

LIVING THE GOSPEL
DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY – Apr 11, 2010

and bring us to share in your eternal life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen



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Theme: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Gathering Prayer

All: God of mercy, you wash away our sins in water, you give us new birth in the Spirit, and redeem us in the blood of Christ. As we celebrate Christ's resurrection increase our awareness of these blessings, and renew your gift of life within us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: John 20:19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." ²⁸

Saturday 10am - 12pm at Church of The Holy Cross (room #03-06)

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Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Gospel Notes

19-20. Jesus appears to the Apostles on the evening of the day on which he rose. He presents himself in their midst without any need for the doors to be opened, by using the qualities of his glorified body; but in order to dispel any impression that he is only a spirit he shows them his hands and his side: there is no longer any doubt about its being Jesus himself, about his being truly risen from the dead. He greets them twice using the words of greeting customary among Jews, with the same tenderness as he previously used put into this salutation. These friendly words dispel the fear and shame the Apostles must have been feeling at behaving so disloyally during his passion: he has recreated the normal atmosphere of intimacy, and now he will endow them with transcendental powers.

21. Pope Leo XIII explained Christ transferred his own mission to the Apostles: "What did he wish in regard to the Church founded, or about to be founded? This: to transmit to it the same mission and the same mandate which he had received from the Father, that they should be perpetuated. This he clearly resolved to do: this he actually did. 'As the Father hath sent me, even so I send you' (Jn 20:21). 'As thou didst send me into the world, so I have sent them into the world' (jn 17:18). [...] When about to ascend into heaven he sends his Apostles in virtue of the same power by which he had been sent from the Father; and he charges them to spread abroad and propagate his teachings (cf. Mt 28:18), so that those obeying the Apostles might be saved, and those disobeying should perish (cf. Mk 16:16). [...] Hence he commands that the teaching of the Apostles should be religiously accepted and piously kept as if it were his own: 'He who hears you hears me, and he who rejects you rejects me' (Lk 10:16). Wherefore the Apostles are ambassadors of Christ as he is the ambassador of the Father" (Leo XIII, *Satic cognitum*). In this mission the bishops are the successors of the Apostles: "Christ sent the Apostles as he himself had been sent by the Father, and then through the Apostles made their successors, the bishops, sharers in his consecration and mission. The function of the bishops' ministry was handed over in a subordinate degree to priests so that they might be appointed in the order of the priesthood and be co-workers of the Episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission that had been entrusted to it by Christ" (Vatican II, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 2)

faith regarding these sacraments and possess the required dispositions.(Cf. CIC, can. 844 # 4)

1441 Only God forgives sins.(Cf. Mk 2:7) Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, "The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" and exercises this divine power: "Your sins are forgiven."(Mk 2:5, 10; Lk 7:48) Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.(Cf. Jn 20:21-23)

1485 "On the evening of that day, the first day of the week," Jesus showed himself to his apostles. "He breathed on them, and said to them: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (Jn 20:19, 22-23).

1556 To fulfill their exalted mission, "the apostles were endowed by Christ with a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit coming upon them, and by the imposition of hands they passed on to their auxiliaries the gift of the Spirit, which is transmitted down to our day through episcopal consecration."(LG 21; cf. Acts 1:8; 24; Jn 20:22-23; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7)

2839 With bold confidence, we began praying to our Father. In begging him that his name be hallowed, we were in fact asking him that we ourselves might be always made more holy. But though we are clothed with the baptismal garment, we do not cease to sin, to turn away from God. Now, in this new petition, we return to him like the prodigal son and, like the tax collector, recognize that we are sinners before him.(Cf. Lk 15:11-32, 18:13) Our petition begins with a "confession" of our wretchedness and his mercy. Our hope is firm because, in his Son, "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."(Col 1:14; Eph 1:7) We find the efficacious and undoubted sign of his forgiveness in the sacraments of his Church.(Cf. Mt 26:28; Jn 20:23)

Sharing and Discussion

1. To whom is the commission, in verse 21, given?
2. Explain what you believe about your having been sent forth by Jesus.
3. To what extent are you able to identify with Thomas?
4. Verse 31 speaks of the need and hope of believing. What synonyms define and amplify what Jesus meant when he spoke of believing?

Closing Prayer

All: God of peace, your Spirit brings us unity and harmony. Open us to your gracious divine presence, transform us into peacemakers,

976 The Apostle's Creed associates faith in the forgiveness of sins not only with faith in the Holy Spirit, but also with faith in the Church and in the communion of saints. It was when he gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles that the risen Christ conferred on them his own divine power to forgive sins: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."(*Jn 20:22-23*)

(Part Two of the catechism will deal explicitly with the forgiveness of sins through Baptism, the sacrament of Penance, and the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist. Here it will suffice to suggest some basic facts briefly.)

1087 Thus the risen Christ, by giving the Holy Spirit to the apostles, entrusted to them his power of sanctifying(Cf. *Jn 20:21-23*) they became sacramental signs of Christ. By the power of the same Holy Spirit they entrusted this power to their successors. This "apostolic succession" structures the whole liturgical life of the Church and is itself sacramental, handed on by the sacrament of Holy Orders.

1120 The ordained ministry or *ministerial* priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood.(Cf. LG 10 # 2) The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church. The saving mission entrusted by the Father to his incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in his name and in his person.(Cf. *Jn 20:21-23*; *Lk 24:47*; *Mt 28:18-20*) The ordained minister is the sacramental bond that ties the liturgical action to what the apostles said and did and, through them, to the words and actions of Christ, the source and foundation of the sacraments.

1287 This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*.(Cf. *Ezek 36:25-27*; *Joel 3:1-2*) On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit,(Cf. *Lk 12:12*; *Jn 3:5-8*; *7:37-39*; *16:7-15*; *Acts 1:8*) a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost.(Cf. *Jn 20:22*; *Acts 2:1-14*) Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age.(*Acts 2:11*; Cf. *2:17-18*) Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.(Cf. *Acts 2:38*)

1401 When, in the Ordinary's judgment, a grave necessity arises, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Anointing of the Sick to other Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church, who ask for them of their own will, provided they give evidence of holding the Catholic

22-23. The Church has always understood-and has in fact defined-that Jesus Christ here conferred on the Apostles authority to forgive sins, a power which is exercised in the sacrament of Penance. "The Lord then especially instituted the sacrament of Penance when, after being risen from the dead, he breathed upon his disciples and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit...' The consensus of all the Fathers has always acknowledged that by this action so sublime and words so clear the power of forgiving sins was given to the Apostles and their lawful successors for reconciling the faithful who have fallen after Baptism" (Council of Trent, *De Paenitentia*, chap. 1).

The sacrament of Penance is the most sublime expression of God's love and mercy towards men, described so vividly in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (cf. *Lk 15:11-32*). The Lord always awaits us, with his arms wide open, waiting for us to repent-and then he will forgive us and restore us to the dignity of being his sons.

The Popes have consistently recommended Christians to have regular recourse to this sacrament: "For a constant and speedy advancement in the path of virtue we highly recommend the pious practice of frequent confession, introduced by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; for by this means we grow in a true knowledge of ourselves and in Christian humility, bad habits are uprooted, spiritual negligence and apathy are prevented, the conscience is purified and the will strengthened, salutary spiritual direction is obtained, and grace is increased by the efficacy of the sacrament itself" (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*).

24-28. Thomas' doubting moves our Lord to give him special proof that his risen body is quite real. By so doing he bolsters the faith of those who would later on find faith in him. "Surely you do not think", St Gregory the Great comments, "that it was a pure accident that that chosen disciple was missing; who on his return was told about the appearance and on hearing about it doubted; doubting so that he might touch and believe by touching? It was not an accident; God arranged that it should happen. His clemency acted in this wonderful way so that through the doubting disciple touching the wounds in his Master's body, our own wounds of incredulity might be healed. [...] And so the disciple, doubting and touching, was changed into a witness of the truth of the resurrection" (*In Evangelia homiliae*, 26, 7).

Thomas' reply is not simply an exclamation: it is an assertion, and admirable act of faith in the divinity of Christ: "My Lord and my God!" These words are an ejaculatory prayer often used by Christians, especially as an act of faith in the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist.

29. St Gregory the Great explains these words as follows: "By St Paul saying 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen' (*Heb 11:1*), it becomes clear that faith has to do with thing which are not seen, for those which are seen are no longer the object of faith, but rather of experience. Well then, why is Thomas told, when he saw and touched, 'Because you have seen, you have believed?' Because he saw one thing, and

believe another. It is certain that mortal man cannot see divinity; therefore, he saw the man and recognized him as God, saying, 'My Lord and my God.' In conclusion: seeing, he believed, because contemplating that real man he exclaimed that he was God, whom he could not see" (*In Evangelia homiliae*, 27, 8)

Like everyone else Thomas needed the grace of God to believe, but in addition to this grace he was given an exceptional proof; his faith would have had more merit had he accepted the testimony of the other Apostles. Revealed truths are normally transmitted by word, by the testimony of other people who sent by Christ and aided by the Holy Spirit, preach the deposit of faith (cf. Mk 16:15-16). "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ" (Rom 10:17). The preaching of the Gospel, therefore, carries with it sufficient guarantees of credibility, and by accepting that preaching man "offers the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals, willingly assenting to the revelation given" (Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, 5).

"What follows pleases us greatly: 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. 'For undoubtedly it is we who are meant, who confess with our soul him whom we have not seen in the flesh. It refers to us, provided we live in accordance with the faith, for only he truly believes who practices what he believes" (*In Evangelia homiliae*).

30-31. This is a kind of epilogue or conclusion to the Gospel of St John. The more common opinion is that he added chapter 21 later, which covers such important events as the triple confession of St Peter, confirmation of his primacy and our Lord's prophecy about the death of the beloved disciple. These verses sum up the inspired writer's whole purpose in writing his Gospel-to have men believe that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ announced by the prophets in the Old Testament, the Son of God, so that by believing this saving truth, which is the core of Revelation, they might already begin to partake of eternal life (cf. Jn 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; 14:13; 15:16; 16:23-26)

Gospel Reflection

The popularity of roller coasters at amusement parks, haunted houses at Halloween, horror shows at the theaters all attest to the fact that sometimes we like the thrill of a good fright. Fear overtakes us when we perceive mortal harm, face the unknown, encounter what is utterly different and threatening. When the fear is caused by temporary or unreal situations such as those mentioned above, our fears are quickly allayed: we climb out of the coaster car with our stomach back where it belongs, emerge from the haunted house all in one piece, leave the theater to reenter familiar and safe surroundings. A sense of well-being and peace comes over us as we laugh at the entertaining good time and its now dissipated fears. Sometimes, however, the fears are real and not so easily swept away, like

glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he will; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm.(Cf. Mt 28:9, 16-17; Lk 24:15, 36; Jn 20:14, 17, 19, 26; 21:4) For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith.(Cf. Mk 16:12; Jn 20:14-16; 21:4, 7)

659 "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God."(Mk 16:19) Christ's body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys.(Cf Lk 24:31; Jn 20:19, 26) But during the forty days when he eats and drinks familiarly with his disciples and teaches them about the kingdom, his glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity.(Cf. Acts 1:3; 10:41; Mk 16:12; Lk 24:15; Jn 20:14-15; 21:4) Jesus' final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God's right hand.(Cf. Acts 1:9; 2:33; 7:56; Lk 9:34-35; 24:51; Ex 13:22; Mk 16:19; Ps 110:1) Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul "as to one untimely born", in a last apparition that established him as an apostle.(1 Cor 15:8; cf. 9:1; Gal 1:16)

730 At last Jesus' hour arrives(Cf. Jn 13:1; 17:1) he commends his spirit into the Father's hands(Cf. Lk 23:46; Jn 19:30) at the very moment when by his death he conquers death, so that, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,"(Rom 6:4) he might immediately *give* the Holy Spirit by "breathing" on his disciples.(Cf. Jn 20:22) From this hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Spirit becomes the mission of the Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."(Jn 20:21; cf. Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47-48; Acts 1:8)

788 When his visible presence was taken from them, Jesus did not leave his disciples orphans. He promised to remain with them until the end of time; he sent them his Spirit.(Cf. Jn 14:18; 20:22; Mt 28:20; Acts 2:33) As a result communion with Jesus has become, in a way, more intense: "By communicating his Spirit, Christ mystically constitutes as his body those brothers of his who are called together from every nation."(LG 7)

858 Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired; . . . And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach."(*Mk* 3:13-14) From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek *apostoloi*). In them, Christ continues his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."(*Jn* 20:21; cf. 13:20; 17:18) The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me."(*Mt* 10:40; cf. *Lk* 10:16)

is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name."(Jn 20:31)

575 Many of Jesus' deeds and words constituted a "sign of contradiction",(Lk 2:34) but more so for the religious authorities in Jerusalem, whom the Gospel according to John often calls simply "the Jews",(Cf. Jn 1:19; 2:18; 5:10; 7:13; 9:22; 18:12; 19:38; 20:19) than for the ordinary People of God.(Jn 7:48-49) To be sure, Christ's relations with the Pharisees were not exclusively polemical. Some Pharisees warn him of the danger he was courting;(Cf Lk 13:31) Jesus praises some of them, like the scribe of *Mark* 12:34, and dines several times at their homes.(Cf. Lk 7:36; 14:1) Jesus endorses some of the teachings imparted by this religious elite of God's people: the resurrection of the dead,(Cf. Mt 22:23-34; Lk 20:39) certain forms of piety (almsgiving, fasting and prayer),(Cf. Mt 6:18) the custom of addressing God as Father, and the centrality of the commandment to love God and neighbor.(Cf. Mk 12:28-34)

643 Given all these testimonies, Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. It is clear from the facts that the disciples' faith was drastically put to the test by their master's Passion and death on the cross, which he had foretold.(Cf. Lk 22:31-32) The shock provoked by the Passion was so great that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. Far from showing us a community seized by a mystical exaltation, the Gospels present us with disciples demoralized ("looking sad"(Lk 24:17; cf. Jn 20:19)) and frightened. For they had not believed the holy women returning from the tomb and had regarded their words as an "idle tale".(Lk 24:11; cf. Mk 16:11, 13) When Jesus reveals himself to the Eleven on Easter evening, "he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen."(Mk 16:14)

644 Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are still doubtful, so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. "In their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering."(Lk 24:38-41) Thomas will also experience the test of doubt and St. Matthew relates that during the risen Lord's last appearance in Galilee "some doubted."(Cf Jn 20:24-27; Mt 28:17) Therefore the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the apostles' faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.

645 By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion.(Cf. Lk 24:30,39-40, 41-43; Jn 20:20, 27; 21:9,13-15) Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a

the fear of the disciples in this Sunday's gospel. They were well aware of Jesus' fate. Their fears were well grounded, the locked doors a sensible protection. Unlike the peace we make in face of roller coasters, haunted houses, or horror shows, the disciples could not make their own peace. They had no power. Did they?

Into this scene filled with palpable fear, the risen Lord appears, and three times he addresses the gathered disciples, "Peace be with you." What is this peace he brings? It is a peace that allays fears, empowers forgiveness, and prompts us to accept the reality of suffering and death as doorways to new life. The peace Jesus brings prompts us to face death rather than cower from it. The peace Jesus brings prompts us to set right our relationships. This peace is new life: the Spirit breathed into us by the risen Lord. It is not a peace we can make for ourselves. It is a peace that is the gift of the risen Lord.

Peace is the wholeness and well-being of the gift of the Spirit breathed upon us and dwelling within us. This peace bestows on us the life and power of Jesus himself, and with it we can make a difference in our world, establish God's reign, continue Jesus' ministry of bringing salvation to all. The condition of this gift of peace, however, is belief. Belief is not merely an exercise in intellectual consent but a commitment of self to acceptance of the Life that is given us. We know *to whom and what* our belief is directed: to Jesus and the gift of new life. We know *how* we receive new life: through Jesus' gift of the breath of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. We know the *fruit* of this new life: peace and forgiveness.

Living the Paschal Mystery

Our greeting of others must also be one of peace since we, too, share in the Lord's risen life. As with the disciples, Jesus allays our fears and offers us a whole new relationship with him—not one where we need to touch his wounds but one in which we utter with joyful conviction, "My Lord and my God!" We also enter into a whole new relationship with each other as we continue the works of Jesus that lead others to believing. These works include forgiveness, yes, but also caring for others, accepting them for who they are, easing pain and suffering. Any good we do brings new, risen life to others; our ministry of goodness brings salvation. We are empowered to do so through the Holy Spirit. All we need do is surrender to God's action within us. We have these fifty days of Easter to come to greater belief, deepen our relationships, forgive, spread peace. We have our whole lifetime to manifest the good works of our belief.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading — Acts 5:12-16

¹² Now many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

¹³ None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor.

¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Responsorial Reading — Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

² Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures for ever." ³ Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures for ever." ⁴ Let those who fear the LORD say, "His steadfast love endures for ever."...

¹³ I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me. ¹⁴ The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. ¹⁵ Hark, glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly. ...

²² The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. ²³ This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Second Reading — Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19

⁹ I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the

lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden girdle round his breast. ...

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one; I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. ¹⁹ Now write what you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

105 *God is the author of Sacred Scripture.* "The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."(DV 11)

"For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."(DV 11; cf. Jn 20:31; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19-21; 3:15-16)

442 Such is not the case for Simon Peter when he confesses Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God", for Jesus responds solemnly: "Flesh and blood has not *revealed* this to you, but *my Father* who is in heaven."(Mt 16:16-17) Similarly Paul will write, regarding his conversion on the road to Damascus, "When he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles..."(Gal 1:15-16) "And in the synagogues immediately [Paul] proclaimed Jesus, saying, 'He is the Son of God.'"(Acts 9:20) From the beginning this acknowledgment of Christ's divine sonship will be the center of the apostolic faith, first professed by Peter as the Church's foundation.(Cf. I Th 1:10; Jn 20:31; Mt 16:18)

448 Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as "Lord". This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing.(Cf. Mt 8:2; 14:30; 15:22; et al) At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, "Lord" expresses the recognition of the divine mystery of Jesus.(Cf. Lk 1:43; 2:11) In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration: "My Lord and my God!" It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: "It is the Lord!"(Jn 20:28,21:7)

514 Many things about Jesus of interest to human curiosity do not figure in the Gospels. Almost nothing is said about his hidden life at Nazareth, and even a great part of his public life is not recounted.(Cf. Jn 20:30) What is written in the Gospels was set down there "so that you may believe that Jesus