

Living the Sacraments

Becoming a Mature Christian

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This is the fourth of the "Living the Sacraments" series of eight pamphlets on the sacraments. The writer describes the maturity established in a Christian who has received the the sacrament of Confirmation. The full realization and development of adulthood is explained. Fr. P. F. Crudden, B.A., Dip. Ed., is a member of the staff of the Education Office, Melbourne. He attended a course of studies overseas at the Lumen Vitae Institute, Belgium, and has lectured extensively to conferences of religious teachers.

CONFIRMATION

Introduction

Apart from the few people who discuss Confirmation in relation to their work in the organized lay apostolate, few adult Christians ever give serious thought to the sacrament by which they do become adult Christians. This is a pity, because a knowledge of Confirmation is a real help towards understanding what Christian maturity is.

This essay will consider the origins of the sacrament in the Old Testament, its institution by Christ, its present meaning and the anticipations of future life that it contains. However, most people are so vague in their knowledge of Confirmation that it may be wise to include some introductory remarks.

Confirmation is one of the three sacraments that are said to leave a permanent imprint or seal on the soul. This imprint indicates a deeper sharing in the priesthood of Christ that is given in Baptism. This deep sharing is attributed to the action of the Holy Spirit. His action equips us in a special way for spreading and defending the faith and acting as witnesses of Christ. Thus Confirmation is especially concerned with our responsibility towards other people.

The principal sign used in the conferring of Confirmation is an anointing with oil associated with an imposition of hands by the Bishop. Both of these signs aptly designate a special conferring of the Holy Spirit, special in that it gives adult status to the Christian. Our present task is to find out what this adult status is and to say how the graces that come with this status operate in our lives from day to day.

THE TIME OF PREPARATION

We read in the Old Testament how Samuel anointed Saul with oil to show that God has chosen him as king. We read how men were anointed with oil to show that God had chosen them as his priests.

We read how other men were anointed with oil to show that God had chosen them as his prophets, his specially inspired teachers.

Oil was an apt symbol for each of these functions. It was regarded as a most valued gift of God's goodness, a symbol of life and light and strength and comfort. As such it was ideal for signifying that the spirit of God had descended on the person anointed. The kings were empowered by the Spirit of God to rule in the name of God; the priests were empowered by the Spirit of God to offer prayers and sacrifices that ascended with a pleasing fragrance to God. The prophets, full of the spirit of God, were empowered to teach in his name and to awaken the consciences of men on his behalf.

King, Priest, Prophet

Kingship, priesthood and prophecy are not functions that we immediately attribute to the layman, even the mature layman, in the Church. Yet these are the very functions that the sacrament of Confirmation is concerned with. Probably the greatest difficulty of theologians in connection with this sacrament is to define sharply its distinction from Baptism. In a work of this kind we can avoid that difficulty. It suffices to say that we begin to share in the kingship, the priesthood and the prophecy of Christ at Baptism and there is an anointing at Baptism to indicate this. But in Confirmation we receive a second anointing and with this second anointing the action of the Holy Spirit in giving us full membership in the people of God is complete.

It may seem that these terms have become obsolete in our day; but each one of these functions is a vital one in the life of the Christian today, as the Second Vatican Council has taught so clearly. It would be moving too quickly to treat each one of these functions in fuller detail at this point; but we can at least indicate that they are living concepts.

To Rule is to Serve God is love and in him the exercise of kingship, of power, of rule is always an exercise of love. His exercise of kingship is not a paternal despotism. It is a rule of love established in the heart of man by his free response to his maker's gift of himself. As adult Christians we exercise our "royal" priesthood by everything that we do to establish God's rule in love in our own hearts and in the lives of our fellow men.

We Worship with Christ

We are indeed a royal "priesthood" empowered by our incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ to join with our ordained priesthood in offering sacrifice to God. In fact, all prayer in the church, including the prayers and sacrifices of ordained ministers, is made acceptable to God by our being one with Christ who offers at his Father's side the unchanging homage of an adoration perfected by his self-gift on Calvary.

The Spirit of Prophecy

We are, too, prophets. Even if we do not preach we are empowered to bring men surely to the knowledge and love of God by witness of lives lived for God. Knowledge of God, such as the prophets of old and even Christ himself imparted is knowledge arising from his relationship to men. We are prophets in so far as we are open to the action of God in our lives and instrumental in awakening the consciences of our fellow men through our own response to God.

Compassion

One might here justifiably digress a moment to speak about the spirit of prophecy that is re-awakening the Church in our time. It was characteristic of the prophets that they presented God as

relevant. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit they discerned the anguish of their times, denounced social injustice and awakened in men a fierce desire to create a new order of things. They spoke in burning words of love, sacrifice, conversion, commitment, discipline, hope, fulfilment. They spoke to the heart of man and penetrated the externality of law. Surely this is the very thing that the Church in our time is learning again to do. Before, it sometimes seemed we were jealous of conserving a past order. Now we speak of renewal, renewal directed towards the creation of a new order. But the creation of a new order demands that by involvement in the world we become sensitive to the anguish of the poor and the emptiness of the rich; that, full of the compassion of Christ for the poor and empty, we direct men's lives towards the living God. This is a work for the whole Church; it is a work of priesthood, of kingship in the divine sense and of prophecy, especially of prophecy, for the prophet is essentially a restless man, too moved by injustice to remain inactive in the face of suffering; if it is a work of the whole Church it is a work not merely or even primarily of the ordained ministers; it is a work of all those raised to adult status by the gift of the Spirit. Part of the renewal is a deeper grasp by the church of the implications for the laity of the anointing with the Spirit that they have received in Confirmation, an anointing best understood in terms of priesthood, kingship and prophecy.

THE TIME OF FULFILMENT

Although the gospels give no direct evidence for the institution of the rite of Confirmation by Christ, it is worthwhile exploring them for evidence of the action of the Spirit in Christ's life and work. The information given there helps our understanding of the action of the Spirit in the life and work of the Christian who continues the life and action of Christ in the world. Every Christian is in some way Christ to his world.

We know that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that God the Son became man. More interesting, perhaps, is that Christ was anointed by the Spirit at his Baptism in preparation for his public ministry.

A Twofold Anointing

This dual anointing plays quite an important part in the sacramental system. A priest is anointed with the Spirit on the occasion of his ordination. He receives a second anointing if he receives the fullness of orders, becoming a bishop. Presumably the second anointing confers new strength to sustain new responsibilities. A similar thing occurs in the life of the layman. He is first anointed with the Spirit at his Baptism. Then he receives a second anointing on the occasion of his Confirmation, obviously in view of new responsibilities.

Our Life is a Fight

After the Baptism Christ was led by the Spirit into the desert for his initial conflict with Satan. The imagery of fight, conflict, combat is strongly associated with the sacrament of Confirmation. By this sacrament we are even said to become soldiers of God. This means that we undertake to join with Christ in his fight against sin and evil in ourselves and in our world. The Constitution on the Church in the Modern World acknowledges just how much our life is a fight: "All of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. Indeed, man finds that by himself he is incapable of battling the assaults of evil successfully, so that everyone feels as though he is bound by chains. But the Lord himself came to free and strengthen man, renewing him inwardly and casting out the "prince of the world" who has held him in the bondage of sin." -Par. 13.

It is significant that Christ emerged victorious from his initial combat in the desert. This foreshadowed the victory he won on the cross. It is in virtue of this victory that we are confirmed. His victory is our finest motive for confidence in the face of opposition.

God's Spirit upon Us

Once this conflict with Satan in the desert was over, Christ was led by the Spirit into Galilee. According to Luke's account he returned quite soon to Nazareth and read in the synagogue there the passage from Isaiah that throws so much light on the nature of his work: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me, and sent me out to preach the gospel to the poor, to restore the broken hearted, to bid the prisoners go free and the blind have sight..." Luke 4:18-19.

If the Spirit of God has anointed us, too, it must surely be to make the solicitude of Christ for men live on in the world. After all, the Holy Spirit is the spirit of God's love.

Christ to the World

The work of men in the world includes that of subjecting material creation to human needs. This is shown in the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World to be a part of Christ's work for mankind, a work done in the power of the Spirit.

"Christ is at work in the hearts of men through the energy of his Spirit, animating, purifying, strengthening those noble longings by which the human family makes its life more human and strives to render the whole earth submissive." -Par. 38.

It is true that all these words concern all men; but the christian has a deeper motive for involvement in activity of this kind:

"Hence it is clear that men are not deterred by the christian message from building up the world, or impelled to neglect the welfare of their fellows, but that they are rather more stringently bound to do these very things." -Par 39.

Activity of this kind implies a love both for the world and for mankind. "Redeemed by Christ and made a new creature by the Holy Spirit, man is able to love the things themselves created by God and ought to do so." -Par 39.

Love for creation, which must be there if one is to build up the world, is related to the new law of love which is the basic law of the world's transformation.

"To those who believe in divine love, he gives the assurance that the way of love lies open to men and that the effort to establish a universal brotherhood is not a hopeless one." -Par. 38.

In speaking of this wide concern that the mature christian ought to have for the world and his fellow men, we must not lose sight of its deeply personal nature.

"In our times, a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbour of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign labourer unjustly looked down on, a child born out of lawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, 'As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me'." -Par. 27.

Concluding this line of thought we might ask whether it is too daring to read this deep compassion for men into the Galilean ministry of Christ, whether it is too daring to believe that our own anointing with the Spirit confers a vocation to make the compassion of Christ for men live on. Surely not; surely it is at the heart of our sacramental initiation into Christ. Certainly if we need any re-assuring about the answer to the latter question it is given by the Holy Spirit speaking to us in and through the pages of the Vatican II documents.

At the Service of Men

A longer study of Christ's life and work would show him being led through trial, conflict and opposition to Jerusalem, the place of his sacrifice and his glory. Inspired by the Spirit of God, he bore the supreme witness of fidelity in love for God and men on Calvary and in so doing reconciled mankind with God and won the gift of God's spirit for us all. It is on Calvary and in the resurrection of Christ that the real institution of this sacrament, and every other sacrament, is established.

The christian vocation conferred by Baptism and Confirmation is an involvement in both the death and resurrection of Christ. Our apostolate of charity and renewal is both our cross and our glory. To place oneself at the service of the world and one's fellow men is to undertake to live by sacrifice, by total commitment and by discipline. "He is not worthy of me," says Christ, "that will not take up his cross and follow me." Mt. 10: 38.

Strength from the Spirit

Perhaps the heaviest cross of all is to fail in this work for God and our fellow men, even as Christ seemed to fail. But the gifts of the Spirit include courage and fortitude, so that the lay apostles of Christ need not be deterred by anything, even apparent failure. Christ himself, the Son of God made man, needed to be strengthened by the Spirit for the work he had to do. In winning a victory in the face of greater opposition than we shall ever encounter, he secures for us the gift of the Spirit.

"I will ask the Father and he will give you another to befriend you, one who is to dwell continuously with you forever. It is the truth-giving Spirit, for whom the world can find no room because it cannot see him, cannot recognize him. But you are to recognize him; he will be continually at your side, nay, he will be in you." John 14:16, 17.

This gift of the Spirit comes to the individual christian through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. He is to befriend us, to be continually with us, even in us, enabling us to continue in the name of Christ the work of spreading and defending the kingdom of God.

THE TIME OF CONTINUATION

Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit was fulfilled at Pentecost. The coming of the Spirit had an enormous impact on the apostles, probably because they now saw for the first time that the Lord Yahweh had come amongst them in the person of Christ. They had walked, talked, eaten with, and enjoyed the companionship of the very Son of God. In the light of this knowledge and in their newly found confidence, courage and strength they launched the Church in the world. To understand the power of their preaching we need to recall that by the power of the Spirit Christ had come to preach and to establish the kingdom of God amongst men. Now it was by the power of the Spirit that this work was to be continued in the world through the efforts of his chosen disciples. The present stage in the history of mankind is best understood as the age of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The gift of the Spirit was not reserved to the apostles. They handed on their gift to others, both to the bishops who succeeded them and to the laity. "And now the apostles at Jerusalem, hearing that Samaria had received the word of God, sent Peter and John to visit them. So these two came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, who had not as yet come down on any of them; they had received nothing so far except Baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the apostles began to lay hands on them so that the Holy Spirit was given them." -Acts 8:14-17.

The Confirmation Rite

In post-apostolic times the successors of the apostles continued to hand on the Holy Spirit to the laity, although it is not always easy to isolate from Baptism the rite by which this was done. The rite varied greatly from church to church and from age to age and it was not until late in the fifteenth century that our present rite in its current form was included in the Roman Pontifical. As mentioned earlier, it suffices for this brief study to say that whether an anointing was used or an imposition of hands by the bishop, adult status in the Church was always conferred by an anointing with the Spirit of God. Further modification of the Confirmation rite is (1966) to be expected as the Constitution on the Liturgy states: "The rite of Confirmation is to be revised." -Par. 71.

The revised rite is to lay emphasis on Confirmation as a step towards christian maturity. There is no better way of understanding the present sign by which the Spirit is conferred, namely an anointing on the forehead with the oil of chrism, than by looking at the prayers used in the Mass of the Oils on Holy Thursday morning. Chrism is there presented as the cause of Life, of Holiness and of Peace, all three of which are to be attributed to the gift of the Spirit.

A Kiss of Peace?

Perhaps this is the place to mention that a kiss of peace is associated with post-baptismal anointing as far back as the beginning of the third century and is undoubtedly the older meaning of the tap on the cheek given by the bishop in the present rite. It is possible that it will again take on this meaning when the rite is renewed. A gesture of love and affection from the bishop on the occasion of a christian achieving adult status in the Church seems more positive in meaning than a blow given as a sign that one must be prepared to suffer rebuffs in the course of serving Christ.

The Constitution on the Church refers only briefly to Confirmation, but it reassures us of its value. "Christians are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation; the Holy Spirit endows them with special strength so that they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and deed as true witnesses of Christ."

Your Kingdom Come

Each time that we say the Our Father we pray "Your kingdom come." When we pray in this way we are asking that God's reign of love may be established in our own hearts and in the hearts of our fellow men. God's reign of love is established in our own hearts primarily through our effort to ratify by an adult commitment the gift of faith that we have received in Baptism. This is largely a matter of saying to God with Christ in the whole of our lives "Father, your will be done." The will of God is that we be sanctified and that all men may come to knowledge and love of him. When we pray "Your kingdom come", we are committing ourselves to working to bring men to know and love God. This is so basic to the christian way of life that our sanctification depends upon it. We must, therefore, see Confirmation as completing the work that Baptism has begun in us by

strengthening us to spread and defend the faith as witnesses of Christ. A real understanding of Confirmation therefore requires that we fully appreciate what is involved in christian witness.

Witnesses of Christ

Witness is an elusive word in English. We are witnesses of Christ in the world in so far as people can see Christ in us. It is difficult to associate this concept with the word witness; but it is nonetheless the real force of the word in this context.

Christ is undoubtedly in us, in the sense that we share his life by faith and by grace. Every christian has the vocation to be Christ to this world. Confirmation is concerned with everything that enables the christian in his world to be Christ bringing men to the knowledge and love of the Father.

Witness through the Family

Parents are witnesses of Christ in educating their children by word and example. They are assisting the Holy Spirit in this, because all growth in faith comes ultimately from him. They are also assisted by the Holy Spirit in doing their work with Christ and for Christ. If it were not for this assistance who would dare to suggest that children ought to be able to see Christ in their parents? It goes without saying that they will do this in so far as they see in their parents a mutual love for God, for each other and for them. Although this kind of love is fostered by human effort, it is made possible through the grace of the sacrament of Matrimony. But this sacrament is one for those who have already been made mature christians by the gift of the Spirit in Confirmation. There is a very obvious continuity between Confirmation, Matrimony and christian family life because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of a God who is love. His special work is to awaken and nourish Christ's love in us and he relies on our co-operation to ensure that this love of Christ expresses itself in our relationships with other people. In this case the relationships we are considering are those of husband and wife with each other and with their children. Where christian love flourishes in these relationships, the truth of christianity and the presence of Christ in the world are being manifested in a highly significant way.

True Friendship

The graces of Confirmation are operative equally strongly in the relationships between person and person in the community of men. Friendship is an art that ought to be cultivated by mature people. True friendship needs to be cultivated; it requires generosity and a certain amount of self-sacrifice. It is not being suggested here that one cultivates friendships for the sake of apostolic action. There is something patently insincere about this attitude, something unworthy of human dignity. Rather it is being suggested that sincerely formed friendships are valuable in God's sight because in them we really see man at his best. For this reason they have real religious significance and the Holy Spirit works in and through them.

Witness through Work

Within the human community there are many human relationships based more on service than personal friendship. The work of the doctor, the nurse, the teacher, the tram conductor, the tradesman, the shop assistant, the public servant and all the rest must be seen by the christian as a work of faith. These people are called to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in developing their own integrity and in valuing the human dignity of all with whom their work brings them in contact. Their witness does not consist in saying, "Have you noticed how competent and courteous I am; that's because I'm a christian." It is rather a matter of saying, "I know by faith that the Holy Spirit is

working in my world. Do I hinder or assist his work?" So completely have religious life and work life been compartmentalized that we needed the Second Vatican Council to remind us that integrity of approach in our work and in the personal relationships demanded by our work is part of our christian vocation. This brings it within the scope of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Those christians whose lives are taken up with the pursuit of truth in science or art; those christians whose life is taken up with the betterment of the human condition whether through psychology, sociology, technology, education, economics, politics or international relations; all of these must see that their work is eminently christian, in that everything that helps to overcome material destitution, ignorance, war or any kind of sub-human or inhuman condition is laying a necessary foundation for the growth of God's kingdom. Any vocation of this kind is to be seen as a christian's response to his vocation to restore all things in Christ. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, is given to the christian as a gift in virtue of work of this kind.

Organized Lay Apostolate

Up to this point we have considered the role of the layman as witness in a very general way. Within the vocations of those already mentioned it may be possible often for people to speak explicitly of God and the christian faith and even lead people directly to the knowledge of God by word as well as example. But in the ordinary life of the ordinary individual these occasions will be rare enough to be especially treasured and prayed over.

There are as well those who co-operate more directly in the work of Christ by membership in various forms of organized lay apostolate. Already people of this kind have done a great service to the Church by re-awakening in the People of God a sense of apostolic commitment to Christ. Great work still lies ahead for them in these days of renewal. Since they co-operate in the work of Christ in the world in such a privileged way, they can look to the sacrament of Confirmation for the wisdom, counsel and fortitude that their specific dedication to Christ requires of them. Those lay people who work with youth, whether as leaders or catechists, although they may not regard this sacrament as their exclusive domain, can surely take heart from the fact that they receive their mission and the grace to fulfil it through the gift of the Spirit of God.

CONFIRMATION LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Christ is the sacrament of God. Our God is the God who walked amongst us in the person of Christ. In knowing Christ and loving him and committing ourselves to him we are knowing God, loving God and living for Him.

But Christ is also humanity. In some way he has become all men in taking to himself a human nature. St. Paul expressed this by saying that Christ is the new Adam. As in the first Adam all men sinned, so in the new Adam all men find life. Thus it is inconceivable that we could commit ourselves to Christ without at the same time living for him in our fellow men and serving him in our fellow men.

Since the Church is the sacrament of Christ, and therefore of God, in the world, our commitment to Christ is a commitment to the Church. It is through the Church which continues the action of Christ in the world, that all men are drawn into the life of Christ. Therefore, the sacrament of Confirmation in making us full members of the Church commits us to the service of men.

Consecration of the World

This service is firmly rooted in the present. The christian needs to be able to read his times and meet the needs of the men of his times by positive action. This positive action will consist in consecrating his world to God through the Eucharist, the cosmic sacrifice of Christ. It will consist in witnessing to the truth and relevance of Christ's presence as the Word of God in the world of men. It will consist in a special way in the witness of charity understood as positive action to foster brotherhood between men and to establish harmony between men and their environment. The christian works to mould material creation to meet the physical needs (food, clothing, housing) and the psychological needs (security, truth, beauty) of all mankind. These actions have already been interpreted in terms of priesthood, prophecy and kingship.

The Second Coming

Although such service is rooted in the present, it looks to the future and takes on its full meaning in view of the second coming of Christ. At his second coming Christ will hand over the kingdom of the redeemed to his Father. One of the characteristics of the mature christian is that he has a vision of God's plan for the salvation of men that enables him to work consciously in the ways outlined to prepare the world for the second coming of Christ. The grace of Confirmation enables us to have this vision and to work towards its fulfilment.

There is no doubt that Confirmation is directed towards the growth of the kingdom of God in the world. But this growth cannot be separated from the growth of God's kingdom in ourselves. Part of our work as christians is to identify ourselves with Christ in such a way that we may be identified with him in worship of the Father for all eternity. Confirmation is a vital step towards our identification with Christ. So it is that when a very young child is in danger of death we hasten to confirm him in the belief that he thus enters more fully into the priesthood of Christ and is thereby more perfectly equipped both to enter into the worship of God in heaven and to experience the happiness of God.

Towards the Eucharist

Finally, to complete our sketch of Confirmation, it is necessary to comment that, like every other sacrament, it is directed towards the Eucharist. The assembly of Christians gathers in a place of worship to hear the word of God. By the grace of this sacrament our ear is more firmly attuned to this word and this fact quite obviously has consequences that persist forever. But the assembly of christians also gathers at the altar to celebrate ritually the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. We are empowered by Confirmation to enter more fully into this action of Christ, the eternal priest. The eating of the flesh of Christ that is part of our Eucharistic Celebration is both our best means of identification with him and our food for eternal life, What Confirmation keeps before our eyes is that we cannot really identify with Christ in worship unless our lives are lived in service of our fellow men and that the food we receive is given as nourishment for our christian action in the world. In this sense only is it a preparation for eternal life. The Eucharist unites men and makes all who eat the same bread one body with Christ. In this sense it completes the work begun in our souls by Baptism and Confirmation and in doing that prepares us even more fully for eternal life with God.

CONSIDER CHRISTIAN MATURITY

Confirmation confers adult status in the Church. Such a status is both a mission and a grace. To fulfil our mission and to co-operate fully with the grace of the Holy Spirit we need to be humanly mature persons.

A French writer has listed the characteristics of human maturity as follows: -

1. An adult is a man who knows himself, his powers and his limitations.
2. An adult is a man who has outgrown passing enthusiasms and now lives according to convictions.
3. An adult recognizes that he is responsible for every aspect of his life.
4. An adult is a man who is aware of his being-with-others.
5. An adult is a man who is well-adjusted to the realities of his life and does not seek an escape in dreams or fantasies.

These characteristics help the christian to play his proper role in the world. Perhaps it is true that few of us ever achieve full maturity in all aspects of our life and work; but so long as we see human maturity as a goal to work towards we can be an effective influence. If we expect the sacrament to do everything for us, we will never be able to work effectively for Christ. The precise action of the sacrament is to give direction to the human powers that we possess by infusing them with grace and light and charity coming from the gift of the Spirit.

Pessimists or Optimists?

One encounters a wide range of opinions about the direction that mankind is taking in modern times. Some are frankly pessimistic; others are openly optimistic. Although the Vatican II documents warn about threats to individuality and personal freedom inherent in technocratic society, they are basically optimistic about man's growth in maturity. Only this optimism can explain the confidence with which the role of the laity in the Church and in the world was delineated. Possibly the best way of drawing together our thoughts about Confirmation as the sacrament of christian maturity would be to list some of the Council's conclusions in speaking either of the role of the whole People of God in the world or specifically of the laity.

1. The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ according to his state.
 2. The laity are in their own way made sharers of the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ.
 3. The laity engaged in each and all of the secular professions and occupations are called to work for the sanctification of the world from within.
 4. The status of the People of God is that of the dignity and freedom of Sons of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple.
 5. Between all the parts of the Church there remains a close bond of communion whereby they share spiritual riches, apostolic workers and temporal resources.
 6. The People of God, although numerically few enough, is a seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race.
 7. The People of God spread abroad a living witness to Christ, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise.
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