULO**

**RECTO:**

**PILGRIMS THROUGH GRACE**

**"What talk is this you exchange between you as you go along...?" (Luke 24, 17)**

**COMPOSTELLAN HOLY YEAR  
2004**

**PASTORAL LETTER  
OF THE  
MOST REVEREND  
ARCHBISHOP OF SANTIAGO,  
D. Julián Barrio Barrio**

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**CHRISTIAN LIFE,  
LIFE OF GRACE**

## ***I. CHRISTIAN LIFE, LIFE OF GRACE***

### *1.- First Compostellan Holy Year of the Third Millennium*

Throughout each year, large numbers of pilgrims from all over the world continue to arrive at the tomb of the Apostle St. James. In these moments we cannot be unaware of the meaning and the importance gained by the jacobean phenomenon together with the Camino de Santiago, the pilgrimage and the Jubilee. Starting from a supposedly critical appreciation in the past, the anthropology of "*man as pilgrim*" is gradually being reduced to something that is merely political, cultural and touristic, leaving aside the religious dimension. What is being proposed is simply a secularised interpretation of the jacobean reality<sup>1</sup>.

In the last Compostellan Holy Year, following the doctrine outlined in the Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of the "Way of St. James" in Spain<sup>2</sup> and in the numerous allusions of Pope John Paul II to Compostela and its "Camino"<sup>3</sup>, I tried to offer my simple contribution to this Catholic vision of the jacobean pilgrimage, of the Way of St James and the Jubilee with my pastoral letter "To be a Pilgrim in Spirit and in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. E ROMERO POSE, *El Jubileo Compostelano: I Giubilei nella storia della Chiesa*. Atti Convegno internazionale in collaborazione con L'École Française de Rome sotto il patrocinio del Comitato Centrale per il Giubileo de 2000, Roma, Istituto Patristico Augustinianum, 25-26 giugno 1999, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Roma 2001, 90-115, especially p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> El Camino de Santiago. Un Camino para la peregrinación cristiana, Santiago 1988, 47p.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Homily in the Pilgrim Mass (9 November 1982): *Teachings of John Paul II*, I, V/3 (1982) 1245-1251; Pro-European ceremony (9 November 1982) in I, V/3 (1982) 1257-1263; Speech on the celebration of the "Eve of Europe": Heldenplatz, Vienna (10 September 1983), in I V/2 (1983) 436-444; Speech on the visit to the headquarters of the European Community in Brussels, in I VII/I (1985) 1578-1588; Speech during the meeting with the world of culture in the Cinquecento Salon of the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence (18 October 1986), in I, IX/2 (1986) 1083-1094; Speech to the Spanish bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Toledo on their *ad limina* visit (19 December 1986), in I, IX/2 (1986) 1990-1997; Dialogue with the young people of Europe in the Meinau Stadium, Strasbourg (8 October 1988): *L'Osservatore Romano* (=OR) 10 October 1988; Speech in the General Audience of 22 August 1989, in OR 24 August 1989, p.4; Speech to the cardinals, to the pontifical family, to the Curia and the Roman Prelature in the General Audience of 22 December 1989, in OR, 23 December 1989, pp 4-5; Speech to the Plenary session of the Pontifical Council for Culture (12 January 1990), in OR (13 January 1990), p..5; Greeting to young people at the sanctuary of Jasna Góra (14 August 1991), in OR (16-17 August 1991), p. 4; Message to the participants in the European Meeting of Young People in Santiago de Compostela (7 August 1999), in OR (9-10 August 1999), p. 5.

Truth"<sup>4</sup>. Similarly on this occasion I wish to do so by means of this reflection which may help to prepare for and celebrate the Compostellan Holy Year 2004.

## 2.- *The Meaning and Objectives of the Compostellan Jubilee*

The beginnings of the third millennium of Christianity, with all the symbolic and expressive associations that this implies and with all the challenges that the Church has to face in *this new stage of her journey*, providentially site this Holy Year in a special perspective in order to respond to the invitation to 'put out into the deep' in the depth of our Christian commitment. In one way or another the spiritual and cultural heritage of Compostela is presented to us at this time as an unmistakable light orienting the Christian spirit of the West. Following a centuries-old tradition, the person of our time, in the search for apostolic authenticity, will set out on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle St. James the Great.

The festive celebration of this Jubilee, Year of Grace, should be for everyone a cause of good cheer and hope, as a summons to continual conversion in the life of Christians, as much personal as social, conscious of the transcendence of the Christian message, which consists in the happy paradox of final salvation brought by Christ to mankind: *now, but not yet*<sup>5</sup>. In the night of faith and hope through which we are passing, the pilgrim to Santiago must be the watchman that announces the dawn of life after death, proclaiming faith in the resurrection and in eternal life<sup>6</sup>, and makes the way of pilgrimage easy, practising the most humble virtues.

According to St. Augustine "the words of the Lord warn us that in the midst of the multiplicity of this world's tasks, there is only one thing towards which we should direct ourselves. Direct ourselves, because we are still pilgrims, not householders; we are still on the way, not in our final homeland; towards it, all our desires yearn, yet we do not yet enjoy its possession"<sup>7</sup>. It is necessary to abandon any form of modern idolatry and seek to glorify God without allowing ourselves to be frightened by those who teach doctrines opposed to the Gospel. In this manner, one goes as a pilgrim to Santiago to confess faith in Christ, accept the grace of pardon through penitence and sacrifice, and maintain the memory of the apostolic origins of our Christian tradition,

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. BARRIO BARRIO, *Peregrinar en espíritu y en verdad. Pastoral Letter*. Santiago de Compostela 1997, 64 p.

<sup>5</sup> The whole of nature, as we know, groans in a common travail all the while. And not only do we see that, but we ourselves do the same; we ourselves, although we have already begun to reap our spiritual harvest, groan in our hearts, waiting for that adoption which is the ransoming of our bodies from their slavery. It must be so, since our salvation is founded upon the hope of something. Hope would not be hope at all if its object were in view; how could a man still hope for something which he sees? And if we are hoping for something still unseen, then we need endurance to wait for it." (Rom. 8, 22-25).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. COMISION EPISCOPAL DE LA FE, *Esperamos la resurrección y la vida eterna*, Madrid 1995

<sup>7</sup> ST AUGUSTINE, Sermon 103, 1-2: *Patrologia Latina* (=PL) 38, 613.

recovering the content of its permanent originality and renewing fidelity to the same, whose roots go back to the Lord's commandment: "...you, therefore, must go out, making disciples of all nations, and baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the commandments which I have given you. And behold, I am with you through all the days that are coming, until the consummation of the world" (Matt. 28, 19-20). In the face of "the culture of dissent" it is necessary to become aware of the meaning of orthodoxy. This awareness, accompanied by grace, strengthens faith, helping to maintain spiritual tone, leaving aside passivity, indifference and mediocrity, and enlivens the desire for Christian perfection on the way of holiness.

### 3.- *The grace of God for mankind, pilgrim of salvation*

The saving relationship between God and man is a love story, in which God, through the gift of himself in Jesus Christ, makes possible the freedom, dignity and fulfillment of man. "Christian knowledge of God is the result of a process of search, reasoning and hope on the part of man before God, but above all of a process of kindly indulgence, deference and grace on the part of God towards man"<sup>8</sup>. In this way, the dynamic of historic human pilgrimage, keeping in mind the providential action of God, shows clearly that man, created "*in the image and likeness of God*" (Gen. 1, 26; 2, 7) is a responsible subject and chief interlocutor in a free dialogue, in which the basic structure of the human condition is safeguarded, not forgetting that the way of faith comes accompanied by suffering, as the Apostle Peter pointed out: "*Rather rejoice, when you share in some measure the sufferings of Christ; so joy will be yours, and triumph, when his glory is revealed*" (I Peter 4, 13). Neither can we forget that the tomb that we venerate in the basilica of Compostela is that of the first Apostle who "drank the chalice of the Lord" (cf. Matt. 20, 22).

### 4.- *Christian salvation, God's greatest gift and man's greatest necessity*

The indisputable priority of divine grace does not imply or suppose the eradication of human freedom. In this respect the words of Pascal are most expressive and paradigmatic: "Acknowledge, then, proud being, what a paradox you are to yourself. Humble yourself, impotent reason; keep silent, foolish nature; learn that man infinitely surpasses the comprehension of man, and be taught by your Maker what you know not - your true condition. Listen to God"<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, in order that this way of pilgrimage which we have begun through our profession of faith may have a positive ending, we must always keep in mind that freedom and grace, like reason and faith, far from being opposed, are inseparable, able to meet because *de facto* they have already met in Jesus Christ. In him it is revealed that God's greatest gift is mankind's greatest necessity. He is what the Christian faith calls "grace" or "salvation": God himself, giving himself to us<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDENAL, *La entraña del cristianismo*, Salamanca 2001, p. 337.

<sup>9</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensamientos sobre la verdad de la religion cristiana*, no. 438. Ed. J. Chevalier, Madrid p. 226-227. [English translation, *Pensées*, ed. Robert Van de Weyer, London 1995, pp. 62-3]

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J.L.RUIZ DE LA PEÑA, *Creación, gracia, salvación*, Santander 1998, 86 s.

Grace, in so far as it is *relationship*, is expressed in the form of encounter and vital exchange between two personal beings, in which God has made himself accessible to man and man has transcended himself in reaching up to God. The story of the Christian is thus the convergence of two "caminos": that of the Son who returns to the Father and that of the Father who goes out to seek his younger son. The Father has given himself to us, giving us to the Son, and he, in his turn, offers himself to us and makes us participants in his glorious existence, so that we can say in truth: *I am alive, or rather not I; it is Christ that lives in me*" (Gal. 2, 20).

The Son, by entering into our history as a pilgrim and submitting himself to its conditions, endows it with potential and transforms it from within, thus making "*possible that which was impossible*" (Rom. 8, 3), that is to say, to set aside the ordinary laws of nature and make us co-inheritors of his glory "because the glory of God is mankind endowed with Life; and the Life of mankind is the vision of God"<sup>11</sup>. God converses with mankind from the beginning through the ages before the Incarnation of Christ, and during the ages after it "... *he has chosen us out, in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saints, to be blameless in his sight, for love of him; marking us out beforehand (so his will decreed) to be his adopted children through Jesus Christ*" (Eph. 1, 4-5).

## **II. COMPOSTELLAN HOLY YEAR, YEAR OF GRACE**

### *5.- The time and place of Christian redemption*

The Jacobean Holy Year seeks to motivate man in his condition as pilgrim to contemplate what elevates him to "the greatness of God", converting "the sacred place" of the tomb of the Apostle St James into a "tent" (John 1, 14; cf. Ex 40, 34-35; I Kings 8, 10-13), the goal of pilgrimage which provides the conditions for man's encounter with Christ.

The sanctuary of Compostela, in this instance, "is a sign of the active, saving presence of God in history", and a refuge where the people of God, pilgrims on the roads of the world on the way to the City of the future (cf. Heb. 13, 14), renews its strength to continue.... It is an image of the dwelling place of God with mankind (cf. Acts 21, 3) and recalls the mystery of the Temple<sup>12</sup> that has been realised in the body of Christ, (cf. John 1, 4; 2, 22), in the ecclesial community (cf. I Pe. 2, 5) and I each one of the faithful (cf. Cor. 3, 16-17; 6, 19; 2 Cor. 6, 16)<sup>13</sup>. Underlying the history of

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<sup>11</sup> ST. IRENAEUS, *Adversus haereses* IV, 20, 7: *Patrología Griega* (=PG) 7a, 1037. Cf. M. CABADA CASTRO, *El Dios que da a pensar. Acceso filosófico-antropológico a la divinidad*, BAC, Madrid 1999, cap.V y VI.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J.RATZINGER, *El Espíritu de la liturgia. Una introducción*. Madrid 2001, pp 75 ss; Y.M. CONGAR, *Le Mystère du temple*, Cerf 1958. F MUSSNER, *Jesus und "das Haus des Vaters"*. *Jesus als "Tempel"*: J.SCHREINER, *Freude am Gottesdienst*, Stuttgart 1983, 267-275.

<sup>13</sup> CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND SACRAMENTAL DISCIPLINE (=CDWSD) *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy. Principles and guidance*. Vatican City 2002, 262-263.

salvation time, which "is like an imitation of eternity", plays an intrinsic part, but it should not be forgotten that in the actual effecting of the mystery of the Incarnation the spatial dimension is no less important than the temporal<sup>14</sup>, even if it is true that since Christ passed from this world to the Father (cf. John 13, 1) "effecting in his person the final exodus, for his disciples there is no longer any obligatory pilgrimage: their whole lives are a pilgrimage towards the celestial sanctuary and the Church herself proclaims that she is a pilgrim in this world"<sup>15</sup>.

#### 6.- *The history of salvation as a dialogue between persons who are free*

The history of salvation is a dialogue in which God reveals himself as absolute Freedom. This is equivalent to saying that God reveals himself as a *personal* reality, given that freedom and personhood are mutually implied. In the face of the drama of depersonalisation<sup>16</sup> suffered by the human person in our time, it must be clearly affirmed that freedom is the distinguishing feature in the difference between personal beings and impersonal ones: where there is freedom, there is personhood, and where there is no freedom personhood is lacking. And vice versa: where there is personhood there is freedom, and where there is no personhood, there is no freedom.

If God is absolute Freedom, he is also Full Consciousness of Himself, personal Completeness. An impersonal God would be superfluous, lacking importance for mankind. Only in virtue of his absolute Freedom is God transcendent in relation to the world, mankind and history. To an impersonal God "man cannot send up his prayers nor offer him sacrifices. Before [him] man cannot throw himself on his knees in an outpouring of worshipful fear, nor play music or dance"<sup>17</sup>. Obviously, a God before whom man cannot be himself cannot be the God of mankind. Impersonal reality is only for man *an object, a thing*, which has no interest for human freedom.

In our free relationship with God we must always keep in mind his two attributes of transcendence and personality, which in Jesus Christ find the overcoming of all contradiction, given that in Him, incarnate Word, it is no longer the rule of ideas, values and abstract laws that govern history and establish its meaning: *He himself is history*. In the life of Christ what is factual not only coincides with what is "*de facto*" normative, but "must be so", because the "made flesh" is at the same time the manifestation of God and the prototype of the authentically human according to God's plan<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *On the pilgrimage to the places associated with the history of salvation. Letter of the Holy Father John Paul II*. 29 June 1999, 1.

<sup>15</sup> CDWDS, *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy*... 281.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. J. MARIAS, *Persona*, Madrid 1996; -----, *Mapa del mundo personal*, Madrid 1993; -----*La perspectiva cristiana*, Madrid 1999, 119 ss. C. DIAZ, *La persona como don*, Bilbao 2001; R. GUARDINI, *Mundo y persona*, Madrid 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. M. HEIDEGGER, *Identität und Differenz*, Stuttgart 1957, 70.

<sup>18</sup> "Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear". VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 22. See *Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott S.J., London 1967.

## 7.- *The God of Jesus Christ "particular and personal"*

This is how Christ, through his recapitulation of history, makes it his own, not an abstract universal norm, but eternity *within* time, the truth *within* the singularity of his person and his life. In the Christian vision of history the particular is certainly not subject to the general rule, it is never a simple "case". None the less, everything in history is subject to the rule of Jesus Christ, the truth of reason universally normative by virtue of the receptivity of the incarnate Son.

In this way the Christian God, in so far as he is *transcendent and universal*, is Lord of "time" and "space", given that in his act of creation everything issued from his hands<sup>19</sup> and he is present everywhere. *"The Lord owns earth, and all earth's fullness, the round world and all its inhabitants. Who else has built it out from the sea, poised it upon the hidden streams?"* (Ps. 24, 1-2). Thus all the world can be considered a "sacred place" or "temple" of God.

None the less, as *particular and personal*, the God revealed in Jesus Christ has shown himself in the history of salvation in a special way in specific sacred places, such as the temple of Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 122, 1-2), and above all the sacred space *par excellence* which is Christ, new "temple" (John 2, 21), in which resides the "fullness of divinity" (Col. 2, 9).

## 8.- *Transformation of the universal experience of "sacred space"*

In accordance with these assumptions, "the mystery of the Incarnation [...] transforms the universal experience of "sacred space", restricting it on one hand, and on the other, restating its importance in different terms. In effect, the reference to space is implied in the very *"being made flesh"* of the Word (cf. John 1, 14). God has assumed in Jesus Christ the characteristics proper to human nature, including the need of man to belong to a definite people and a specific country [...]. The physical reality of the country and its geographical location is united to the truth of the human flesh assumed by the Word<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> St. Augustine writes: "I asked the earth and it said: 'I am not it', and all that is in it made the same reply. I asked the sea and the nether deep...and they made answer: 'We are not your God. Seek above us.' I asked the moving breezes, and the air, and all that inhabits the air, answered me: 'Anaximenes is mistaken. I am not your God.' I asked the sky, the sun, the moon and the stars, and they said to me: 'Neither are we the God you are seeking.' And I said to all the things that surround the doors of my flesh: 'Tell me something of my God, given that you are not He; speak to me of Him.' And they cried out with a loud voice 'He made us.' My questioning was the action of my mind; their reply was their beauty. *Confessions*, X 6, 9: PL 32, 783. [English translation ed. E.M. Blaiklock, London 1983]

<sup>20</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *On pilgrimage to the places associated with the history of salvation* ..., 3.

It is in this context of the Incarnation<sup>21</sup> where the specific "time and place made sacred" of the Compostellan Holy Year is situated, with grace for all, and of particular relevance, an invitation to those who find themselves far from an attitude of faith, in order to return once more to the Christian life. The sick are those who have need of a doctor (cf. Matt. 9, 12), in order to return to the shepherd of our souls, if we are on the wrong track (cf. I Pe. 2, 25).

#### 9.- *Grace and conversion in a dialogue freely undertaken*

Grace and conversion are, then, the coordinates by which every pilgrimage must be governed. The essential beginning of the Christian life is the primacy of grace, which is far removed from that temptation to adulterate every spiritual path and pastoral action "by thinking that the results depend on our capacity to do and plan. Certainly God asks of us a real collaboration with his grace, and therefore invites us to use all the resources of our intelligence and operative ability in our service to the cause of the Kingdom. But it should not be forgotten that without Christ we can do nothing (John 15, 5)<sup>22</sup>.

Although the gift of God is definitive and is wholly given, it still awaits reception on the part of mankind, in an act of conversion by means of a dialogue freely undertaken. In the acceptance of saving revelation, man, as a pilgrim, abandons the framework of his previous personal life, longing to be with Christ and hoping to take on the new condition, in the light and on the basis of, the truth freely received from God. The life of man as pilgrim is not easy, because he must continually vanquish the temptation to settle into and cling to human realities and creations, which are not a means directly expressive of new Christian life. The Christian pilgrim, "making his way to heaven but with his roots in the earth", must let go of everything superfluous or anything that has not been shaped by the spirit of the Beatitudes. Thus the Second Vatican Council teaches us: "Christians, once they have acquired the professional competence and the experience that are absolutely necessary, respect in temporal matters the righteous hierarchy of values, with fidelity to Christ and his gospel, with the aim that their whole life, individual as well as social, becomes saturated with the spirit of the Beatitudes, and especially with the spirit of poverty"<sup>23</sup>. It is certain that "the world cannot be transformed nor offered to God without the spirit of the Beatitudes"<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Studies on the biblical, theological, spiritual and escatological dimension of the Jubilee in the authors I. Cardellini, G. Gottier, A.M. Triacca, A. Vanhoye, E. Romero Pose and F.E. George: *Seminarium* 39/1 (1999).

<sup>22</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter "Novo Millennio Ineunte"*, 38.

<sup>23</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, (Gaudium et Spes)*, 72.

<sup>24</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, (Lumen Gentium)*, 31.

### **III. JOYFUL ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS JUBILEE CELEBRATION**

#### *10.- Pilgrimage as an appropriate expression of the human condition*

The time of jubilee introduces us, in the robust language that the divine pedagogy of salvation uses to inspire man to conversion and penitence, the start and process of his rehabilitation and the condition needed to recover that which with his efforts alone he cannot obtain: the friendship of God, his grace, supernatural life, the only one in which the deepest longings of the human heart can be resolved<sup>25</sup>. It is the "pilgrim" state of all human existence which made St. Augustine cry out "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you"<sup>26</sup>, and St. Thomas place the condition of the human being as pilgrim as a central category of the *Summa Theologica*. To be on a journey is a fundamental constituent in the life of mankind in every age. The believer sees in this the path leading onward to the goal and towards consummation in God. The steps on the way to this goal are frequently compared with the steps of the traveller in the world and in history. The Way of St. James too, a space and time for dialogue, reconciliation and peace, must be undertaken equipped with faith, trust in God, and charity, since if this is lacking on our pilgrimage it would all be useless (cf. I Cor. 13, 2). It is a heritage that we must live and pass on with gratitude.

The sense of being on pilgrimage is a feature profoundly rooted in the Christian vision of life and of the Church<sup>27</sup>. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela during the Jubilee Year will constitute an outstanding event for the universal Christian community in the determination to renew the vitality of the faith. The secular role as a meeting place made available by the city of the Apostle St. James as part of an international effort and the extraordinary historical and cultural heritage of the Camino de Santiago are revitalised with the arrival of thousands of pilgrims from every continent. The experience that we are living through in this Objective of pilgrimage shows clearly that St James and the network of routes to his tomb continue to be a lighthouse of hope and concord that will guide the footsteps of every "*homo viator*" that, in the words of St. Augustine, alluding to those of Emmaus, is each of God's children making his or her own way in the world.

Pilgrimage in its different forms is the most adequate symbol to represent human life<sup>28</sup>, which is perceived fundamentally as a pathway to eternity, truth and completion. The desire to be, to know, to love, which dominates human life is nothing other than God's ever-present love: to want to be is to love eternity, to want to know is

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<sup>25</sup> JOHN PAUL II, "*Incarnationis mysterium*". *Convocatory bull of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions* I, 1,1: PL 32, 661.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, (*Lumen Gentium*), 9.

<sup>28</sup> On this point the reader may consult issue 266 of the review *Concilium* (1996), wholly dedicated to the subject of Pilgrimage.

to love the truth, to want to love is to love love itself<sup>29</sup>. Early pilgrimage was undertaken to eradicate guilt or gain an indulgence for sins, to obtain spiritual salvation, with the hope of curing some bodily ill, but also through the desire for adventure. One must not undervalue this last factor, since the pilgrimage was for many medieval pilgrims the only possibility of getting out of their rigidly structured world. From this point of view, the pilgrims of the past and those of today have much in common, since today, as yesterday, in the pilgrimage to Santiago daily norms and tasks are left behind and one returns to Europe's ancient cultural and spiritual origins. None the less, surpassing any time and place, the deepest reason for the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is conversion to the living God by means of the encounter with oneself, since "one prepares oneself to discover Christianity not by reading books nor through considering the history of the world, but by going deeper into what it means to be alive<sup>30</sup>. Seen this way, man is on the way towards God, but God is on the way towards man, as soon as a pathway has been opened through history to arrive at where he is: "If He had not willed to be the way, we would be lost. He made himself the way to follow. I will not say to you "Seek the way". The way himself is he who presents himself to you. Take up your bed and walk"<sup>31</sup>.

### 11.- Joyful news for all

The commencement of the new century is the fitting moment for speculations and prognostications of every kind concerning what the future may unleash upon us<sup>32</sup>. On the other hand the human restlessness and dramatic uncertainty that generate factions, violence and terrorist acts are visible to all. For this reason the nations have the responsibility, but also the possibility, of expressing their desire for peace as a general attitude of hope<sup>33</sup>. In this way humanity will be given a positive spur to conscience to set out along the path of the new millennium.

With such a hope, and giving thanks for the privilege conceded to the particular Church of Santiago de Compostela, I announce joyfully the first Compostellan Holy Year of the third millennium and invite the faithful of the Archdiocese and the sister dioceses of Galicia, the rest of Spain, Europe and other continents<sup>34</sup> to set out along

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. ST AUGUSTINE, *De libero arbitrio* III, 9, 21: PL 32, 1282 ss; *De Trinitate* IV, 1, 2: PL 42, 887-889.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. S. KIERKEGAARD, *Obras y papeles. I Ejercitación del cristianismo*, Madrid 1961, 35.

<sup>31</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *Sermon* 141, IV, 4: PL 38, 777.

<sup>32</sup> Concerning the different aspects of the *Change of Century* the articles published in the review *Cuenta y Razón* 126 (2002) can be consulted.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. C.M. MARTINI, *Terrorismo, ritorsione, legittima difesa, guerra y pace. Discorso per la vigilia di Sant'Ambrogio 2001*, Milan 2001.

<sup>34</sup> " The pilgrim represents a generous and Christian universality that denies the narrow-mindedness of ancestries, of fatherlands and frontiers, but which hurls itself resolutely into the broad course of catholicity". PIUS XII, *Message to the Pilgrimage of Catholic Youth during the Holy Year 1948: Acta Apostolicae Sedis*. 404 (1948) 417.

the way, responding to the summons to follow Christ decisively, confessing faith in Him and receiving the abundance of his mercy.

**I**

**PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO  
DE COMPOSTELA, "PLACE OF  
PARDON AND GRACE,  
LUMINOUS CENTRE OF  
CHRISTIAN LIFE"**

# I. PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, "PLACE OF PARDON AND GRACE, LUMINOUS CENTRE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE"

## ***I. THE JACOBAN PILGRIM AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM***

### *12.- Receiving the pilgrim*

Among the inherent characteristics of pilgrimage are hospitality, works of mercy and witness to faith. A caring and religiously motivated reception is an aspect of fraternal charity which makes the Christian believe himself always a debtor to everyone<sup>35</sup>. "Everything that human mercy gives in this time of pilgrimage, divine mercy repays later in the final homeland"<sup>36</sup>. The meaning of hospitality has a special relevance when the pilgrim is received who needs material and spiritual attention on his journey. This involves not only giving him something to eat or drink, but listening to what he says and accepting him just as he is. This disarranges our life. In the house of Martha and Mary "the Lord was received as a guest (he who came to his own home and his own did not receive him), but to those who received him he gave the power to be sons of God, taking in the servants and converting them into brothers, redeeming the captives and converting them into co-inheritors. But let none of you say: "Those were fortunate who could welcome the Lord into their homes". Don't be misled, don't complain of having been born in a time in which you can no longer see the Lord in flesh and blood; this does not deprive you of that honour, since the Lord himself affirms: *Every time you do it to one of the least of these my brothers, you do it unto me*"<sup>37</sup>.

### *13.- The jacobean pilgrimage, millenarian pilgrimage*

"In addition to the liturgy, Christian life is nourished by various forms of popular piety, rooted in the different cultures. While carefully clarifying them in the light of faith, the Church fosters the forms of popular piety that express an evangelical

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<sup>35</sup> "Do not let anybody have a claim upon you, except the claim which binds us to love one another" (Rom. 13, 8). St. Augustine wrote: "Love, and do what you will. If you keep silent, keep silent for love; if you speak, speak for love; if you give correction, correct for love; if you forgive, forgive out of love. May there be in you always the root cause of love, because from that root good must proceed". *In Epistolam Johannis ad Parthos*, VII, 8: PL 35, 2033. Cf *Didache* XII; *Regulae Benedicti (The Rule of Saint Benedict)* 53, 1-2: "All guests must be made welcome as if they were Christ himself, since one day He will say: 'I was a pilgrim and you took me in'. To everyone the same honour must be paid, above all to brothers in faith and to foreigners'.

<sup>36</sup> ST CAESARIUS OF ARLES, *Sermon 25*, 1: *Corpus Christianorum Latinorum* (=CCL) 103, 111.

<sup>37</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *Sermon 103*, 1, 2: PL 38, 613-615.

instinct and a human wisdom, and that enrich Christian life<sup>38</sup>. In the light of this text from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, let us contemplate the pilgrimage to Santiago, rooted in a piety and popular culture going back centuries, as a manifestation of religious feeling which supports the reality of salvation narrated in the Scriptures and safeguarded in Tradition, "contained" and symbolically enacted in the liturgy of the sacraments. "It is not surprising that the Way of St. James has been considered on some occasions as a paradigm of the pilgrimage of the Church on her way to the celestial city, a way of prayer and penitence, of charity and solidarity; the pilgrimage is a defined period of life where faith, entering into human history, itself converts culture into Christian culture"<sup>39</sup>.

#### *14.-The cultural environment of the pilgrim, today*

The contemporary pilgrim breathes the atmosphere of so-called post-modern culture that together with the achievements of an increased solidarity, a mature voluntary sector, a greater respect and defence of human rights, regrettably offers him a personal vision of the world interwoven with the threads of relativism and pluralism<sup>40</sup>, of the awareness only of the present in which he happens to live, of pure pleasure, of a superficial aesthetic, of a feeble reason that makes way for sensation, sentiment and instinct, and of a return to an uncommitted and "comfortable religiosity". On the other hand, discerning look at this situation frequently concludes by stressing the unhappy state of civilisation. It is often said that other times were better because they are not our own. In any case God continues to be Lord of time and of history, and we, saved in Christ, have more reasons to be happy than to complain of the age we live in<sup>41</sup>. It is true that to the man of our times does not lack questions and has plenty of anxieties in the search for the Truth that makes us free. In these circumstances this Holy Year and the jacobean pilgrimage, following the celebration of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, are a providential occasion to inject life into the task of the new proclamation regarding God - the primary reality and question, as he has been definitively revealed to us in Christ, "The Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14, 6) – the Triune God, the Father who communicates himself to mankind as salvation through the Son in the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>38</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, London 1994. 1679.

<sup>39</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Address of the Holy Father: IV World Youth Day, Santiago de Compostela, August 1989*, La Coruña 1990, 233.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL ESPAÑOLA, "*La Verdad os hará libres*" (John 8, 23), Madrid 1990; J.A. MARTÍNEZ CAMINO, *Evangelizar la cultura de la libertad*, Madrid 2002, 19-40; J. RATZINGER, *Una mirada a Europa. Iglesia y modernidad en la Europa de las revoluciones*. Madrid 1993; -----, *Ser cristianos en la era neopagana*, Madrid 1995; A.M. ROUCO VARELA, *La Iglesia en España ante el siglo XXI. Retos y Tareas*, Madrid 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL ESPAÑOLA, *La fidelidad de Dios dura siempre. Mirada de la fe al siglo XXI*, Madrid 1999.

### *15.- Reference to God as the condition for authentic culture*

In reality, two different worlds exist side by side: a natural world, a world of things just as they appear in nature and another world of things that are not the simple products of nature but of man himself, such as, we might say, cultural benefits. In this sense, culture is all that in which mankind has placed some purposeful intention or meaning<sup>42</sup>. Moreover, in human life everything is culture<sup>43</sup>, given that this implies all the resources, of those which are valued by human beings, needed to live with freedom, justice and dignity. We may thus state that culture need not be elitist, and must be evangelised "down to its very roots".

All the resources that emanate from the human mind, however apparently primitive or sophisticated, can contribute to improving and dignifying man's life. It must be added, as well, that there is no need for culture to eliminate openness to transcendence. The spiritual dimension, which has in religion its best incentive, is part of the cultural sphere. In keeping with this, the Pope underlines the need for culture to refer to God, affirming that "one cannot possess a truly human culture without reference to God"<sup>44</sup>.

The cultural tradition of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, in so far as it is a historical and religious symbol, continues to be, at the beginning of the third millennium, an appropriate and useful instrument, capable of expressing the profound meaning of human existence and, therefore, of the life of Christian faith in conformity with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: "The Churches receive from customs and traditions, from wisdom and doctrine, from the arts and institutions of nations, everything that can serve to bear witness to the glory of the Creator, to explain the grace of the Saviour, and to order Christian life in the proper way"<sup>45</sup>

## ***II. THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF THE PILGRIMAGE. SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, "PLACE OF PARDON AND GRACE, LUMINOUS CENTRE OF CHRISTIAN LIFE".***

### *16.- The pilgrimage to Santiago, rooted in the past and oriented towards the future*

Places of pilgrimage are not ends in themselves, but instead often act as portals that give access to new stages of life. Pilgrimage is undertaken not to gain superiority through an experience available to few, but to allow oneself to be changed in an unexpected way and thus return to ordinary life with some completely new attitudes. Pilgrims, despite their diversity of cultures, social levels, ages and personal situations, are united in the purpose of seeking something that is beyond the ordinary.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDENAL, *El poder y la conciencia*, Madrid 1984, 87-99.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Address to UNESCO* on 2 June 1980, 6.

<sup>44</sup> Cited by Cardinal P. POUPARD, *Chiesa e cultura*, Milan 1985, 225.

<sup>45</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes)*, 22.

Pilgrimage, and especially the pilgrimage to Santiago, is regarded as a rich tradition, with which many wish to be associated, a factor that gives this particular pilgrimage a strong element of continuity. There is also an element of discontinuity, in so far as the past, represented by a traditional ritual, offers a possibility of excelling in a post-modernist existence in which one runs the risk of diluting one's identity and of losing contact with others. In the jacobean pilgrimage one tries to immerse oneself in the past in order to orient oneself towards the future. The pilgrim arrives at the House of the Lord in order to relive the memory of the apostolic tradition which is the foundation of our faith.

Despite its differentiation with respect to others, this pilgrimage possesses three features in common with the rest: separation from a spatial, social and psychological context; entry into an unknown space and a set of social relationships within which God becomes manifest, producing a profound sense of community; and the pilgrim's return home as a human being changed and renewed.

### *17.- A personal pathway of meditation*

The pilgrimage along the Way of St. James possesses some characteristics of its own which mark it out as a symbol of genuine Christian life. It is a genuine pathway of meditation and contemplation which must be supported by the staff of the Word of God, avoiding the dangers of gnostic experience present in the new spirituality of the New Age movement<sup>46</sup>. To tell the truth, the mystery of the experience of the pilgrimage does not depend in the first instance on solitude or the historical importance of the place to which pilgrimage is made, but on the personal attitude of interior openness to following and encountering the Lord. Fidelity and following Christ cannot be lived in an atmosphere of comfort, thinking as men do and not according to God (Matt. 16, 23), but accepting the unrenounceable and sanctifying Cross: "*If any man has a mind to come my way, let him renounce self, and take up his cross daily and follow me*" (Luke 9, 23).

### *18.- A theoretical and practical pathway*

Jubilee grace helps us to make ourselves aware of our condition as sent by Christ in conformity with the vocation to which we have been called. In the same way as the first disciples, we must travel the way of our mission by rigorous service to others, with full trust in the heavenly Father, always open to those we meet along the way. In the *charity* "that is the essence and measure of Christian perfection"<sup>47</sup>, the human creature receives the divine love and bears living witness to it through the silent re-enactment of love: "*My little children, let us show our love with the true test of action, not by taking phrases on our lips. That proves to us that we take our character from the truth...*" (I John 3, 18-19). The longing for salvation can only find satisfaction in a knowledge of existence that implies experience of time lived and encounter with others, with ourselves and with God. That is equivalent to saying that salvation cannot take place in a historical vacuum, devoid of change and of future. In consequence, following Jesus in a practical, and not merely a theoretical, following. A

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. G. FILORAMO, *Il risveglio della gnosi ovvero diventare dio*, Bari 1990.

<sup>47</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 9, 7: PL 36, 120.

following that remains absorbed in the aesthetic contemplation of the route or in theoretical debate and is not expressed in the practical commitments of everyday life, is a very long way from the discipleship desired by Jesus and sustained by the Church.

*19.- A way that is spiritual and social, communal and not only individual*

The way of following Jesus, symbolised by the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Holy Apostle, also has a social dimension. Its dynamism is not political, given that it does not envisage the transformation of the political or economic system as its primary objective; but neither is it apolitical, since it is not limited to accepting passively the social structures and conventions of our age.

This journeying towards the encounter with Christ is, in addition, communal and not merely individual. Following him does not only have to do with what each individual does individually in relation to God. To be a follower of Jesus means to belong to the family of those who make a priority of trying to fulfil the will of God, to the group of those who celebrate the kingdom of God by sharing their table. At the same time, the community of disciples must not be considered in itself an exclusive group. On the contrary, according to the characterisation of Jesus himself, it must be a group open to the poor and to sinners. The ecclesial "we" that defines the following of Jesus is not drawn so as to exclude "them". It is an inclusive "we", open to strangers, prepared to identify itself with the marginalised and to recognise that following implies a community that goes beyond other signs of unity that are more visible and established.

*20.- The "need" for the Church for salvation*

"We travel in faith but not yet in the vision" (cf. 2 Cor. 5,7). The Church, the continuer, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, of the work of Christ himself, "who came into the world to bear witness to the truth, to save and not to judge, to serve and not to be served"<sup>48</sup>, makes known the Good News of the reconciliation of the world with God in Christ, through the Word and a life of witness that, sustained by the worship rendered to Christ, is herself made worship in order that the offering of the "pagans", or gentiles, may also be pleasing to God (cf. Rom. 15,16). In this way, the community of the Church, as God's salvation in history, appears as necessary<sup>49</sup>, given

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<sup>48</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Declaration Dominus Iesus on the uniqueness and saving universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*. Vatican City 2000, 20: "Above all it must be firmly believed that the pilgrim Church is necessary for salvation, given that Christ is the only Mediator and the way of salvation, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, and He, teaching specifically the necessity of baptism (cf. Matt. 16, 16; John , 5), confirmed at the same time the necessity of the Church, in which men enter by way of baptism as through a door. This doctrine is not opposed to the universal saving will of God (cf. I Tim. 2, 4): therefore, `it is necessary, then, to maintain united these two truths, that is to say, the real possibility of salvation in Christ for all men and the necessity of the Church in order for this same salvation".

that it permits the historical principle of the saving transformation of humanity that is Jesus Christ to be identified.

It is the "via ordinaria" of salvation, which presupposes the existence of "vias extraordinarias", such as those that refer to the action of the Spirit, who sows the "seeds of the Word"<sup>50</sup> present in rites and social customs, and in such a way that they come to maturity in Christ. There thus exists the possibility of being saved outside the visible ecclesial community, but the need for the Church is evident so that humanity in its totality may have full awareness and hope of salvation. Without the ecclesial community, therefore, there would be no historical certainty that God wishes to lead all people into communion with him and with the whole human race<sup>51</sup>. All of history is the history of salvation; but the fullness of life is in the manifestation and self-giving of the Father that is realised completely and definitively in Christ for those that receive it (cf. John 1, 1-18). "He is the medium of divine grace in the plan of creation and redemption, in whom all things are brought to completeness, to whom for our sakes God gave divinely originating wisdom, justice, sanctification and redemption"<sup>52</sup>. In this sense, "the Catholic Church cannot be understood from within as one of many manifestations and historical enactments of the unique God-man Jesus Christ, which God might offer to man to choose from as he sees fit. No, the Church is understood and must understand herself as the sole and complete historical presence of the God-man, one in his truth and grace, in principle, for all mankind"<sup>53</sup>.

#### *21.- The urgency of conversion by means of pilgrimage*

In the Christian message the summons to take to the road and follow Jesus is a serious and urgent one: "*Time is coming to its end, and the kingdom of God is near at hand*" (Mark 1, 15). This urgency demands that the pilgrim not remain centred on himself, not lose himself in his own affairs (cf. Luke 9, 57-62) and not allow himself to be swayed by discouragement. Rather, he must know where he is going, with complete trust and accepting the risks of going on pilgrimage (cf. Luke 10, 4). This decision and attitude are somewhat unnerving; they are a shock that makes the foundations of everyday life tremble. It is a vital matter, in which the universal orientation of human life is brought into play. Life, sometimes so apparently complete and full of meaning, can at other times be shown to be superficial, empty and meaningless. To be aware of this undoubtedly leads to *repentance*, which need not be understood only in the sense of feeling sorrowful or changing one's way of looking at things, but which also implies a turning around, a radical modification of the course one's life is taking, of the fundamental motivations and attitudes with which one has

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. ST. JUSTINUS, *Apologia II*, 7(8), ed. D. Ruiz Bueno, BAC 116, Madrid 1996, 269.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. G. LOHFINK, *Necesita Dios la Iglesia?*, Madrid 1999.

<sup>52</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Declaration...* 11.

<sup>53</sup> K. RAHNER, "*Iglesia, Iglesias y religiones*": K. RAHNER and O. SEMMELROTH, eds., *Academia teológica*, Salamanca 1967, 113.

lived by setting God aside<sup>54</sup>. For this reason, the new attitude is *conversion*, understood the literal sense of *turning oneself around* and setting out in a different direction. Without any doubt, devotion to St James the Great and the rich legacy of the pilgrimage to his tomb have been real forces that have given impetus to the summons to conversion through the centuries.

## 22.- *The Jubilee indulgence*

The person of our times, cast into the emptiness of superficiality, needs to recover his concentration and, in response to the transcendental summons, aim and direct his steps towards the true goal, "*towards the prize of the sovereign vocation of God in Christ Jesus*" (cf. Philipp..3, 14). Thus, conversion in a person's life means to change one's path, one's way of thinking and acting; and this is deeply painful and demanding. Perfect love, as total integration of one's life with God, redeems man completely, not only from his sins, but also from their consequences. None the less, man has the saddening experience of finding that he is not capable of this love. Plenary indulgence, the gift of the Jubilee, which we can benefit from once a day and which can be applied for the benefit of the souls of the dead, is the grace which God gives us so that our growth in conversion and love may be accomplished in a way that is on each occasion deeper, easier and more rapid.

Through the efficacious prayer of the Church, the sign of the presence of Christ, the indulgence is conceded in a certain and secure fashion. But, as in the sacraments, grace and the personal communication of God take place in the world and in the person if he or she does not put obstacles in its way. This is to say that the person must be moved to repentance. "Indulgences do not have, nor cannot have, the object of relieving or substituting for man's personal penitence. Indulgences, in essence, set out to really achieve, with God's help and in a rapid and effective way, what penitence tries to achieve: the complete purification and full maturing of the person, starting out from the central fact of his or her reception of the grace of God. It carries out its activity when the authentic spirit of penitence is present. Without it, one cannot speak of repentance. Without it there is no forgiveness of sins. And without the forgiveness of sins neither can there be pardon of the temporal punishment of sins"<sup>55</sup>

In this sense the indulgences cover a profound religious significance, bearing witness to our situation as members of the pilgrim Church that, while we look forward to the homeland that is God himself, we discover ourselves to be sinners, full of imperfections, but willing to walk the straight and narrow way in a total integration of the multiple dimensions of our existence, asking for the jubilee indulgence in which "is shown the fullness of the mercy of the Father, who goes out to seek everyone with his love shown in the first instance with the pardon of transgressions"<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. G. BARDY, *La conversión al cristianismo durante los primeros siglos*, Madrid 1990.

<sup>55</sup> K. RAHNER, "*Abläss*": *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, I, Freiburg 1957, 52-53; cf. -----, *Observaciones sobre la teología de las indulgencias: Escritos de Teología II*, Madrid 1961, 189-216.

<sup>56</sup> JOHN PAUL II, "*Incarnationis mysterium*". *Bull convoking the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000*, 9.

### 23.- *Penitence and Eucharist, "apex of pilgrimage"*

In addition, with the participation in the sacraments of Penitence and the Eucharist, which assume, nourish and express faith, and "whose reception forms the apex of pilgrimage"<sup>57</sup>, the pilgrim discovers Christ as the mystery of piety in which God reveals to us his merciful heart and reconciles us fully with himself"<sup>58</sup>, and come to see himself as one who exists through God's gift and pardon. "This communion-*koinonia*, of a 'vertical' type because it is united to the divine mystery, engenders, at the same time, a communion-*koinonia* that we might call 'horizontal', or ecclesial, fraternal, capable of uniting with a bond of love all who have a place at the same table"<sup>59</sup>. In this way, in the celebration of Penitence and the Eucharist together at the tomb of the Holy Apostle, the Church expresses the love and forgiveness of God, creates community among men on integrating them into communion with their destiny. The Eucharist is for them an anticipation of eschatological unity and a foretaste of eternal life.

### **III. THE PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO, IMPULSE OF NEW EVANGELISATION**

#### 24.- *Universality of salvation*

Salvation is not something that happens only at the end of life, like a previous step to a new and definitive situation, nor an episode, nor a quality added to normal life. Salvation does not belong to one part or to an aspect of life: life in its entirety is called to be saved; our historical life, in its present condition, here and now. It is a new vision (springing from faith), it is a new relationship (with the Father, with our brothers and sisters, with oneself, with nature), it is a new perspective (for the present and the future until after death). It does not consist, then, in the acceptance of a system of truths or values, nor in a set of rites; it is rather, a personal relationship, lived so deeply that it is made explicit in celebration, made visible in ways of behaving and expressed in ways of thinking.

To be a Christian means (and is the way) to be fully human. The Gospel teaches us how to live, sets out the guidelines, and offers us its content. It is the proposal of a fuller life (cf. John 10, 10) that once accepted brings with it a new way of existence. Never the less, without the news of the Gospel, it is not possible for man to live his relationship with God the Father in a fully human way. The salvation brought by Jesus enters an individual's life when Jesus is discovered by the subject himself. At the same time, the task of making salvation or evangelisation known corresponds to the commandment and desire of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 5, 14) as well as to the longing of humanity (cf. Rom. 8, 19). Thus, evangelisation has to take account of

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<sup>57</sup> JULIAN BARRIO BARRIO, *"Peregrinar en Espiritu y en Verdad"...*35. Cf. CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL ESPAÑOLA, *La Eucaristía, alimento del pueblo peregrino*, Madrid 1999.

<sup>58</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Pastoral Letter "Novo millennio ineunte*, 37.

<sup>59</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Alabanza a la Trinidad. El hombre y su encuentro con Dios. Catequesis del gran Jubileo*, Madrid 2002, 125.

the phenomenon of inculturation, understood as presence and fruit of faith in the heart of a specific culture: "The synthesis between faith and culture is not only a requirement of culture but of faith. A faith that is not translated into culture is a faith that has not been fully received, thoroughly considered and faithfully lived"<sup>60</sup>.

## 25.- *Many ways to God*

The ways by which humanity, and within it the individual person, come as pilgrims to God are long and many. Every road along which man travels with real fidelity to conscience is a road that ends in the infinity of God. That is the same as saying that the faith does not identify itself with any cultural project, however excellent it may be. While culture is the work of humanity, the faith is only identified with the evangelising mission of the Church and, ultimately, with the person of Jesus Christ. It must be added, none the less, that the faith is not offered "chemically pure" to a specific culture. The faith itself is offered "incarnate" or inculturated. The principle of incarnation, then, must prevail, according to which the tradition or cultural genius of a people must not be eliminated or eclipsed, at least until it can be shown with evidence that one is dealing with something aberrant and prejudicial to people<sup>61</sup>.

## 26.- *The jacobean pilgrimage as a vehicle of evangelisation*

In this context there necessarily arises the question of the legitimacy of the traditional culture of the jacobean pilgrimage as a vehicle of evangelisation in Europe; where the transmission of the faith is in crisis, it is difficult to announce the Gospel and urge the renewal of Christian initiation so as to make man an integral part of the mystery of Christ, dead and resurrected, and of the Church through the medium of faith and the sacraments<sup>62</sup>. The answer is given to us by Vatican Council II in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, for matters referring to the liturgy<sup>63</sup>, and in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*<sup>64</sup>, where two basic principles are evoked: the principle of the *incarnation*, according to which the Church

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<sup>60</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Mensaje de Juan Pablo II a España*, Madrid 1982, 94.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 41-44; JOHN PAUL II, *Encyclical Letter "Fides et Ratio"*, Vatican City 1998.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. CONFERENCIA EPISCOPAL ESPAÑOLA, *La iniciación cristiana. Reflexiones y orientaciones*, Madrid 1998.

<sup>63</sup> "Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity, in matters which do not involve the faith or the good of the whole community. Rather, she respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples. Anything in their way of life that is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, as long as they harmonise with its true and authentic spirit". VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctam Concilium)*, 37.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 58.

can enter into communion with different cultures, and that of *transcendence*, according to which the Church is not indissolubly tied to any race or nation, or any custom, ancient or modern. In the thousand year-old history of the jacobean pilgrimage these two basic criteria are present, legitimising it as faith "incarnate" or inculturated, with the ability to continue being a force which activates a new evangelisation in the ecclesial community.

#### ***IV. TO BE A PILGRIM IN A CHURCH THAT IS "PILGRIM AND MISSIONARY, PENITENT AND WAYFARING, PRAYERFUL AND BEARING GOOD NEWS"***

##### *27.- The Church in the world*

The pilgrim looks with the eyes of the heart towards the mystery of the Trinity and that of the Church. "Coming forth from the eternal Father's love, founded in time by Christ the Redeemer, and made one in the Holy Spirit, the Church has a saving and eschatological purpose which can be fully attained only in the future world. But she is already present in this world, and is composed of men, that is, of members of the earthly city who have a call to form, the family of God's children during the present history of the human race, and to keep increasing it until the Lord returns"<sup>65</sup>. Vatican Council II here presents the Church not as an institution that lives apart from the world, but rather as a pilgrim in it and growing with it, as an extension of Christ himself for apostolic service, that "led by the Holy Spirit [...] unceasingly exhorts her children to purify and renew themselves so that the sign of Christ can shine more brightly upon the face of the Church"<sup>66</sup>. In this way, the Church consciously places herself in a process of continuous *aggiornamento* in her ways of presenting herself and acting. Thus, this "worldliness" or "historicity" of the Church demands that "With the help of the Holy Spirit..." she "...hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and ... judge them in the light of the divine Word. In this way, revealed Truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood, and set forth for greater advantage"<sup>67</sup>; she is also encouraged to "scrutinise deeply the signs of the times"<sup>68</sup> - in other words, live in the world.

##### *28.- The critical temper of the Church*

The historicity of the Church, her pilgrim character, avoids the risk of historical immobility: "In virtue of her mission and nature, she is not tied to any particular form of human culture or political, economic or social system"<sup>69</sup>. On the other hand, if the Church is so free of ties to the temporary "forms of human culture", it is because they

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<sup>65</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 40.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 43. Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, 15.

<sup>67</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 44.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

must be expressed in her, the way the Gospel and the salvation of mankind require. "This adaptation of the preaching of the revealed word must continue being the law of all evangelisation"<sup>70</sup>, that on the other hand demands of us an attentive and careful discernment of the wheat and the cockle, of grain and straw, of good and evil, in the midst of ambivalent and ambiguous human affairs. The Church, aware that she does not preach to please or flatter people (cf. I Thes. 2, 4; Gal. 1, 10), must show herself in the world in which she lives, not to "make the Gospel fit", but to preach it more effectively or simply to make it intelligible and able to be assimilated. Only thanks to this constantly renewed participation in time and culture, the Church, "at once a visible group and a spiritual community, advances together with the whole of humanity and experiences the same earthly fortune as the world; and exists as ferment and soul of human society, which must be renewed in Christ and transformed into the family of God"<sup>71</sup>.

### 29.- *The Church engages in dialogue*

In the jacobean pilgrimage, enacted along a pathway of ecumenical fraternity, the Church has maintained from the beginning an attitude of dialogue and continues to do so, so that on coming into contact with the world in which she lives, she understands more fully and profoundly the very truth of the faith. For that reason, this constant contact, this dialogue with the world is for the Church not only possibility, but also duty, as beginning and path towards the "full unity" of Christians, "which is hoped for and desired today also by many who do not believe in Christ" and who consider it a "harbinger of unity and peace for the whole world"<sup>72</sup>. To work for unity is to guarantee pluralism, freedom and progress.

The desire for this dialogue does not exclude anyone on the part of the Church, which does not only speak, but also listens and learns from the world in which she lives. She recognises in all that is authentically human the voice of her Lord, who is not only "the head of her body, but also creator and lord of the world"<sup>73</sup> which proceeds from the love of the Creator and which, having fallen under the sway of sin, was redeemed by Christ. In the world the Church gives to the human family on its earthly journey the good of salvation, "which at the same time makes patent and makes a reality the mystery of the love of God for mankind"<sup>74</sup>. Needless to say that this "mission is a complex process, because it must integrate a diversity of elements: the news of Jesus Christ dead and resurrected; the liberation of man from all that menaces his integrity; the elimination of all obstacles to reconciliation; dialogue with members of other religions; the defence of creation, subjected to the exploitation of human selfishness; incorporation into the community and to the celebration of the

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, "*Kirche und Welt*", in J.B. METZ, ed., *Weltverständnis im Glauben*, Mainz 1965, 134.

<sup>74</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 46.

faith"<sup>75</sup>. In the face of this complexity of the missionary task it is opportune to recall the words of John Paul II: "Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like an immense ocean on which she must launch herself, counting on Christ's help.... The adored and beloved Christ now invites us once more to set out again: 'Go and make disciples among all peoples, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matt. 28, 19). The missionary commandment ushers us into the third millennium inviting us to have the same zeal as the first Christians"<sup>76</sup>.

### 30.- *Worship and liturgy, forces for ecclesial dialogue*

The Church's dialogue, missionary and pastoral activities find their strength in the enactment of worship and liturgy with their double dimension. It is the action which began in the Incarnation, through which Christ sanctified humanity, making it above all visible, "since he is present with his virtue in the sacraments, so that, when someone baptises, it is Christ who baptises", and similarly in his word, "so it is He himself who speaks when Sacred Scripture is read in the Church"<sup>77</sup>. Corresponding to this movement from above to below there is another from below to above, which is carried out in the glorification of the Father in the liturgy of the Church, especially "when Christ is present in the sacrifice of the Mass" and "when the Church prays and sings"<sup>78</sup>. The apostolate of mission lives, then, in the liturgy; from here is derived its vigor, above all from the celebration of the Eucharist, the sign of gratitude and thanksgiving. With this prayerful attitude it is as if the Church in her missionary activity wishes to gather together all mankind. Thus, in liturgy and prayer the Church appears pilgrim, for in her, permanent health is the hidden strength of her pilgrimage towards perfect and unveiled possession. We are inheritors of salvation (cf. Heb. 1, 14) and we are fully justified by faith (Rom. 8, 24). This impelled St. Paul to say: *Not that I count these present sufferings as the measure of that glory which is to be revealed to us*" (Rom. 8, 18).

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<sup>75</sup> COMISIÓN EPISCOPAL DE MISIONES, *La mision "Ad Gentes" y la Iglesia en España*, Madrid 2001, 15.

<sup>76</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter "Novo millennio ineunte"*, 58.

<sup>77</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctam Concilium)*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

## II

### PILGRIMAGE AS THE LIVING EXPERIENCE OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD

## II. THE PILGRIMAGE AS THE LIVING EXPERIENCE OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD

### I. GOD'S KINDLY INDULGENCE AND GRACE

#### *31.- Man's encounters with God*

Just as in another time the Greeks came to the apostle Philip saying that they wanted to see Jesus (cf. John 12, 20-26), today more and more pilgrims, by way of the apostle St. James, also wish to live this encounter with the Lord, recalling the apostolic tradition and bearing witness to the God of the Trinity so as to become new persons. The present situation of man, which seems without light and means of escape, is illuminated by faith in God and open to hope.

Two ways by which man encounters God can be noted: one from human knowledge and experience, and another by way of faith. Man encounters God through reality, and this brings about the realisation that there are as many encounters with God as with reality, as many possibilities of asking oneself about God as of confronting reality or living reality. From this arises the diverse typology of encounters with God through history and human sensitivity: the medieval centred on the world, the modern centred on man, and the present centred on history, which are not three forms that oppose or exclude one another, but which in many aspects, complement one another.

#### *32.- Encounter with God through history*

The encounter or present-day experience of God springs from the premise that the world is living experience as history, not as pre-established order, but as process, which comes about through the work of men. In this way, the historical dimension constitutes an essential dimension of man, given that we discover our reality within an inter-subjective relationship. It is from this that the question about the possibility of living the experience of God is converted into the question of how to experience God as the meaning of history.

Certainly, it seems reckless to affirm that history has a meaning.. Given that it has no fixed laws, (the law) depends on man; its progress is not straightforward and frequently human wickedness brings about meaningless situations. None the less, despite all the deceptions and disasters, there exists a fundamental trust that prevents us from giving up on ourselves, on others and the world. That is to say, in the face of all disaster the sense of history continues to be kept alive. Moreover, this sense is not only the goal of our historical action, but also its reason and assumption. It is something that is imposed upon us, and therefore, cannot be explained only in terms of man and constitutes a key for encounter with God. The meaning, as something that is given to us, is not natural, but unexpected and surprising. It comes to meet us just as people do.

In this way, history reveals to us what is completely new, original and totally "other", which we call God, made event in history. God appears thus as the peace which makes possible our peace, as the freedom which makes possible our freedom, *God the creator and God hope*, alpha and omega, nearby and close at hand, who constantly comes forth to meet us, especially in our neighbour, in events and tasks;

who is meaning and lord of history, but who is not only supreme power over and above history, but also suffering with the oppressed: a suffering God, crucified<sup>79</sup>.

### *33.- Faith as the expression of the highest human dignity*

Notwithstanding, the act by which is expressed the highest dignity of a particular human life and its unconditional openness for the encounter with the living God, that has a historical basis is Abraham's act of faith. "With this act, apparently absurd, Abraham established a new religious experience: *faith*"<sup>80</sup>. Thanks to the act of faith in the God who appeared to deny his promises, time remained open to divine omnipotence, and to the human decision to place trust in Him. Moreover, when he seemed to remain silent and hidden, this act acquired the aspect of an infinite dignity, capable of giving value to all historical time.

This valuation of history as place where the glory of the living God is revealed and hidden reaches its climax in Christian revelation: with the Incarnation the Son was made subject to a fully human life without ceasing to be God. The fact that God has made himself subject to a truly human history makes apparent the concept of "personhood" and aids the understanding of man himself as personal historical subject. The good new characteristic of Christianity is the salvation *of* history, not salvation *outside of* history; man's humble "today" remains assumed into and redeemed by the "today" of the Son of man and can be converted into the welcome given to him in the "today" of God. Man is, then, able to receive love in gratitude, to allow himself to be reached and modified by the other, to be inhabited by the gift, without losing his own identity, in keeping with the words of St. Augustine: "Christ takes shape through faith in the inward self of the believer, which is called to the freedom of grace, is gentle and humble of heart and is not boastful about the merit of his actions, which is nil, but which recognises that grace is the starting point of his poor merits; him Christ may call the least of his brothers, which is equivalent to identifying him with himself given that he says: each time you did it for one of the least of these my brothers you did it for me. Christ comes to inhabit the person who receives Christ, and the person who receives Christ is the one who lives united to him with spiritual love. The result of this love is the perfect imitation of Christ in the measure in which this is possible. The person who identifies himself with Christ must live as he did"<sup>81</sup>.

## **II. THE SEARCH FOR THE MEANING OF LIFE**

### *34.- The meaning of life as gift and undertaking*

Man asks himself, then, about the meaning of the visible world and of human history, and when it eludes him, he feels dissatisfied and impelled to seek it out or create it. None the less, the Christian faith accepts that life has a meaning, since it is a gift and an undertaking entrusted by someone, before whom we live and die. The person who does not acknowledge an inherent meaning in living is incapacitated in

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. A. VERGOTE, *"Amarás al Señor tu Dios". La identidad cristiana*, Madrid 1997.

<sup>80</sup> M. ELIADE, *The myth of the eternal return*, XXXX.

<sup>81</sup> ST AUGUSTINE, *Expositio Epistolae ad Galatas*: PL 35, 2131-2132.

understanding Christianity. Given his pilgrim condition, man in so far as he draws near to his goal, intensifies his spirit of seeking. This restlessness does not permit him to taste fully while he is still on his journey the possession of the goal achieved. That is why "let us seek like those who have yet to find, and let us find like those who must carry on seeking, because when man ceases, there in truth he begins"<sup>82</sup>.

That is to say, from each given position on the journey of his life, man tends towards one that is farther off, to a weightier future and a more fulfilling totality. He does not stop at each achieved objective, but carries on towards an ultimate end, in keeping with the radical restlessness (*cor inquietum*), formulated by St. Augustine and the point of departure for contemporary utopian theories.

The meaning of our life is not a purely philosophical question but a problem of theological responsibility that finds light in the word of God. This offers us two fundamental considerations to illuminate "our reason for being": one is the reflection concerning personal destiny in relation to time and eternity: *Make no mistake about it; you cannot cheat God. A man will reap what he sows* (Gal. 6, 7-8); *how is a man the better for it, if he gains the whole world at the expense of losing his own soul?* (Mark 8, 36). The other is the need for existential charity among people and in relation to our neighbour: *Bear the burdens of one another's failings; then you will be fulfilling the law of Christ..! Let us practise generosity to all, while the opportunity is all; and above all, to those who are of one family with us in the faith* (Gal. 6, 2, 9-10). Time and temporal life, in their fleetingness and fragility, acquire authentic eternal value through evangelical charity.

### 35.- *The impermanence of earthly things*

The restlessness of man on pilgrimage, on his journey towards the goal, does not find his ultimate satisfaction in earthly political projects, nor in the solutions proper to science nor in all that may attach him to a definite point in time and space. The Christian is not, therefore, the person who accepts more truths, who nourishes more hopes or carries out more acts of piety, but rather, the person who lives with reference to the infinite Mystery and open to him in an attitude of acknowledgment, and of praise and self-giving through faith: "And in order to reach this end directly, by way of the righteous way of the Scriptures, one must begin at the beginning, that is to say, we must approach the Father of the stars without any other baggage than faith, humbling our hearts so that He through his Son in the Holy Spirit may give us true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and with the knowledge, love, so that thus knowing and loving him, founded on faith and rooted in charity, we may know the breadth, the length, the height and the depth of Sacred Scripture and through this knowledge, reach the full understanding and ecstatic love of the Most Holy Trinity; towards it the longings of the saints incline, in it the plenitude and the perfection of all that is good and true consist"<sup>83</sup>.

### 36.- *The commitment of the Christian*

This does not mean that the Christian, as such, has to be on the periphery of historical action, but rather that he must adopt an attitude at once close and at a

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<sup>82</sup> ST AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, IX, 1: PL 42, 961.

<sup>83</sup> ST BONAVENTURE, *Breviloquium Opera omnia*, 5, 201-202.

distance, welcoming and the same time critical with respect to historical situations, human points of view and socio-political undertakings. The Christian is the person who perceives reality in a way that is more fully human, because he or she values humanity at God's price.

In contrast to purely historical utopias, the Christian faith declares that the *Kingdom of God*, salvation, in its ultimate form, transcends history and that the historical process will achieve its fullness at the end of time, when, once the mortal tendencies inherent in it have been abolished, life triumphs over death and "*God is all in all*" (I Cor. 15, 28). None the less, this eschatological hope does not deny history, but affirms and convalidates it. In this sense, John Paul II speaks<sup>84</sup> of *helping to bring about the Kingdom of God in the world, by means of commitment in earthly realities through freedom and justice, through avoiding ecological catastrophe and through a future worthy of mankind*. "Mankind" says the Pope "is not an inert witness to the entry of God into history. Jesus invites us to 'seek' actively the kingdom of God and its justice' and to consider this search as our principal concern (cf. Matt. 6, 33)". The Pope thus follows the line of the Second Vatican Council, which warns that Christian hope not only "does not diminish the importance of earthly tasks, but rather gives new grounds of support for their fulfilment"<sup>85</sup>.

### **III. PILGRIMAGE AND CONVERSION**

#### *37.- The Christian between search and encounter*

"*Blessed are they who find their strength in You and set their hearts on pilgrimage*" (Ps. 83, 6). The rite of pilgrimage, as a living metaphor, is one of the best to express the meaning of Christianity. Christianity is an encounter with Christ. He is not only a reflection of the universally human that each one of us carries within us, but an indeductible reality and is irreducible to what is already known. But neither is he "wholly other", but exists in our world and is a person like us.

The encounter with Christ occurs mid-way between the two. Given that Jesus is man and exists in a humanity that cannot be fully understood from a purely natural standpoint, once existing, we can recognise him as an extension, growth and perfection of our most intimate being, in which resides something of an opening onto the absolute. As in the pilgrimage, the goal of the path is indicated to us by the Gospel by way of the events and interpretation of the meaning of these events desired by God for man. He in turn replies, setting out along the road towards this goal through a way of life shaped by conversion as a break with previous life and as faith in adhesion to the reality before him. From the beginning of the jacobean pilgrimage the consequences of conversion gained through the intercession of the Apostle have been emphasised. The *Liber Sancti Jacobi* reflects on it as follows: "Thus many poor folk have gone there who afterwards have been happy, many weak who were afterwards healthy; many at odds with everyone, later at peace; many cruel who were later pious; many lustful, later chaste; many laymen later monks; many misers later resplendent; many userers who became generous; many proud men later humble; many liars who

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Alabanza a la Trinidad* (cited in note 57) pp 138-154.

<sup>85</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 21.

were later sincere; many who despoiled their neighbour who later gave even their clothing to the poor; many false who were later loyal; many who judged falsely who later proclaimed the truth; many barren women who later became mothers; many twisted of soul who became straightforward, through the grace of God"<sup>86</sup>. On the other hand, many pilgrims drew up their wills, attempting to leave their personal affairs in order before setting out on the eventful and penitential journey to the tomb of the Apostle St James, safeguarded by the Basilica of Compostela, faithful reliquary of the Lord's friend"<sup>87</sup>.

### 38.- *The Christian sense of history*

The difficult pilgrimage towards the future, which since the beginning has characterised the history of man on earth, is not suspended from the void, but is gathered *in* God, given that Jesus, more than model of life, is source of new life, transforming newness, the Son, God with us. It is thus that in Christianity one may speak of the *meaning of history*. On one hand, this does not mean a development separated and apart from human history on earth in relation to a far-off celestial spectator. On the other, neither does one mean the vast process of man making himself like God, confusing temporal and eternal history.

The Christian meaning of history consists, in the first instance, in the recognition of the divinity of God and of the worldliness of the world, in the sense of the sovereign transcendence of the one and the profound dignity of the other and, above all, in the good news of Easter regarding the participation in the very life of God, who has come to pitch his tent *in* the world and make his own the history of men so as to make manifest, with men and for men, the eternal glory of his love. We can only carry out the complete historical meaning living with equal determination the faith, love and hope correlating to the past, present and future.

Seen in this light nothing of human history is lost, given that everything can be lived and transformed in union with the living God; the weight of days and the darkness of the future are illuminated in the presence of the promise God has made with us; the finite quality and the pain of the present receive an explanation which goes to the heart of the very Trinitarian love of God and can be borne with love thanks to the Spirit, which the Father gives us in communion with his crucified Christ. In a world where the strongest demand seems to be the search for meaning in personal and

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<sup>86</sup> *Liber Sancti Jacobi "Codex Calixtinus"*. Spanish translation by Professor A. Moralejo, C. Torres and J. Feo. New edition by X. Carro Otero, Pontevedra 1992, 202.

<sup>87</sup> "He undertakes the road to the sanctuary of St James in the proper manner he who, before setting out, pardons those who have injured him, who remedies, if possible, all the remorseful feelings directed to him by others or by his own conscience; ...he who, if he can, returns what he has acquired unjustly; he who converts arguments into peace as far as he can; ...he who, once on his way, gives what is necessary to the body and soul of needy pilgrims...; he who does not engage in idle chatter, but who tells stories of the saints, flees from drunkenness, from fights and from lust; hears Mass, if not every day, the at least on Sundays and feast-days; prays without ceasing and bears all adversities with patience; he who on returning to his home leaves off what is illicit and perseveres in good works as long as he lives, so as to be able to sing with the Psalmist: I sang your redemption, Lord, in the place of my pilgrimage". *Ibid.*, 210-211.

collective undertakings, the Christian "Trinitarian homeland" is offered as the goal of our journey which gives light to the path, like our present companions who give strength on the pilgrim way, like the memory of our origins that makes us feel rooted and founded in love (cf. Eph. 3, 17).

At the same time, the goal of the "Trinitarian homeland" towards which man on earth makes his way as a pilgrim, denounces the myopia of all human possession and invites him to adopt the poverty of openness and the perpetual newness of heart and of life, prompting him to be forever a pilgrim "for whom the day does not begin where another day ends and to whom no sunrise ever finds in the place where the sunset left him"<sup>88</sup>.

#### **IV. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH GOD**

##### *39.- The Spirit as a bridge in history and in the Trinitarian mystery*

Jesus Christ, anchored in history, transcends the world and reveals to us his own mystery of the Son and in him the Trinitarian mystery. In the light of the Trinity it is possible to bridge the chasm of time and establish an encounter with Jesus whose life unfolded in the obscurity of a remote part of the Roman Empire. He is the "man-for-others"<sup>89</sup>: "From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace" (John 1, 16). In this way his Spirit elides the distance between eras and the time of grace, and makes real in another form the relationship of the unrepeatable event of salvation in every human situation, writing with it the history of God in the history of men. In the Spirit of Christ the encounter with the Father is made possible to every man who desires it, in whatever time and place he may find himself. The Spirit is the guarantee that God will always have time for man.

Man's decision in favour of the living Christ takes place in the act of faith, by which, thanks also to the action of the Spirit, man is able to enter into God's time, having as a result the divinisation of man and the humanisation of God. That is the same as saying that, without the Spirit, faith is no more than a pious memory and through the Spirit it is the experience of the Living One, capable of changing man's life in his specific present.

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<sup>88</sup> These are the words of G. Khalil Gibran, cited by B. FORTE, *Trinidad como historia*, Salamanca 1988, 211.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. D. BONHOEFFER, *Resistance and submission*. Letter of 3 August 1944. XXXX

### **III**

## **PILGRIMS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**

### III. PILGRIMS IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

#### I. THE AVAILABILITY THAT SAVES

##### 40.- Happiness as gift and undertaking

Faith arises from a call, from an encounter, from a relationship, for which the word in some way intercedes: "*See how faith comes from hearing, and hearing through Christ's word*" (Rom. 10, 17). Faith receives, in the person of Jesus Christ, the intervention of the living God in history, wholly committed to mankind. It does not ordinarily spring from the heart of man, from his reflection, from his inordinate and self-centred desire, but comes from outside ourselves, from the word that announces and bears witness to what God has wrought in Jesus through love of men and in order to save them.

It must be added, none the less, that happiness is the highest need, the highest hope, the supreme desire and the supreme impossibility for man, just as St Augustine described it: "The entire life of the good Christian is a holy longing. You do not yet see what you long for, more because your desire makes you capable of being satiated when the moment of vision arrives. Suppose that you want to fill a bag and you know the abundance of what they are going to give you; you will thus hold out the bag, the sack, the wineskin or what ever it is; you know how large is that which you have to put into it and you see that the bag is not quite big enough, and so you stretch the mouth of the bag wider to make it bigger. So God, deferring his promise, enlarges desire: with desire, he enlarges the soul, and enlarging it, makes it capable of holding his gifts. Such is our life: to exercise ourselves in desire. Well now, this holy desire is in direct proportion with our detachment from the desires aroused by the love of the world. We have said elsewhere that a receptacle must be empty in order to be filled. Empty yourself of evil, then, since you must be filled with goodness"<sup>90</sup>.

In this reflection on the part of the Bishop of Hippo it is clear that happiness is at once a gift and an undertaking, never something man gains for once and for all or a gift which God gives to man without the latter's express hope nor longing for it. At the same time, trust in man and faith in God are only possible where the desire for truth, goodness and beauty, based more on personal and existential consent than on conceptual and notional approval, provide the impulse for man to become a pilgrim and direct himself towards an objective. That is the same as saying that, if faith in man and faith in God have always been a matter of intellect, their origin is ethical and practical. The words of Pascal have no other meaning: "Endeavour to arrain

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<sup>90</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *Epistolam ioannis ad Parthos*, IV, 6: PL 35, 2008-2009.

perfection, not by accumulating evidence of the eternity of the Deity, but diminishing the violence of your own passions"<sup>91</sup>.

The Christian message is, then, far from being part of the illusory dream of a prompt consummation of the historical process. Human progress is not identified with the Kingdom, although it may exert a chance predisposing causality with respect to it<sup>92</sup>. Moreover, taking as a starting point the doctrine of justification as and how it had been defined by the Council of Trent<sup>93</sup>, the Christian faith affirms the need for man to co-operate *actively* in receiving grace, to the point that the said activity is *an essential condition* for justification, keeping in mind the goodness, patience and generosity of God and not forgetting that it is God's goodness which invites us to repentance (cf. Rom.2,4). Consequently, starting from these premises, we can add in the same way that full happiness is a transcendent gift, that is to say, *grace*, and that, therefore, it can not *be caused* by an immediate factor, although of course it must be *received*.

## **II. MAN, THE SEEKER OF GOD**

### *41.- An open-ended and uncertain search*

For that reason, man searches for God in a pilgrimage, in which fundamental tensions are expressed towards the deepest meaning of life in relation with the mystery of God, marked by two particular characteristics. On one hand, this is a search that is open-ended and uncertain. Modern man, investigating his own life, his own destiny and his way forward, reflection on his family, his work or the socio-economic condition of the world, comes to realise that his search is open-ended and not defined. He may even have the sensation of not being certain of the direction he should take. On the other hand, this search carries with it the awareness of separation. Man is morally separated from the one whom he wishes to encounter. Entangled among brambles and unable to find the way home, his pilgrim restlessness is overtaken by the eagerness to have it all, to live in the present moment, to enjoy instant, sensational and esoteric gratification in the dominion of the ephemeral, of change and exchange, of giving way to the adolescent temptation to try new and fleeting experiences, flitting from one to another without setting on anything, of making an aimless journey for the sake of it in a world lacking meaning, without order nor harmony.

Despite everything, the merciful Lord does not disdain the restless search of pilgrim man, nor even what is suffocated by the cares of the moment. God always responds to man and gives in Christ a precise meaning to his search, not suffocating it, but purifying it, making it grow and leading it to its maturity, since "[the mercy of God] is sent early to cure us, but it will continue after the cure to revive our spirits. It is sent to call us, but it will remain in order to glorify us. It moves us to be devout,

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<sup>91</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées*, ed. J. Chevalier, 243. [*Pensées*, English translation ed. Robert Van de Weyer 1995, p 50]

<sup>92</sup> "Earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom. Nevertheless, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of great concern to the Kingdom of God". *Gaudium et Spes*, 39.

<sup>93</sup> DH 1525s; 1554.

ensuring that we may live with him, because without him we cannot do anything (cf. Jn. 15, 5)<sup>94</sup>. This moves the pilgrim to remain firm in faith, following the counsel of the author of the letter to the Hebrews when he says: "*Why then, since we are watched from above by such a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of all that weighs us down, of the sinful habit that clings so closely, and run, with all endurance, the race for which we are entered. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the origin and crown of all faith, who, to win his prize of blessedness, endured the cross and made light of its shame, Jesus, who now sits on the right of God's throne. Take your standard from him, from his endurance, from the enmity the wicked bore him, and you will not grow faint, you will not find your souls unmanned*" (Heb.12, 1-4).

### **III. GOD THE SEEKER OF MAN**

#### *42.- The grace and love of God*

In all ages God desires to redeem man, quite apart from his history, his past, his experience of alienation and unfaithfulness. The search undertaken by God is, then, capable of making grow, of bringing to maturity, of directing the pilgrim journey to a fitting conclusion almost in spite of man, like the prodigal son or the sheep that strayed<sup>95</sup>. Jesus, the Son of God made Man, reveals that the human search is not simply left abandoned to itself, but is impelled to grow and mature, and is capable of inwardly making man's desires and needs its own and transform them and lead them towards unsuspected ends. It is surely true that it is also He who can be resisted, as the Gospel wards us: "*What do you want with me, Jesus Son of the Most High God? I beg you not to torment me*" (Luke 8, 8).

Christianity, therefore, is not only a proposal of meaning, a plan of moral life or an invitation to historical responsibility, but the forgiveness of sins, grace and resurrection of the body. That is why "the Christian cannot be vain regarding his condition as a Christian, because he continues to be human, all too human; he lives thanks to the grace of God which is extended to mankind and to each who opens himself to it and learns to recognise it in the cross of Christ. The gift of Christ is not, therefore, Christianity as another form of the religion of man, but the grace and love of God which find their culmination in the cross"<sup>96</sup>.

Christ is indeed the model of life or moral example, but in a way different to other moralists. He is the gift of life before he is the demand for action, he bestows his

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<sup>94</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *De natura et gratia* XXXI, 35: PL 44, 403.

<sup>95</sup>

The pilgrim must have as a reference point in the days and nights of his journey the parables concerning mercy (Luke 15). As St Augustine expressed it, "Oh house full of light...I desire that my proceeding be oriented to thee and I say it to what made thee, so that it may also possess me in thee, because it also made me. I strayed like a lost sheep, but on the shoulders of my shepherd, thy maker, I hope to be brought to thee". *Confessions*, XII, 15, 21; PL 32, 833.

<sup>96</sup> D. BONHOEFFER, *Barcelona, Berlin, America 1928-1931*, en *Werke*, München 1991, X, 321.

holy Spirit before his holy Law, he gives power before he imposes his command. With reference to grace, he draws our hearts to himself with goodness so that we may love it and only from that point bids us to make it a reality.

#### **IV. MAN IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

##### *43.- The coming together of the two searches in human life*

The pathways of men as a means to discover his own religious identity and to determine to follow Christ are always before the presence of God. The convergence of the search for man on the part of God and the search for God on the part of man take place in human life. God and man do not meet on the periphery, but in the very centre of existence; "either God is encountered in the centre of existence or it will not be possible to find him, because the God which is on the periphery of life in truth is not the Christian God, but a substitute".

The decisive element of the encounter consists in knowing how to knit together all the aspects of life – words, desires, actions, persons – with something greater and with a deeper meaning, which gives value and flavour to everything man does and wants. In this sense, the love of husband and wife, parental responsibility and the effort to educate are seen in a new light if they are viewed in a broader dimension, without holding up the results to the light of passing day. In the same way, young students or workers, on asking themselves if it is possible to build a more meaningful perspective into their youthful lives, intuitively grasp that they cannot weigh up decisions by basing them only on short-term considerations.

The encounter with God assumes entering into a relationship with Him, a relationship which transforms heart and life. On one hand, God's intention seeks out man in Jesus, wants to encounter him where he may wish to be found, and becomes his companion on the journey and in the breaking of bread. On the other, the encounter is a transforming event, which transfigures the heart, changes life, gives fresh vitality to hope and brings about the rebirth of a good and health-giving relationship with God.

##### *44.- The inclusion of man in God*

To the search for man God surrenders his only Son, who becomes one of us except in sin, identifying himself with us and with our destiny, true man with all the repercussions and who, from within the human condition breaks through our helplessness and opens the possibility of an infinite fulfilment. "God became man so that man might become God": this thought constitutes the deepest grasp of the theological understanding of the Fathers of the Church. "The Word of God" wrote St. Irenaeus of Lyon, "because of his great love, understood what we are in order to procure that we might become as He is"<sup>97</sup>. Man becomes *through grace* what the persons of the Trinity are *by nature*. St Irenaeus calls this inclusion of man in God and common life with him the gift of "immortality", because it consists of participation in the divine life<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> ST. IRENAEUS, *Adversus haereses*, V, pref.: PG 7b, 1120.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Y. DE ANDIA, *Homo vivens. Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irene de Lyon*. Paris 1986.

The end of grace is the "divinisation" of man, image of God. The Christian understanding of human divinisation brings one to think of it as a divine gift, not the product of human effort. Man can set himself up as a God and idolise himself, but not make himself divine. Divinisation does not mean a loss through the absorption of the human in the divine; if that were so, man would be renouncing his identity [phrase to come]: We are "Pilgrims through grace here below, citizens through grace there above"<sup>99</sup>; and this does not bring about an alienating metamorphosis from one's own self to a strange being, a human-divine mixture<sup>100</sup>. God has made himself human so that man may share in his divine nature: "*Yours is to be the same mind as Christ Jesus showed. His nature is, from the first, divine, and yet he did not see, in the rank of Godhead, a prize to be coveted; he dispossessed himself, and took the nature of a slave, fashioned in the likeness of men, and presenting himself to us in human form; and then he lowered his own dignity, accepted an obedience which brought him to death, death on a cross. That is why God has raised him to such a height, given him that name which is greater than any other name...*" (Philip. 2, 6-9).

The Christian faith affirms that the only complement to man's human condition is his participation through grace in the being that God is. But this participation is more than mere imitation and in no way a fusion or absorption in the divine<sup>101</sup>. It is assimilation through vital communion in the heart of an interpersonal relationship. This divinisation consists of the participation of the divine being of the Son, in whose glorious humanity "*dwells all the plenitude of divinity in bodily reality*" (Col. 2, 9). In this manner Christian divinisation reaches the category of filiation, or sonship, given that in and through the Son we communicate directly with the being of the Father and of the Spirit, which assume relationship to us through the humanity of the Son (cf. Rom. 8, 14-17).

In faith, God's seeking is, then, man's salvation, and the salvation of man is the coming of God. In these ways not only is the identity of man as searched-for revealed, but also the identity of Jesus: "*the Son of man who has come to seek and save what was lost*" (Matt. 18, 11) and that of the God of Jesus, who searches for and saves the lost, and before whom our attitude must always be that of the pilgrim supplicant: "*Let us come boldly, then, before the throne of grace, to meet with mercy, and win that grace which will help us in our needs*" (Heb. 4, 16). Humility is the attitude with which to receive the mercy of God who is always willing to begin the return journey with us.

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<sup>99</sup> Referring to Abel St Augustine says: "Pilgrim in the century and belonging to the city of God, predestined and chosen through grace, through grace a pilgrim here below, through grace a citizen there above". *De civitate Dei* XV, 1, 2: CCL XLVIII, 453-454.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. I. SCHEFFCZYK and A. ZIEGENAUS, *Katholische Dogmatik VI: Die Heilsverwirklichung in der Gnade Gnadenehre*, Aachen 1998, 112.

<sup>101</sup> Pascal writes: "Wherefore it seems clear that man through grace is made in the likeness of God and a participant in his divinity, and without grace is like the brute beasts". B. PASCAL, *Pensées*, 229.

**IV**

**THE DYNAMIC QUALITY OF  
PILGRIMAGE**

## IV. THE DYNAMIC QUALITY OF PILGRIMAGE

### ***I. PILGRIMAGE, A CONSTANT PRACTICE IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY***

#### *45.- Pilgrimage as a high point in the personal life of the believer*

"Praise, supplication, trust, only arise in the man who has bestirred himself, who is on his way"<sup>102</sup>. In this sense, pilgrimage is one of the oldest practices in the history of mankind as well as in Christian tradition. "It has always been a meaningful moment in the lives of believers, assuming various cultural expressions in different historical periods. It evokes the personal history of the believer following the footsteps of the Redeemer: it is a laborious ascetic exercise, of repentance for human weaknesses, of constant watchfulness over one's own fragility and of inward preparation for conversion of heart. Through vigil, fasting and prayer, the pilgrim advances along the way of Christian perfection, straining to reach with the help of God's grace the state of perfect manhood, the maturity of the fullness of Christ"<sup>103</sup>. On the phenomenon of pilgrimage as a constant in history, quite apart from the many changes the human condition has undergone, Pope John Paul II based his remarks to the directors of pilgrimages in a gathering celebrated in 1980: "You have in your hands a key element for the religious future of our times".

People go on pilgrimage in great numbers and almost always with a spirit of looking for something, repentance, gratitude and openness to divine favour. In this manner pilgrimage can become a high point in the personal history of the believer, and although it may not be enacted physically and geographically, it can help a person progress in faith along the way to fullness of life. An authentic pilgrimage will always be a propitious time and space for discovery, discernment, illumination and conversion. Jesus imparted to the disciples of Emmaus the memory and true interpretation of history. Today too this story is a fitting image of Christian pilgrimage for the pilgrims of a post-Christian Europe. These, illuminating and directing the events of their lives by the light and meaning of the Scriptures, can salvage hope and convert these events into echoes of the encounter with the Lord on returning once more to the communities of family, parish and diocese, and on carrying out their job-related, social, cultural, political and economic activities.

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<sup>102</sup> P. BEAUCHAMP, *Psaumes nuit et jour*. Paris 1980, 147.

<sup>103</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Bull "Incarnationis mysterium"*. *Bull convoking the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000*, 7.

## II. THE "PATHWAYS" OF SPIRITUAL PILGRIMAGE

### 46.- The "interior pathway of solitude"

The pilgrimage to Compostela has always maintained this double dimension: devotional, reflected in the plea for the intercession of the Apostle, and penitential, as the search for conversion. That said, the pilgrimage itself, as a living experience, reflects the inner life of the Church. The person on pilgrimage establishes the transforming relationship with the Son, who is the Way, by means of three pathways, in conformity with the doctrine of St Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa*, which understood man as developing the greatness of his vocation between departure (*exitus*) and return (*reditus*): the departure of God as Creator in order to make a pathway that would lead definitively to the return to the Triune God "in whose image we were created. [He] is our supreme joy, there is none greater"<sup>104</sup>.

One of the pathways of this pilgrimage is the "pathway of solitude" which the pilgrim treads. Solitude is the bedrock or point of departure needed to reach the purest fountain from which true humanity springs, in the sense carried by the words of Whitehead: "Religion is [...] solitude. And if you are never in a state of solitude, you will never be religious"<sup>105</sup>. This is the interior pathway which prepares man to receive the gift of God in "inexpressible groans" (Rom. 8, 26).

The Second Vatican Council formulated an important aspect of the interior pathway when it said: "For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged....Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, whose voice echoes in his depths"<sup>106</sup>. Sensitivity to the voice of God in the depths of one's being presupposes the development of a capacity for response to the dynamic of the interior growth that is made up of astonishment, reflection, contemplation and surrender to the intimacy of the God who reveals and who "is present in man, but also absent because he is infinitely superior to whatever is superior in him"<sup>107</sup>. A fully effective Christian life is not, therefore, possible without the development of this dimension of Christian pilgrimage. "In the inward man the truth resides"<sup>108</sup>.

### 47.- The "pathway of commitment and solidarity"

None the less, solitude, like all the possibilities of human life, is ambivalent and in order to be fruitful, must be perceived and lived, like the footstep that invites one to follow a pathway together with others. For the believer solitude is not a beginning and a radical end, given that the beginning is the mystery of God, who being the Trinity,

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<sup>104</sup> ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, I, VIII, 17-18: PL 42, 831-832.

<sup>105</sup> A. N. WHITEHEAD, *Religion in the Making*, New York 1926, 16 s.

<sup>106</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 16.

<sup>107</sup> "More inward than my inmost self and higher than my highest self". ST AUGUSTINE, *Confesiones* III, 6: PL 32, 688.

<sup>108</sup> ST AUGUSTINE, *De vero religione* 39, 72: PL 34, 154.

implies others. It is here that the second "pathway of commitment" must be located in the pilgrimage of our life. Remembering his neighbour in solitude, man embarks upon the "pathway of commitment", whose goal lies in the building of a world in which it is possible to speak, share and work together on the basis of evangelically acceptable and guaranteed values: *"The mark by which all men will know you for my disciples will be the love you bear one another"* (John 13, 35). "The pilgrim to Santiago also find his spirits lifted by the application of Christian principles to social life along his "camino". Christianity, alive and firm in faith, must show itself alive and fruitful in charity, which means that today it cannot cease to acquire ways of broadening society, according to the social doctrine of the Church"<sup>109</sup>.

#### 48.- *The "ecumenical pathway"*

Commitment and solidarity with everyone reveals that humanity offers different forms of religious and cultural expression. It is not possible to assign the fullness of human expression to a single race or culture, but it may rather lie in the complete spectrum of cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity, which constitutes the third pathway and which we call the "ecumenical pathway". One of the great contributions of the Second Vatican Council was to voice attitudes of respect and of openness towards different human traditions, as one can appreciate when it states: "Likewise, other religions to be found everywhere strive variously to answer the restless searchings of the human heart by preparing `ways', which consist of teachings, rules of life, and sacred ceremonies. The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon these ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, `the way, the truth and the life' (John 14, 6) in whom men find the fulness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself"<sup>110</sup>. It is time to affirm the universal Catholic vocation. In this sense, "outstanding symbol of this vocation is Santiago de Compostela, the city which through the strength of the memory of the Apostle, attracts people from different nations so that they may find unity within the same faith"<sup>111</sup>. The Way of St. James is a powerful link of unity within a religious ideal.

#### 49.- *Invitation to human communion, plenitude and integrity*

Pilgrimage along these pathways is not a solitary adventure, but an invitation to human communion, plenitude and integrity. To announce the kingdom of brotherhood, freedom, justice, solidarity and life as realities already established by Jesus Christ, is equivalent to setting oneself against hate, slavery, injustice and death; to *'incline one's heart towards one's brother in faith' so as to know how to share happiness and sufferings, sense his wishes and take care of his needs; to 'see the positive' in others in*

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<sup>109</sup> PAUL VI, *Radio-televised message on the Feast of the Patron of Spain, Holy Year 1965: Ecclesia* 1254 (31 July 1965), 5.

<sup>110</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Declaration "Nostra Aetate"*, 2.

<sup>111</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Address of the Holy Father (in reply to the greeting of His Majesty King Juan Carlos I): IV World Youth Day, Santiago de Compostela, August 1989, La Coruña* 1990, 226.

order to affirm and value it as a gift of God; and to 'give one another the benefit of the doubt', bearing one another's burdens" (cf. Gal. 6, 2). The word which proclaims the gospel of salvation is a sacramental word, it is a sacrament: one must act in accordance with it/ show with deeds its meaning. It thus follows that it will be truly professed only in so far as it may verify the contents of its message by putting them into action, making them prevail.

### **III. THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE PILGRIMAGE**

#### *50.- The eschatological dimension*

Pilgrimage, as a "universal religious experience", continues to maintain today the essential elements of its spirituality, clearly shown in different dimensions: the eschatological, penitential, festive, cultural, apostolic, and that of fellowship <sup>112</sup>.

In the first place, pilgrimage is an aid to becoming aware of the eschatological scenario in which the Christian moves. Christian life, as life in the Spirit, consists according to St. Paul in not allowing oneself to be guided by the promptings of the flesh, but by the Spirit, in choosing not that which is perishable, but that which does not perish, in living according to God and not according to man (cf. Gal. 5, 17-25; 6, 8; Rom. 8, 2-15). Life lived in the Spirit means, positively, openness to God and to neighbour. Openness to God is put into practice primarily in prayer (cf. Rom. 8, 15-26; Gal. 4,6), as an open window to his limitless nature. Thanks to the Spirit we possess the *freedom of the children of God*. The free man is he who frees himself from himself in order to be at the disposition of God and also of others. Unselfish love is the true freedom of the Christian, since from it spring the fruits of the Spirit, which are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, simplicity and self-control (cf. Gal. 5, 22 *et seq.*) In this way the Spirit promotes the kingdom of freedom of the children of God and ensures that the Christian lives in the balance between the "already" and the "not yet". What it means to live in the Spirit is before all else to establish one's life in the dynamic of hope and to await the definitive transformation of the world. If faith is the point of departure and the beginning of the Christian experience, if charity is, in itself, the greatest virtue (I Cor. 13, 13), hope is the highest of "*homo viator*" on his earthly pilgrimage. We are travelling towards the end of time, understood not as catastrophe, but as fulfilment and culmination of history. This pilgrimage is already begun, completely under God's promise, but completely entrusted to man's responsibility. "The pilgrim knows that 'here below we have no lasting city' (Heb. 13, 14), so that beyond the immediate goal of the sanctuary, he makes his way across the desert of life, towards Heaven, towards the promised land"<sup>113</sup>. This eschatological dimension of earthly pilgrimage caused Bonhoeffer to exclaim: "Blessed are they who, having recognised [the grace of God in Jesus Christ], are able to live in the world without losing themselves in it: those who in following

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<sup>112</sup> CDWDS, *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy. Principles and guidance*. Vatican City 2002, 286.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

Jesus Christ are so certain of the heavenly homeland that they feel themselves really free to live in the world"<sup>114</sup>.

### 51.- *The penitential dimension*

Moreover, "pilgrimage is configured as a 'pathway of conversion': making his way to the sanctuary, the pilgrim enacts a journey which extends from becoming aware of his own sin and of the ties that bind him to fleeting and useless things, to the consecration of his interior freedom and the understanding of the profound meaning of life"<sup>115</sup>. The pilgrim becomes aware of sin and rejects it. He takes off the old man in order to reclothe himself as the new man. That is to say that the life of faith is expressed through conversion and penitence. This means that "penitence" can only become clear against a background of a broad understanding of the faith. This is an unconditional return (conversion) to God and consequently, a turning away from other plans and ways of seeing one's existence, abandonment of money, pleasure and power, in so far as they are understood as a guarantee and fulfilment of life. Faith is the attitude which allows God to be completely God. That is why penitence is its key strength against the old idols, against all the pretensions of ideological and political systems to be absolute.

This is how John Paul II puts it when he writes: "Conversion (*metanoia*), to which every human being is called, brings one to accept and make one's own the new way of thinking expounded by the Gospel. This presupposes the abandonment of the way of thinking and acting in the world, which so often strongly conditions existence. As Sacred Scripture records, it is necessary that the old man die and the new man be born, that is to say, that the human person be renewed 'to the point of reaching a perfect understanding patterned on the image of its creator' (Col. 3, 10). In this way of conversion and search for sanctity 'there must be recourse to the ascetic means which have always existed in the practice of the Church, and which reach their summit in the sacrament of pardon, received and celebrated with the appropriate dispositions'. Only he who reconciles himself with God is the protagonist of an authentic reconciliation with and among his brothers"<sup>116</sup>.

Pilgrimage, then, shows clearly that the Christian faith and penitence are mutually inter-related, in that penitence is not in the end anything other than the other face of faith which impels us to live the love of God to the point of forgetting ourselves, and to abandon the love of ourselves that leads us to think less of God"<sup>117</sup>.

### 52.- *The festive dimension*

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<sup>114</sup> D. BONHOEFFER, *The price of grace* XXXX, 25.

<sup>115</sup> CDWDS, *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy...*, 286.

<sup>116</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Ecclesia in America* (22 January 1999), 32. [English translation in *The Pope speaks to the American Church: John Paul II's homilies, speeches and letters to Catholics in the United States*. San Francisco, 1992]

<sup>117</sup> ST AUGUSTINE, *De civitate Dei* XIV, 28: CCL. XLVIII, 451.

This penitential dimension of pilgrimage `coexists with the festive dimension: this also is found in the heart of pilgrimage, in which appear a number of anthropological characteristics of the festival<sup>118</sup>. All the integral elements of pilgrimage come to mean that Christian existence is dominated by the joy of the Spirit. If we possess the gift of the Spirit *already*, we therefore possess eschatological happiness *already* by extension, in the sense that this is not something that must be deferred until the *end*, but that is dispensed and enjoyed festively in the *now* of the pouring out of the Spirit. Therefore, in the same way as the happiness of pilgrimage, Christian happiness is not pagan impassivity (*apathy*), nor the happiness of the civilisation of well-being: pleasure as the prime aim in existence, the greatest possible accumulation of pleasant experiences and of intense and varied enjoyments, the *good life* as the only worthwhile version of a *life dedicated to good*.

### 53.- *The worshipful dimension*

Pilgrimage is essentially an act of worship. It is to journey towards the encounter with God in a sanctuary, with an attitude of praise, gratitude for gifts received and petition for necessary graces or the forgiveness for sins committed, in order to share in Christ's Paschal feast, "in this passing from the divine to the human, from death to life, towards the unity of God and man. Christian worship is thus the specific complement and realisation of the word that Jesus proclaimed on the first day of the great week leading to his Passion, Palm Sunday, in the Temple of Jerusalem: "When I am lifted up above the earth, I will draw all things to myself" (John 12, 22).<sup>119</sup>. In worship, freely expressed before God, the divine word is given to us as life, avoiding the risk of reducing Jesus simply to a figures of the past or a moral teacher. Also, like the lost sheep, carried on the shoulders of Christ and "brought home", we recognise and proclaim full of praise that we are grace, and we become aware of it to the degree that we say so before God.

### 54.- *The apostolic dimension*

Given the itinerant condition of the pilgrim, like Jesus and his disciples travelling the roads of Palestine to make known the Good News, pilgrimage is a proclamation of faith and pilgrims become the "heralds of Christ"<sup>120</sup>. Like the Apostles sent out by Jesus to preach, pilgrim-disciples must not carry baggage, provisions or money; they must depend entirely upon the hospitality people offer them in the cities and villages they enter (cf. Matt. 10, 9-11). They set out in the name of Jesus and in the name of him who sent Jesus (cf. Matt. 10, 40). Thanks to the two mysteries of the Trinity that took place in visible form through the incarnation of the Son in the womb of Mary and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, in the pilgrim Jesus has to become incarnate, be born and take flesh, and the Spirit descend, so that, like the apostles, the pilgrim may be a witness beyond Jerusalem, Samaria and Judea.

### 55.- *The dimension of communion*

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<sup>118</sup> CDWDS, *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy...*, 286.

<sup>119</sup> J. RATZINGER, *The spirit of the liturgy. An Introduction*, XXXX. Cf. R. GUARDINI, *Sobre el espíritu de la liturgia*, Barcelona 1999.

<sup>120</sup> CDWDS, *Directive on popular piety and the liturgy...*, 286.

The pilgrim is in a communion of faith and charity not only with those who accompany him, but with Jesus himself, as on the road to Emmaus (cf. Luke 24, 13-35), with his community of origin, with the Church which dwells in Heaven and is a pilgrim on earth, with the pilgrims of every era, with nature and with all humanity<sup>121</sup>. The universal communion of all Christians is founded on the same faith, lived as a radical encounter with Christ, and on the same experience of the Spirit, in freedom and love, which unites them all. None the less, the novelty of this experience is not enclosed in those charismatic features that are limited to internal feeling and the elevation of it above reason, which without doubt exist, but rather, that is expressed in apostolic love and mutual service. That is why St. Paul appeals, beyond the Law, to the Spirit of Christ, received through faith (cf. Gal. 3, 1-3) and expressed in "love, joy, peace" (cf. Gal. 5, 22), as the guarantee of Church unity and universal mission. "To make of the Church the home and school of communion: this is the great challenge that we have before us in the millennium about to begin, if we wish to be faithful to God's plan and also respond to the deepest hopes of the World"<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Letter "Novo millennio ineunte"*, 43.

V

CHRIST, PILGRIM OF THE  
FATHER'S GRACE

## V. CHRIST, PILGRIM OF THE FATHER'S GRACE

### I. CHRIST, TRUE GOD AND TRUE MAN

#### 56.- *Divine filiation in and through Christ*

Christ, "the Son who gives Form and Word to God in the world"<sup>123</sup>, is created by the relationship to the Father who sent him and to those to whom he is sent, with those who have the same nature and share the same destiny. He is the Son through *antonomasia*, whose filiation is based on being engendered and the consequent participation in the same nature. But not only does Jesus call God *Abba*, but teaches his followers to do the same. "Given that only a son really knows his father, only he is capable of transmitting this knowledge to others"<sup>124</sup>. Starting from this principal fact, the idea of a human participation in the divine is indissolubly linked to the person and action of Christ, that is, to the idea and reality of filiation in and through Christ. Thus, Christian life consists of reproducing the salutary mysteries of Christ: to live with him, die with him, be buried with him, undergo resurrection with him, to be co-heirs and glorified with him. The Christian is the person in whom Christ takes form (cf. Gal. 4, 19; 2 Cor. 3, 18; Col. 3,10), the person who gradually assumes the image of the Son (cf. Rom. 8, 29) until this image attains a supreme quality in the resurrection (cf. 1 Cor. 15, 49; Phil. 3, 21). The assumption of the form of the Son on the part of man is due to the communication of the life of the Son through the action of grace, which led the Apostle to say "*It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me*" (Gal. 2, 20). In the same way, the Christlike existence<sup>125</sup> of the believer carries with it an equally Christlike psychology, by virtue of which we share in "the same feelings" as Christ (Phil. 2.5), which must be outwardly expressed in deeds and above all in fraternal charity (cf. 1 John 2, 29; 4, 7-13), which is a way of loving as Christ loved us (cf. John 13, 34; 15, 12) or a way of giving our lives as he gave his (cf. 1 John 3, 16).

#### 57.- *Personal divine communication through Christ*

Christian life is like a braid in which the threads of open horizons and ideals of greatness – the Incarnate Word's own – are interwoven with those of realism, historical condition and beloved littleness – characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth until his death on Calvary<sup>126</sup> - whom we must imitate. Turn a deaf ear when anyone speaks to you of not

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDENAL, *La entraña del cristianismo...*, 413-428.

<sup>124</sup> J. JEREMÍAS, *Teología del Nuevo Testamento I*, 78. Salamanca 1984.

<sup>125</sup> "Christ is realised through faith in the inward self of the believer, who is called to the freedom of grace, is mild and humble of heart and does not boast of the merit of his actions, which is nil, unless he recognises that grace is the foremost of his poor merits: Christ may call him his humble brother, which is equivalent to identifying him with himself given that he says: Each time you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me. Christ is realised in him who receives him, him who lives united to him with a spiritual love. The result of that love is the perfect imitation of Christ as far as is possible. Whoever says he remains in Christ must live as he lived." ST AUGUSTINE, *Expositio Epistolae ad Galatas 37-38*: PL 35, 2131-2132.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ DE CARDENAL, *Raíz de la esperanza*, Salamanca 1995, 400.

being a follower of Jesus Christ, he of the family of David, the son of Mary, who was truly born, who ate and drank as a man, who was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate and truly also was crucified and truly died in the sight of dwellers in heaven and earth and hell. He truly rose again from the dead, having been raised by his own Father, and like him, those of us who have believed in Him will also be raised in Jesus Christ, outside whom we have no true life"<sup>127</sup>.

The Christological paradox of death and resurrection in the same way reveals the paradox of the Trinity. God, revealed in Christ, is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that relate and communicate reciprocally and towards mankind, each one in his specific and original relationship to the other. God is community of dialogue in which an "I" relates with and communicates with a "You", which is received and given back, in the communion of a "We", which is not a "He" outside of the dialogue, but is precisely the "We" in person: the Spirit. Man is introduced into this community of relationships, and comes into contact with Jesus. On this is based the absolute demand posed by the preaching and action of "*Jesus the Nazarene, powerful in deeds and words*" (Luke 24, 19). In his history and in his filial conscience, the Father has placed him in a new and transforming relationship with men, sending them by way of the Son to the Holy Spirit. Man has access to the Father in the Spirit and by way of the Son. "In this name are two worlds meet and are separate...the world of the flesh [...] and the world of the Father [...]. The point of the line of intersection in which it can be seen and is seen is *Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, the 'historical' Jesus*"<sup>128</sup>. The God in whom we Christians believe is, then, personal communication in love that we human beings can receive and share in Christ.

## **II. CHRIST, GOD'S GIFT OF HIMSELF TO MANKIND**

### *58.- Gratuitous and mysterious divine communication*

This personal communication or revelation of God, as a total manifestation of the mystery which was hidden, does not dispel the mystery, which must be understood as that which is opened from the centre which at the same time hides it. In this way then, the communication or revelation of the Son is the manifestation of the mystery from the heart of the Father which keeps it hidden in eternal silence. God is the treasure which gratuitously announces his own always hidden presence.

What God reveals is not something apart from and outside himself, but He himself as living Word and as transcendent and infinite Love. This happens in an outstanding manner when God, "the friend of life" (cf. Wis. 11, 26), commits himself to the full life of man, which takes place in the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. He, imbued with Love as his very being, is communicated as Grace and Life and revealed as Light. "*The love of God has been revealed*" (Tit. 2, 11). But the Salvation and the Love of God are none other than God himself.

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<sup>127</sup> ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Carta a los Tralianos IX, 1-2: Fuentes Patrísticas I*, bilingual edition translated and edited by Juan José Ayán Calvo, Madrid 1991, 143-145.

<sup>128</sup> K. BARTH, *Letter to the Romans*, (XXXX), 77.

### 59.- *Divine self-giving and the realisation of man through grace*

In the conception of revelation, understood as God's utterance which gives its authorised witness, one must put more emphasis on the *authorised witness* than on the *utterance*. God, through his self-giving, forms part of this language and therefore, in the revelation of God, God himself is acting and, in second place, the words and propositions with which men usually communicate with one another. This is the same as saying that the Word takes precedence over the words and propositions. The words of Sacred Scripture are a testimonial intermediary between the Word and our hearts enlightened with faith by the Holy Spirit<sup>129</sup>. The words are many. The Word, made flesh, just one.

Therefore, the incarnation is not the result of an evolution of self-divinisation of man who by himself would have reached the stage of becoming God, but of a free decision of God Almighty which reaches out to himself outside his own being. Seen from God's viewpoint, the incarnation is self-giving to his creature, and seen from man's, it is a realisation of himself, which carries him to the maximum possibility contained in his being as a free entity. Divine filiation is thus the perfection of man, at once intrinsic, because we do not have any other vocation in God's plan, and free, because only through the free gift of divine liberty are we able to reach it. Grace at once acts upon and perfects our being as creatures. And this perfection is brought about only by God himself, for "*when a man becomes a new creature in Christ, his old life has disappeared, everything has become new about him* (2 Cor. 5, 17).

### 60.- *God's paternity, divine filiation and fraternity among men*

To speak of divine filiation and God's paternity assumes in addition the thought of brotherhood among men. Grace is also a mystery of fraternal communion, in so far as the unity of the human species is founded ultimately in Jesus Christ, the definitive Adam, through whom all of us have access to the Father of all (cf. Eph. 2, 18). Only he who understands life and his own salvation as gift can in his turn offer himself entirely to the other in love. Only at the point when we feel ourselves "we" and consequently united to Christ, can we be "you" for God, who, even loving us for ourselves, loves us especially in his Son. Divine filiation and human fraternity are, it follows, two notions which are mutually implied and as St. John tells us, (cf. 1 John 4, 19-21), in the second is the necessary proof of the first.

Consequently, salvation is something irrevocably offered by God in giving us his Son and including us in his paternity, but which has to find in each person the reply and free acceptance of this divine offer and self-giving. Salvation, and hence grace, has to be seen and to make itself present in all the dimensions of human life, including the most visible and exterior ones, given that they can be manifestations of the love of God and signs of his presence. And it is proper to man to receive and bear witness to this divine benevolence in the world. "Blessed are they who, in simply following, have

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<sup>129</sup> "Sacred Scripture is not to be identified with revelation; although Sacred Scripture is itself the word of God, it is so in the form of witness to its own revelation of the Word; and in addition, Sacred Scripture is the form of self-witness of the Word in the letter, besides which are given still other forms of self-witness of the Word." H. URS VON BALTHASAR, *Palabra, Escritura, Tradición*. Ensayos teológicos I. Verbum Caro, Madrid 1964, 19. [English reference to come]

been moved [by the grace of God in Jesus Christ], so that with a humble spirit, they may glorify the grace of Christ, which is the only active force"<sup>130</sup>.

### **III. CHRIST, PILGRIM FOR THE LOVE OF MAN**

#### *61.- The "emptying out" of God as fountain of salvation*

Divine self-giving shows clearly the radical manner with which the Christian God has gone forth from himself in order to make himself poor and a wanderer for the love of man. In the Gospel of John the mystery of salvation is represented through the journey of Jesus as the Son who proceeds from the Father and comes into this world. His return to the Father from this world by way of death and resurrection is the paradigm of our transition or Easter in following Jesus. *"It was from the Father I came out, when I entered the world, and now I am leaving the world, and going on my way to the Father"* (John 16, 28). Authentic life will be experienced through the participation in this paschal mystery of Christ, in that when Jesus dies on the Cross, he is assumed by the Father to his right hand and, filled with the Spirit which he anoints with the power of the Son of God, bestows this same Spirit upon his community and upon each one of his disciples, in which he is alive for ever.

In a similar manner St. Paul describes salvation in terms of the "journey" of the Son as self-negation, or emptying out of himself that leads the Son of God to "obedience unto death" and his exultation to glory as the fountain of salvation for all (cf. Philip. 2, 5-11). Here is the essence of the Easter mystery which frees believers from slavery to sin in order to lead them to a new life in the Spirit. Jesus transforms the span of human existence not only by working miracles but in his own person and his presence.

### **IV. MARY, PILGRIM THROUGH GRACE AND "ICON OF THE PILGRIM CHURCH IN THE DESERT OF HISTORY"**

#### *62.- The divine plan, freely established before all time*

With the incarnation in the *"appointed time"* (Gal. 4, 4) the Son of God began his pilgrimage in the world, being born of a woman subject to a Jewish legal regime. The appointed time was not ordained through mankind's reaching a degree of maturity within historical time, nor through the explicit hope of a divine revelation, nor because biological or cultural evolution required the presence of God as necessary. The sending of the Son was part of a divine plan freely pre-established, to which none the less the preparations in historical time were not alien, as the condition of the possibility of recognising and receiving the divine offer. There is therefore reciprocity: God sent his Son at a moment in which the development of men had reached a determined point. *"The humanity of Jesus is as real and decisive as his divinity; that is why the figure of Mary, from the moment in which the human and divine identity of Christ is made explicit, has had a fundamental presence in Christian consciousness which is founded and demanded by the realism of the incarnation, of the human constitution and of the physiological verity of Jesus"*<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. D. BONHOEFFER, *The price of grace*, XXXX, 25.

<sup>131</sup> O. GONZÁLEZ DEL CARDENAL, *La entraña del cristianismo...*, 87.

Through Mary the pilgrimage of the Son in the world is made possible and begun and, in consequence, the truth of the incarnation and of the redemption are united to the truth of Mary. If she is not a free woman, if she does not give her body and soul in order that the Son of God may be born, there is no incarnation nor redemption. That is why, where she is not taken absolutely seriously as a real person, giving her consent to God and co-operating, there is no full Christianity<sup>132</sup>. In this sense it is very meaningful that theology describes her as "proof of the Catholic faith"<sup>133</sup>. Her conscious and co-operative "yes" to God was necessary for Him to set up his "tent among us", be the Emmanuel, God with us. He thus had us in mind, present, foreseen and represented in the consent of Mary. "The Blessed Virgin advanced in the pilgrimage of faith"<sup>134</sup>, going beyond the trials that going on pilgrimage as a believer involves for us in the state of confusion, indifference and lukewarmness with regard to faith.

### 63.- *Mary, shining emblem of humanity redeemed*

According to John Paul II, Mary, "icon of the pilgrim Church in the desert of history", points to the way, Christ, who is the only means by which to encounter the plenitude of the Father. In her Immaculate Conception is the perfect model of the human creature, in that, filled with divine grace from the beginning, she freely chooses the way of God. In "her glorious Assumption into heaven, Mary is the image of the creature, summoned by the risen Christ to reach, at the end of history, the fullness of communion with God in the resurrection throughout a happy eternity. For the Church, which often feels the weight of history and the discomfort of evil, the Mother of Christ is the shining emblem of humanity redeemed and enveloped in the grace that saves"<sup>135</sup>.

Keeping in mind that the bodily glorification of the Virgin anticipates that glorification to which all the chosen are destined, the Pope describes her as "sign of hope for the lowest on earth, who will be the first in the kingdom" and as "pilgrim in faith, star of the third millennium" whom the Church follows, "walking the tortuous pathways of history, to raise, promote and revalue the immense procession of women and men who are poor, hungry, downtrodden and slighted.... As such, all those who have recourse to her she guides towards the encounter with God the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit"<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Cf. O. GONZÁLEZ DEL CARDENAL, *Cristología*, Madrid 2001, 421-423.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. I. SCHEFFCZYK, *Maria. Exponent des katholischen Glaubens*, in IDEM, *Schwerpunkte des Glaubens Gesammelte Schriften zur Theologie*, Einsiedeln 1977, 306-323.

<sup>134</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, 58.

<sup>135</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Alabanza a la Trinidad...*, 166.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, 171.

**VI**

**THE PILGRIMAGE TO  
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA  
IN THE NEW EUROPE**

## VI. THE PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA IN THE NEW EUROPE

### ***I. THE BIRTH OF EUROPEAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO***

#### *64.- The Way of St. James, evocation of the apostolic tradition*

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has contributed, without any doubt, to the unity and integration of Europe. "The destiny of the Way of St. James coincides with the Christian destiny of Europe given that the Compostellan jubilee is the one which recalls most deeply the popular religious feeling of Christian Europe"<sup>137</sup>. John Paul II magnificently expresses the reality of this when he declared: "The whole of Europe has found her true self in the 'memory' of St. James, in the same centuries during which she was becoming a homogeneous and spiritually unified continent. Thus Goethe himself suggested that European consciousness was born on pilgrimage"<sup>138</sup>.

In the middle of the twelfth century the *Codex Calixtinus* described with joy and admiration the gathering representing all the peoples of Europe around the tomb of the holy Apostle: "It arouses happiness and admiration to see the choirs of pilgrims at the foot of the venerable altar of St. James keeping constant watch: Teutons on one side, Franks on another, Italians on another; throughout all this the church is lit as if by the sun on a clear day. Each with his countrymen adeptly takes his turn in keeping watch. Some play the zither, others the lyre, others the drum, others flutes, shawms, trumpets, harps, violins, British or Welsh bagpipes, others singing with zithers, others singing accompanied by different instruments spend the night in vigil; others weep for their sins, others read the psalms, others give alms to the blind. Here one may listen to diversity of speech, different voices in barbarous languages; conversations and ballads in Teutonic, English, Greek and in the tongues of other tribes and different races from every corner of the world. There are neither words nor tongues that do not find a voice"<sup>139</sup>. Around the tomb of the Apostle there gathered pilgrims from France, Italy, the northern countries, the Slavic nations and the Middle East, of every social condition and cultural and spiritual level.

Santiago de Compostela becomes, then, the goal of a Way which pilgrims travel to recall the apostolic tradition even as our Christian roots fall into oblivion. It is necessary to give people hope; those who have none, and Christians who have forgotten ""at what price they have been rescued"<sup>140</sup>. With faith in their knapsacks

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<sup>137</sup> E. ROMERO POSE, *El Jubileo Compostelano...* [cited in note 1].

<sup>138</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *The spiritual and human renewal of Europe* (rest of citation to come – tr into English? European gathering in cathedral of S de C 1982.)

<sup>139</sup> Cf. *Liber Sancti Jacobi, "Codex Calixtinus"*. Spanish translation by A. MORALEJO, C. TORRES and J. FEO. Re-edited by X. CARRO OTERO, Pontevedra 1992, 199 s.

<sup>140</sup> " You appeal to God as your Father; yes, but he judges each man impartially by what he has done; look anxiously, then, to the ordering of your lives while your stay

pilgrims began their journeys following the direction of the Milky Way. Their footsteps, repeated thousands of times, marked out the route and formed the *Camino de Santiago de Compostela*, "spiritual capital of European unity". A *Camino* which has to be the current of spiritual oxygen that purifies the air we breathe, so that the seed of evil may come to nothing and the seed of goodness may mature in abundant fruits of Christian life.

## **II. THE HISTORY OF EUROPE AS THE HISTORY OF HER EVANGELISATION**

### *65.- The jacobean tradition, a constant summons to faith in Christ*

Secularisation, unbelief as a mentality, and the falling away from Christianity have brought us to a religious crisis that has generated the cultural crisis that Europe is undergoing. Due to the tendency towards a radical desacralisation of the way of seeing the world, successively favoured by the cult of celebrity and by materialistic and idealistic systems, in the midst of it all it would be incorrect to affirm that the subject matter of Christianity is no longer a point of reference in our lives. "The history of the formation of the European countries goes together with their evangelisation, to such a degree that the European borders coincide with those of the penetration of the Gospel"<sup>141</sup>.

This was the Europe that began to be formed thanks to the work of "inculturation of the evangelical message in the respective civilisations", carried out by the Saints Benedict, Cyril and Methodius, patrons of Europe, finding a fundamental collaboration in this intention in the monasteries. This helped to forge a Christian patrimony that, according to John Paul II, continues today "offering fitting answers to the new questions that are arising, especially in the field of ethics". We Christians of Europe cannot forget this<sup>142</sup>.

"The pilgrimage to Santiago was one of the strong elements that favoured the mutual understanding among European peoples so different as the Latin races, the Germans, Celts, Anglo-Saxons and Slavs. The pilgrimage drew them closer, created relationships among them and united those peoples that, century after century,

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on earth lasts. What was the ransom that freed you from the vain observances of ancestral tradition? You know well enough that it was not paid in earthly currency, silver or gold; it was paid in the precious blood of Christ; no lamb was ever so pure, so spotless a victim. Before the beginning of the world, God had foreknown him, but it was only in these last days that he was revealed, for your sakes." (I Peter 1, 17-20)

<sup>141</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *The spiritual and human renewal of Europe...*, 184.

<sup>142</sup> Paul VI wrote: "We are convinced that the Catholic faith is able to be a coefficient of incomparable value in instilling spiritual vitality into this fundamentally unifying culture which should constitute the soul of a socially and politically unified Europe. The whole of Europe receives from the traditional inheritance of the religion of Christ the superiority of its legal customs, the nobility of the great ideas of its humanism and the wealth of those principles that distinguish and give life to civilisation. The day that Europe repudiates this basic ideological inheritance it will cease to exist." E. MORENO BAEZ, *Los cimientos de Europa*, Santiago de Compostela 1996, 7-8.

convinced by the preaching of the witnesses of Christ, embraced the Gospel and at the same time emerged as races and nations"<sup>143</sup>. Jacobean culture constitutes, in this way, a constant summons to faith in Christ, and going deeper into the traces it has left in the past and present is not only an enriching personal experience, but a shared pathway of hope for a world ever more inclined to solidarity and attentive to its most enduring virtues.

### **III. THE DISCOVERY OF THE ORIGINS OF EUROPE BY MEANS OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO**

#### *66.- The Church and Europe are marked by the same history*

In these early years of the third millennium, Europe is trying to consolidate her personality as a nation, with common aspirations and a hopeful future resting on the pillars of history and Christian culture. If the City of the Apostle reached by the Way of St. James was for centuries one of the common goals of western Christianity, the re-encounter with the experience of the pilgrimage will serve to renew and modernise common links, forge the Christian spirituality of the new millennium and gain a personal inward experience animated by a sensitivity to others and an open and modern culture where the universal values of evangelical teaching may be fertilised.

"The Church and Europe are two realities intimately united in their being and their destiny. Together they have journeyed through the centuries and they remain marked by the same history. Their encounter has enriched them both with values that are not only the soul of European civilisation, but which also form part of the patrimony of all humanity. For this reason, Europe cannot abandon Christianity as her travelling companion on the journey into the future, just as a traveller cannot abandon his reasons for living and for carrying on without provoking a major crisis. As the Pope has indicated on various occasions, the crises of the European are the crises of the Christian and the crises of European culture are the crises of Christian culture"<sup>144</sup>.

#### *67.- Europe in its origins*

Nowadays we see before us the consequences of the secular ideologies that run from the negation of God or the limitation of religious freedom to the overwhelming importance attributed to economic success; from materialism and hedonism that attack the values of the family at their source, to a nihilism handicaps the facing up to problems as pressing as those of people falling into poverty, immigrants from the third world, ethnic and religious minorities, fundamentalist nationalisms that bring terrorism in their train, or that of the correct use of the communications media. We perceive that "Christianity is living in a situation of crisis, of existential displacement, chilling times – and it has lost influence over consciences, social relevance, public hearing and effectiveness, presence in institutions and in shaping behaviour". In this context, the

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<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> A. SODANO, *Los jóvenes de Europa hacia el tercer milenio cristiano. Homily by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State of His Holiness and Pontifical Legate in the Mass concluding the European Youth Gathering, Santiago de Compostela, 8 August 1999: Official Newsletter of the Archbishop of Santiago 3535 (1999), 533 (in Spanish only).*

words pronounced by John Paul II in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela on 9 November 1982 must resound again: "I, the Successor of Peter in the See of Rome, a see which Christ wished to place in Europe and which he loves for her effort in the diffusion of Christianity throughout the world. I, Bishop of Rome and Pastor of the Universal Church, send forth to you from Santiago, ancient Europe, a cry full of love: turn to find yourself again. Be yourself. Unveil your origins. Put new life into your roots. Revive those authentic values that made your history glorious and made your presence in the other continents beneficial. Rebuild your spiritual unity in a climate of full respect for other religions and genuine freedoms. Give to Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's. Do not take pride in your conquests to the point of forgetting their possible negative consequences. Do not be depressed by the quantitative loss of your greatness in the world or by the social and cultural crises that now affect you. You can still be the guiding light of civilisation and the spur to progress for the world. The other continents regard you and await the same reply from you that St. James gave to Christ: 'I can'"<sup>145</sup>.

68.- *European unity based upon human and Christian values*

Certainly, this does not mean creating a Europe parallel to the existing one, but showing the present Europe that her soul and her identity are deeply rooted in Christianity, so as to be able to offer her the key to interpreting her own vocation in the world.

The unity of Europe will be lasting and beneficial if it is based upon the human and Christian values that are fundamental to her, such as the dignity of the human person, the deep-rooted sense of justice and freedom, industriousness, the spirit of initiative, love of family, respect for life, tolerance and the desire for co-operation and peace; that is to say, the united Europe of the third millennium!<sup>146</sup>.

The conjoined system of values – faith, solidarity, charity, sacrifice, an attitude of penitence and transcendence – related to the pilgrimage to Compostela matured and strengthened a Christian concept of relations between people of different countries and customs, united in the same faith and the same civilisation that is still relevant today. Europe can therefore not consider herself solely as an economic structure, based on a common monetary system. European unity has to be founded upon a system of personal and collective values, where existence is understood as a gift and a task for man, where each makes himself responsible for his neighbour and where each places his life at the service of others. This conviction has to be reflected in humane and generous policies that never exclude.

In this panorama, the pilgrimage passes from having a simple and exclusively cultural and historical value to being a value that is a building block and a constituent part of the common European civilisation. The pilgrim contributes effectively to the construction of the only possible Europe: one that has a spiritual reference, with its moral and social principles, her culture, her art and her sensibility; that is to say, one that has its roots in the Christian tradition that has deeply impregnated every fibre of her being.

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<sup>145</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *The spiritual and human renewal of Europe...*, 185.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

## 69.- *The diffusion of the jacobean pilgrimage in the Americas*

Let us not forget the diffusion of devotion to the Apostle St. James in the Americas. From the beginning, the discovery and evangelisation of the New World were marked by the stamp of jacobean devotion and had to be interpreted "*in the mysterious light of the Milky Way*". This paved the way for a new Way of St. James, whose star continues to illuminate the religious and cultural life of our trans-Atlantic cousins<sup>147</sup>. From this shared perspective the Church in Compostela regards the "Continent of Hope" with brotherly affection, inviting her people to make the pilgrimage to the "*House of St. James*", "*Patron of all Spain and help of Christians*", who has many churches and altars dedicated to him in the Americas, where devotion to him is only exceeded by that accorded to the Virgin Mary.

### *Final exhortation*

In this hour also "Compostela, spacious home with open doors, where for centuries and centuries, without discrimination whatever, the bread of pardon and grace has been being given, wishes to become a luminous centre of Christian life, drawing upon Apostolic energy for new pathways of Evangelisation"<sup>148</sup>. This is the joyful news and the brotherly invitation to go out from the thresholds of the Holy Door in 2004, the first Compostellan Jubilee Year of the third millennium of Christianity. In the House of St. James. there continues to resound the call to the hope which consumes but transforms and rejuvenates through the Gospel ever young; "*Nor does this hope delude us; the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received*" (Rom. 5,5).

This cathedral of Santiago de Compostela greets all pilgrims with open arms, offering them her welcome and encouraging them to refresh the memory of the apostolic tradition and to strengthen their faith to be witnesses of Christ in the events of each day. We are already praying insistently that this Holy Year may be for the glory of God and the good of the Church and the world. I commend you to the protection of the Apostle St. James, friend of the Lord, and of Holy Mary, Mother of mercy and Virgin Pilgrim, in the hope that the abundant fruits of this jubilee celebration may help us to revitalise our Christian life, keeping us firm in faith, sure in hope and abiding in charity.

On the feast of the Translation of the Apostle, 30 December 2002.

**Julian Barrio Barrio,**  
Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela.

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<sup>147</sup> Cf. J. Ma. DÍAZ FERNÁNDEZ, *Santiago y América. Sentido y alcance de una exposición*: Santiago y América, Santiago de Compostela 1993, 20-31.

<sup>148</sup> JOHN PAUL II, *Address of the Holy Father: IV World Youth Day. Santiago de Compostela, August 1989*, La Coruña 1990, 232. [details of trans into English to come]