



DIOCESE of
MANCHESTER

The Resurrection and the Church's Mission in the Public Square

A Sourcebook



www.catholicnh.org/public-policy

The Resurrection and the Church's Mission in the Public Square:
A Sourcebook.

Published by: Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester

2020-2023 RCBM. No portion of this e-book may be reproduced in any form, including photocopying, recording, or by any information and retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

For permission contact Diocese of Manchester, 153 Ash Street,
Manchester, New Hampshire, 03104; Attention: Chancellor.

The Resurrection and the Church's Mission in the Public Square

A Sourcebook



**DIocese of
MANCHESTER**



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

No time in the Church year has greater importance for us than the Easter Season. The fifty days from the Sunday of the Resurrection to Pentecost Sunday are celebrated in joy and exaltation as one feast day, indeed as one “Great Sunday.” *Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year, 22.* “The Easter Season is not simply one feast among others, but the “Feast of feasts” and the “Solemnity of solemnities.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1169.*

Although Lent is often the time in the year when we find the greatest number of opportunities for special parish gatherings designed for prayer and faith formation, it is really *Easter* that is the quintessentially appropriate time for these sorts of gatherings to take place. Just as the newly-baptized journey through the Easter Season in what for them is the period of mystagogia, a time set aside to consider deeply the meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation that they celebrated at the Easter Vigil, so too does Easter offer to all of us who have been baptized the perfect time to reflect on our own baptismal call to be missionary disciples of the Risen Lord.

In our new Easter series called, “The Resurrection and the Mission of the Church in the Public Square,” that call to missionary discipleship meets with a look at how the mission is to be carried out in one of the most challenging and critical venues presented to us in the modern world. The Second Vatican Council taught that all Christians have a moral responsibility, arising out of baptism, to actively participate in the public square in such a way as to advance human dignity and the common good. It is my hope that through this series, New Hampshire Catholics will come to know even more profoundly how our work in the political arena is yet one more way that we can be at the service of all people, as members of the Body of Christ.

The series consists of seven brief presentations, one for each week of the Easter Season, that are available at www.catholicnh.org/Easter. This Sourcebook, which accompanies those presentations but which can also be used on its own, contains short excerpts from a variety of writings, primarily from the Second Vatican Council and subsequent papal documents. It is intended to provide material for reflection and discussion on many aspects of the mission of the Church in the public square.

As Pope Francis said in his 2018 Easter message *Urbi et Orbi*: “We Christians believe and know that Christ’s resurrection is the true hope of the world, the hope that does not disappoint. It is the power of the grain of wheat, the power of that love which humbles itself and gives itself to the very end, and thus renews the world.”

Wishing you blessings of the Easter Season and asking you to join me in renewing our dedication to the mission that the Risen Lord has entrusted to each one of us, may I remain

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester



8

Chapter I
THE RESURRECTION
AND THE MISSION
OF THE CHRISTIAN

17

Chapter II
THE WHO
OF THE MISSION

27

Chapter III
THE WHY
OF THE MISSION

43

Chapter IV
THE HOW
OF THE MISSION

54

Chapter V
THE WHEN
OF THE MISSION

58

Chapter VI
THE RESURRECTION
AND CAESAR

71

Chapter VII
THE SPIRIT
AND THE MISSION

80

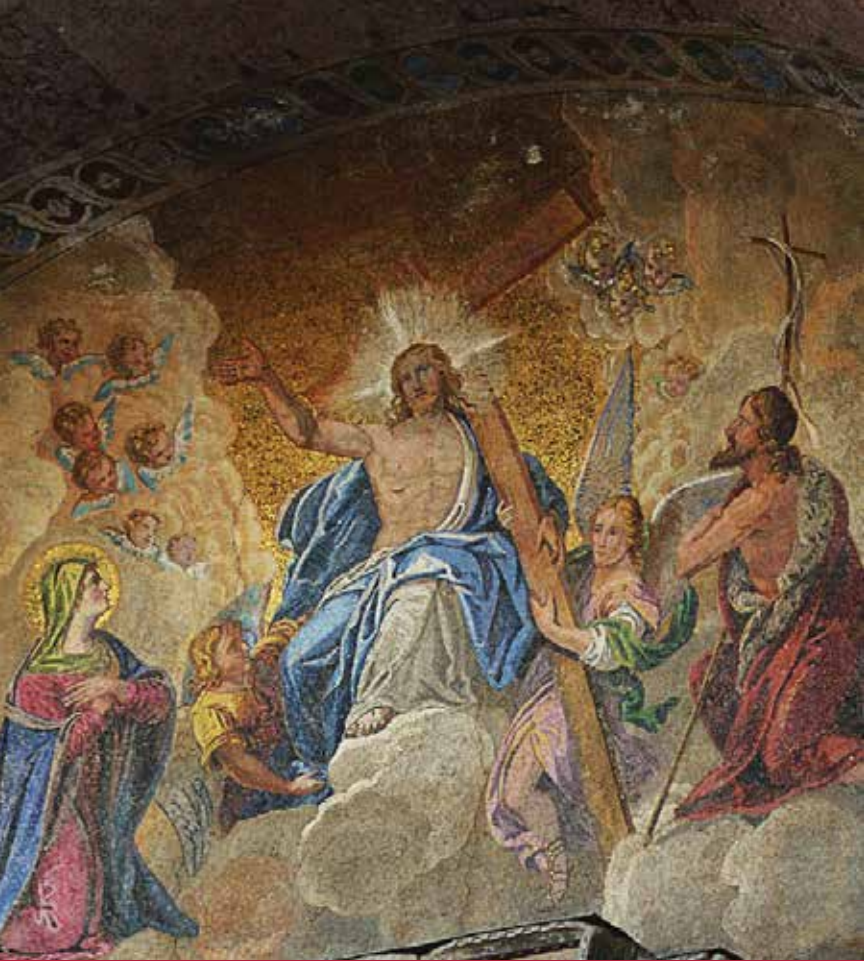
AFTERWORD AND
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

• • •
The
Resurrection



and the
Church's
Mission

in the Public Square



Chapter I

**The Resurrection and
the Mission of the Christian**



The Resurrection and Mission of the Christian

Octave of Easter

We Catholics tend to observe Lent with gusto: Stations of the Cross, parish retreats, penance services, and so on. But then Easter arrives, and just when the celebrations should really be starting, we can actually find that our fervor is diminishing.

It is Easter, though, which the Church considers to be “the Solemnity of solemnities.” During the 50 festive days of the Easter Season, which the Church celebrates as if it were one single feast day, the Church exults in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the foundation of our faith and the source of the mission which God has given to each one of us through baptism.

Because in baptism we are made sharers in the death and Resurrection of Jesus, from the earliest times the Church has seen Easter as the time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation. This makes Easter the perfect occasion for each one of us to think about what our own baptism means.

Now, it is probably impossible for us to think about the Resurrection of the Lord without also bringing to mind the eternal life that God has prepared for us. And yet, as

hard as it is to imagine anything better, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just about the next life; it is about this one, too. The Resurrection means that the Kingdom of God has in fact been launched here on earth, just as in Heaven.

And there is even more. Through baptism, we are the ones who have been given the job of building up that Kingdom. The Church teaches that at the moment of baptism each one of us – lay or ordained, young or old, rich or poor, male or female – became nothing less than a sharer in the threefold office of Christ as priest, prophet, and king. So if you are baptized, God has given you a job to do. You have been enlisted into what has been well described as “God’s rescue mission.”

For almost all of us, the place where we are called to carry out this missionary activity is right at home, in the places where we live and work. There are many ways that we can do this, but over the course of this Easter Season we will be looking at one in particular: our work in the public square. We hope you can journey with us for the next seven weeks.

Resources | Chapter I

Rom 6: 3-11

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God.

Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 2: 4-10

But you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises’ of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Once you were ‘no people’
but now you are God’s people;
you ‘had not received mercy’
but now you have received mercy.

Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us;
may his face shine upon us.

So shall your way be known upon the earth,
your victory among all the nations.

May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you!

May the nations be glad and rejoice;
for you judge the peoples with fairness,
you guide the nations upon the earth.

May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you!

The earth has yielded its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.

May God bless us still;
that the ends of the earth may revere him.

Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on The Church (Lumen Gentium)* 11

Incorporated in the Church through baptism, the faithful are destined by the baptismal character for the worship of the Christian religion; reborn as children of God they must confess before people the faith which they have received from God through the Church. They are more perfectly bound to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, and 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 by deed, as true witnesses of Christ.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *On Keeping Lord's Day Holy* (*Dies Domini*) 71

The teachings of the Apostles struck a sympathetic chord from the earliest centuries, and evoked strong echoes in the preaching of the Fathers of the Church. Saint Ambrose addressed words of fire to the rich who presumed to fulfil their religious obligations by attending church without sharing their goods with the poor, and who perhaps even exploited them: “You who are rich, do you hear what the Lord God says? Yet you come into church not to give to the poor but to take instead.” Saint John Chrysostom is no less demanding: “Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked. Do not pay him homage in the temple clad in silk only then to neglect him outside where he suffers cold and nakedness. He who said: ‘This is my body’ is the same One who said: ‘You saw me hungry and you gave me no food’, and ‘Whatever you did to the least of my brothers you did also to me’ ... What good is it if the Eucharistic table is overloaded with golden chalices, when he is dying of hunger? Start by satisfying his hunger, and then with what is left you may adorn the altar as well.”

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *On Keeping Lord's Day Holy* (*Dies Domini*) 72

The Eucharist is an event and program of true brotherhood. From the Sunday Mass there flows a tide of charity destined to spread into the whole life of the faithful.

Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *On Keeping Lord's Day Holy* (*Dies Domini*) 73

Lived in this way, not only the Sunday Eucharist but the whole of Sunday becomes a great school of charity, justice and peace. The presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his people becomes an undertaking of solidarity, a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled. Far from being an escape, the Christian Sunday is a “prophecy” inscribed on time itself, a prophecy obliging the faithful to follow in the footsteps of the One who came “to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to captives and new sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are

oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19). In the Sunday commemoration of Easter, believers learn from Christ, and remembering his promise: “I leave you peace, my peace I give you” (Jn 14:27), they become in their turn builders of peace.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 11

...Jesus “draws us into himself.” The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within creation the principle of a radical change, a sort of “nuclear fission,” to use an image familiar to us today, which penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, a process leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28).

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 55

...There can be no *actuosa participatio* in the sacred mysteries without an accompanying effort to participate actively in the life of the Church as a whole, including a missionary commitment to bring Christ’s love into the life of society.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 71

...There Christianity’s new worship includes and transfigures every aspect of life: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31). Christians, in all their actions, are called to offer true worship to God. Here the intrinsically eucharistic nature of Christian life begins to take shape. The Eucharist, since it embraces the concrete, everyday existence of the believer, makes possible, day by day, the progressive transfiguration of all those called by grace to reflect the image of the Son of God (cf. Rom 8:29ff.). There is nothing authentically human – our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds – that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full. Here we can see the full human import of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist:

the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and individual, but tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God. The glory of God is the living man (cf. 1 Cor 10:31). And the life of man is the vision of God.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 82

...The moral transformation implicit in the new worship instituted by Christ is a heartfelt yearning to respond to the Lord's love with one's whole being, while remaining ever conscious of one's own weakness. This is clearly reflected in the Gospel story of Zacchaeus (cf. Lk 19:1-10). After welcoming Jesus to his home, the tax collector is completely changed: he decides to give half of his possessions to the poor and to repay fourfold those whom he had defrauded. The moral urgency born of welcoming Jesus into our lives is the fruit of gratitude for having experienced the Lord's unmerited closeness.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 94

...Jesus' gift of himself in the sacrament which is the memorial of his passion tells us that the success of our lives is found in our participation in the trinitarian life offered to us truly and definitively in him. The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love. The offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers and our solidarity with all men and women are essential aspects of that *logiké latreía*, spiritual worship, holy and pleasing to God (cf. Rom 12:1), which transforms every aspect of our human existence, to the glory of God.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 80

Pastoral workers can thus fall into a relativism which, whatever their particular style of spirituality or way of thinking, proves even more dangerous

than doctrinal relativism. It has to do with the deepest and inmost decisions that shape their way of life. This practical relativism consists in acting as if God did not exist, making decisions as if the poor did not exist, setting goals as if others did not exist, working as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist. It is striking that even some who clearly have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions frequently fall into a lifestyle which leads to an attachment to financial security, or to a desire for power or human glory at all cost, rather than giving their lives to others in mission. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 269

...Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is nothing else than the culmination of the way he lived his entire life. Moved by his example, we want to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world. But we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)* 15

Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life. When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better." In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. The Lord has bestowed on the Church the gifts of scripture, the sacraments, holy places, living communities, the witness of the saints and a multifaceted beauty that proceeds from God's love, "like a bride bedecked with jewels."

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 71

The story of the Good Samaritan is constantly being repeated. We can see this clearly as social and political inertia is turning many parts of our world into a desolate byway, even as domestic and international disputes and the robbing of opportunities are leaving great numbers of the marginalized stranded on the roadside. In his parable, Jesus does not offer alternatives; he does not ask what might have happened had the injured man or the one who helped him yielded to anger or a thirst for revenge. Jesus trusts in the best of the human spirit; with this parable, he encourages us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 897

The faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ, and have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World.



Chapter II

The Who of the Mission



The “Who” of the Mission

Second Week of Easter

The names that fill the New Testament readings during the Easter Season – Peter, Mary Magdalene, Paul, Barnabas, and so on – are as familiar to us as they were to the first generations of Christians. The preeminence of these names even after two thousand years makes it easy to forget one important fact: the vast majority of Christian believers, then as now, were people whose names we do not know.

Don't equate anonymity with insignificance, though. It is clear that one of the most significant dynamics in how the news about the Risen Jesus was spread from Jerusalem to Rome (and beyond) was the very way that these ordinary and anonymous Christians lived their everyday lives.

We get a hint of this in the First Letter of Peter, written in the 1st century to Christians in parts of what is now Turkey. (Christians living in the Roman provinces of Bithynia and Pontus were among the letter's addressees; we'll be hearing more about these folks later on in this series). One part of this letter deals with the importance of Christians living peaceably and respectfully

among their non-Christian neighbors. This is capped off with an exhortation to the Christian believers that they should “always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you the reason for this hope of yours.”

It is hard to miss the assumption that sits in the background here: the Christian way of life will be so compelling that non-Christians will want to know more about it (perhaps all the more so because hope, as you can infer, was not a commodity in great supply in the society-at-large).

The Second Vatican Council went to great lengths to renew this way of looking at the Christian mission. The Council brought to the forefront the Church's obligation to give hope to the world by shining the light of the Gospel into every corner of life. As the Council consistently repeated, this is a mission that belongs to all the baptized, lay and ordained alike.

Logically enough, the Council saw the public square as one of the places where this mission must be carried out. Laws impact

the whole of society, and so work in the world of politics can have far-reaching effects. It would not make much sense for us Catholics to say that we stand for human dignity and the common good, and then go on to absent ourselves from the most significant place where society makes its decisions concerning those things.

The primary responsibility for the Church's work in the public square rests with laypeople. Pastors, of course, play an essential role, too – they teach and inspire and help to form the consciences of the faithful. But the Church recognizes that political engagement is uniquely within the area of expertise of the laity, and so it is lay members of the Church who are called to do the bulk of this work.

As New Hampshire Catholics we also have something else to think about. Our 1st century Christian friends were not able to shape society for the common good much

beyond what they were able to do with their own two hands. Like many Christians throughout the world today, they had absolutely no ability to influence the laws that they would be governed by or to choose who it was that would rule over them. It is quite a different situation for us. Our grassroots style of government in New Hampshire gives us unparalleled opportunities to participate in the democratic process. Of course, with this greater opportunity to act also comes a greater duty to act. None of us have the luxury of thinking that as ordinary citizens we are unable to make a difference.

So let's take our inspiration this week from those 1st century women and men whose hope was in the Risen Jesus. If the world of the 21st century is in need of hope (and we know that it is), and if the Body of Christ is going to serve the Body Politic (and we know that it must), then it is obvious who is going to have to do the job.



Resources | Chapter II

Mt 28: 16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Acts 1: 6-8

When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority.

But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

1 Pt 3: 15-18

Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope. Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good?

But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.

Is 42: 6-7

I, the LORD, have called you for justice,
I have grasped you by the hand;
I formed you, and set you
as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,

To open the eyes of the blind,
to bring out prisoners from confinement,
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

Is 49: 6

It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant,
to raise up the tribes of Jacob,
and restore the survivors of Israel;
I will make you a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

Is 60: 3

Nations shall walk by your light,
kings by the radiance of your dawning.

Second Vatican Council, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) 5

Christ's redemptive work, while essentially concerned with the salvation of men, includes also the renewal of the whole temporal order. Hence the mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to people but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel. In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the Christian laity exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders. These orders, although distinct, are so connected in the singular plan of God that He Himself intends to raise up the whole world again in Christ and to make it a new creation, initially on earth and completely on the last day. In both orders the layperson, being simultaneously a believer and a citizen, should be continuously led by the same Christian conscience.

Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* 43

This council exhorts Christians, as citizens of two cities, to strive to discharge their earthly duties conscientiously and in response to the Gospel spirit. They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more obliged than ever to measure up to these duties, each according to his proper vocation. Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life.

This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments. Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation. Christians should rather rejoice that, following the example of Christ Who worked as an artisan, they are free to give proper exercise to all their earthly activities and to their humane, domestic, professional, social and technical enterprises by gathering them into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.

Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* 43

Secular duties and activities belong properly although not exclusively to laypeople. Therefore acting as citizens in the world, whether individually or socially, they will keep the laws proper to each discipline, and labor to equip themselves with a genuine expertise in their various fields. They will gladly work with people seeking the same goals. Acknowledging the demands of faith and endowed with its force, they will unhesitatingly devise new

enterprises, where they are appropriate, and put them into action. Laypeople should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city; from priests they may look for spiritual light and nourishment. Let the layperson not imagine that pastors are always such experts, that to every problem which arises, however complicated, they can readily offer a concrete solution, or even that such is their mission. Rather, enlightened by Christian wisdom and giving close attention to the teaching authority of the Church, let laypeople take on their own distinctive role.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 83

...Worship pleasing to God can never be a purely private matter, without consequences for our relationships with others: it demands a public witness to our faith.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 88

“The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). In these words the Lord reveals the true meaning of the gift of his life for all people. These words also reveal his deep compassion for every man and woman. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus’ feelings towards others, especially the suffering and sinners (cf. Mt 20:34; Mk 6:34; Lk 19:41). Through a profoundly human sensibility he expresses God’s saving will for all people – that they may have true life. Each celebration of the Eucharist makes sacramentally present the gift that the crucified Lord made of his life, for us and for the whole world. In the Eucharist Jesus also makes us witnesses of God’s compassion towards all our brothers and sisters. The eucharistic mystery thus gives rise to a service of charity towards neighbour, which “consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, affecting even my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ.” In all those I meet, I recognize brothers or sisters for whom the Lord gave his life, loving

them “to the end” (Jn 13:1). Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become “bread that is broken” for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: “You yourselves, give them something to eat” (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 91

The mystery of the Eucharist inspires and impels us to work courageously within our world to bring about that renewal of relationships which has its inexhaustible source in God’s gift. The prayer which we repeat at every Mass: “Give us this day our daily bread,” obliges us to do everything possible, in cooperation with international, state and private institutions, to end or at least reduce the scandal of hunger and malnutrition afflicting so many millions of people in our world, especially in developing countries. In a particular way, the Christian laity, formed at the school of the Eucharist, are called to assume their specific political and social responsibilities. To do so, they need to be adequately prepared through practical education in charity and justice.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 276

For these reasons, the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not restrict her mission to the private sphere. On the contrary, “she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines” in the building of a better world, or fail to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development. The Church “has a public role over and above her charitable

and educational activities.” She works for “the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity.” She does not claim to compete with earthly powers, but to offer herself as “a family among families, this is the Church, open to bearing witness in today’s world, open to faith hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother.” And in imitation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, “we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church 899

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will. . . . It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated that these may always be effected and grow according to Christ and maybe to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer.

USCCB, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship 13

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. “People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 220). The obligation to participate in political life is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, “It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person... As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life.”

USCCB, Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship 16

As the Holy Father also taught in *Deus Caritas Est*, “The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful.” This duty is more critical than ever in today’s political environment, where Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and too few candidates fully share the Church’s comprehensive commitment to the life and dignity of every human being from conception to natural death. Yet this is not a time for retreat or discouragement; rather, it is a time for renewed engagement. Forming their consciences in accord with Catholic teaching, Catholic lay women and men can become actively involved: running for office; working within political parties; communicating their concerns and positions to elected officials; and joining diocesan social mission or advocacy networks, state Catholic conference initiatives, community organizations, and other efforts to apply authentic moral teaching in the public square. Even those who cannot vote have the right to have their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the common good.



Chapter III

The Why of the Mission



The “Why” of the Mission

Third Week of Easter

It is a rather remarkable thing that the Church turns to the Gospel of John for the Liturgy of the Word during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday. Of the Last Supper accounts in all four gospels, John’s is the only one that does not include a description of Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist. Instead, John narrates how Jesus, during the supper, washed the feet of his disciples. The narrative concludes with an enduring mandate from Jesus to his disciples: “If I, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” (Jn 13:15)

The Liturgy of the Eucharist that begins in short order after this reading adds a layer of emphasis. The directives in the Roman Missal call for this part of the Mass to open with a procession of the faithful with gifts for the poor, to be accompanied by the singing of a designated hymn: “Wherever there are charity and love, there is God.”

These dots are easy enough to connect. We have no problem seeing how we are carrying

out the Lord’s command of charity and love when we give money or food to the poor. What may be less readily apparent, though, is that this commandment also calls us to service in the public square.

To be sure, on the surface there probably aren’t many things that we’d think of as being more widely separated than politics and charity. Yet, the Church asks us to see that they are intimately linked. As Pope Francis frequently says, “politics is one of the highest forms of charity because it seeks the common good.”

This insight may at first seem counter-intuitive, because we often see politics as a hyper-partisan enterprise that has self-interest or the maintenance of power as its primary goals. But if you want some support for Pope Francis’ position, look no further than our own founding fathers. John Adams described the body politic as a social compact “that all shall be governed by certain laws for the common good.” The very first article of the New Hampshire Constitution declares that government “is instituted for the general good.” The U.S.

Constitution, of course, begins with the word “We.” So this notion that political engagement ultimately is designed for the purpose of serving others is something that we have inherited from both the religious and the secular sides of the family, so to speak. As Catholic Americans, it is doubly in our wheelhouse.

People of faith have invaluable perspectives to share in the political arena: that faith and reason go hand-in-hand; that human beings possess inalienable dignity; that there is a special obligation to stand up for those who are poor or powerless. Pope Emeritus Benedict said that “religion is a vital

contributor to the national conversation,” and it is no accident that two of the most important movements in the history of our own nation—the campaign to abolish slavery and the crusade for civil rights—grew out of and were sustained by the religious faith of the people who led and populated those movements. These examples show just what sort of a difference we can make if we follow this same path of loving and humble service. And that is why we – the ones that Jesus was speaking to that night – have a job to do.

Don’t think of it as politics; think of it as just one more way to wash some feet.



Resources | Chapter III

Jn 13: 1-15

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.

The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Master, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later."

Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."

Jesus said to him, "Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all." For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet, put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?"

You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am. If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

Rom 8: 19

For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God.

Micah 6: 8

You have been told, O mortal, what is good,
and what the LORD requires of you:
Only to do justice and to love goodness,
and to walk humbly with your God.

Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) 1*

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men and women. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every person. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis) 84*

...The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with all. What the world needs is God's love; it needs to encounter Christ and to believe in him. The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church's life, but also of her mission: "an authentically eucharistic Church is a missionary Church." We too must be able to tell our brothers and sisters with conviction: "That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us" (1 Jn 1:3).

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 85

The first and fundamental mission that we receive from the sacred mysteries we celebrate is that of bearing witness by our lives. The wonder we experience at the gift God has made to us in Christ gives new impulse to our lives and commits us to becoming witnesses of his love. We become witnesses when, through our actions, words and way of being, Another makes himself present. Witness could be described as the means by which the truth of God's love comes to men and women in history, inviting them to accept freely this radical newness.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 86

The more ardent the love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: to bring Christ to others. Not just a theory or a way of life inspired by Christ, but the gift of his very person.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 88-89

“The bread I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world” (Jn 6:51). In these words the Lord reveals the true meaning of the gift of his life for all people. These words also reveal his deep compassion for every man and woman. The Gospels frequently speak of Jesus' feelings towards others, especially the suffering and sinners (cf. Mt 20:34; Mk 6:34; Lk 19:41). Through a profoundly human sensibility he expresses God's saving will for all people – that they may have true life. Each celebration of the Eucharist makes sacramentally present the gift that the crucified Lord made of his life, for us and for the whole world. In the Eucharist Jesus also makes us witnesses of God's compassion towards all our brothers and sisters. The eucharistic mystery thus gives rise to a service of charity towards neighbor, which “consists in the very fact that, in God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know. This can only take place on the basis of an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which has become a communion of will, affecting even my feelings. Then I learn to look on this other person not simply with my eyes

and my feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ.” In all those I meet, I recognize brothers or sisters for whom the Lord gave his life, loving them “to the end” (Jn 13:1). Our communities, when they celebrate the Eucharist, must become ever more conscious that the sacrifice of Christ is for all, and that the Eucharist thus compels all who believe in him to become “bread that is broken” for others, and to work for the building of a more just and fraternal world. Keeping in mind the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, we need to realize that Christ continues today to exhort his disciples to become personally engaged: “You yourselves, give them something to eat” (Mt 14:16). Each of us is truly called, together with Jesus, to be bread broken for the life of the world.

89. ... Precisely because of the mystery we celebrate, we must denounce situations contrary to human dignity, since Christ shed his blood for all, and at the same time affirm the inestimable value of each individual person.

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 89

...The Eucharist is the sacrament of communion between brothers and sisters who allow themselves to be reconciled in Christ, who made of Jews and pagans one people, tearing down the wall of hostility which divided them (cf. Eph 2:14). Only this constant impulse towards reconciliation enables us to partake worthily of the Body and Blood of Christ (cf. Mt 5:23-24). In the memorial of his sacrifice, the Lord strengthens our fraternal communion and, in a particular way, urges those in conflict to hasten their reconciliation by opening themselves to dialogue and a commitment to justice. Certainly, the restoration of justice, reconciliation and forgiveness are the conditions for building true peace. The recognition of this fact leads to a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness. Through the concrete fulfilment of this responsibility, the Eucharist becomes in life what it signifies in its celebration. As I have had occasion to say, it is not the proper task of the Church to engage in the political work of bringing about the most just society possible; nonetheless she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the struggle for justice. The Church “has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity (Sacramentum Caritatis)* 90

We cannot remain passive before certain processes of globalization which not infrequently increase the gap between the rich and the poor worldwide. We must denounce those who squander the earth's riches, provoking inequalities that cry out to heaven (cf. Jas 5:4). For example, it is impossible to remain silent before the “distressing images of huge camps throughout the world of displaced persons and refugees, who are living in makeshift conditions in order to escape a worse fate, yet are still in dire need. Are these human beings not our brothers and sisters? Do their children not come into the world with the same legitimate expectations of happiness as other children?” The Lord Jesus, the bread of eternal life, spurs us to be mindful of the situations of extreme poverty in which a great part of humanity still lives: these are situations for which human beings bear a clear and disquieting responsibility. Indeed, “on the basis of available statistical data, it can be said that less than half of the huge sums spent worldwide on armaments would be more than sufficient to liberate the immense masses of the poor from destitution. This challenges humanity’s conscience. To peoples living below the poverty line, more as a result of situations to do with international political, commercial and cultural relations than as a result of circumstances beyond anyone’s control, our common commitment to truth can and must give new hope.”

The food of truth demands that we denounce inhumane situations in which people starve to death because of injustice and exploitation, and it gives us renewed strength and courage to work tirelessly in the service of the civilization of love. From the beginning, Christians were concerned to share their goods (cf. Acts 4:32) and to help the poor (cf. Rom 15:26). The alms collected in our liturgical assemblies are an eloquent reminder of this, and they are also necessary for meeting today’s needs. The Church’s charitable institutions, especially Caritas, carry out at various levels the important work of assisting the needy, especially the poorest. Inspired by the Eucharist, the sacrament of charity, they become a concrete expression of that charity; they are to be praised and encouraged for their commitment to solidarity in our world.

Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 183

Consequently, no one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of civil institutions, without a right to offer an opinion on events affecting society. Who would claim to lock up in a church and silence the message of Saint Francis of Assisi or Blessed Teresa of Calcutta? They themselves would have found this unacceptable. An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses.

The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.” All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world. This is essential, for the Church’s social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ. At the same time, it unites its own commitment to that made in the social field by other Churches and Ecclesial Communities, whether at the level of doctrinal reflection or at the practical level.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 242

Faith is not fearful of reason; on the contrary, it seeks and trusts reason, since “the light of reason and the light of faith both come from God” and cannot contradict each other. Evangelization is attentive to scientific advances and wishes to shed on them the light of faith and the natural law so that they will remain respectful of the centrality and supreme value of the human person at every stage of life. All of society can be enriched thanks to this dialogue, which opens up new horizons for thought and expands the possibilities of reason. This too is a path of harmony and peace.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')* 229

We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)* 96

Holiness, then, is not about swooning in mystic rapture. As Saint John Paul II said: “If we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified.” The text of Matthew 25:35-36 is “not a simple invitation to charity: it is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ.” In this call to recognize him in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)* 137

Complacency is seductive; it tells us that there is no point in trying to change things, that there is nothing we can do, because this is the way things have always been and yet we always manage to survive. By force of habit we no longer stand up to evil. We “let things be,” or as others have decided they ought to be. Yet let us allow the Lord to rouse us from our torpor, to free us from our inertia. Let us rethink our usual way of doing things; let us open our eyes and ears, and above all our hearts, so as not to be complacent about things as they are, but unsettled by the living and effective word of the risen Lord.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (*Fratelli Tutti*) 77

Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. We should not expect everything from those who govern us, for that would be childish. We have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes. Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment. Like the chance traveler in the parable, we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community, constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate and lift up the fallen. We may often find ourselves succumbing to the mentality of the violent, the blindly ambitious, those who spread mistrust and lies. Others may continue to view politics or the economy as an arena for their own power plays. For our part, let us foster what is good and place ourselves at its service.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (*Fratelli Tutti*) 78-79

We can start from below and, case by case, act at the most concrete and local levels, and then expand to the farthest reaches of our countries and our world, with the same care and concern that the Samaritan showed for each of the wounded man's injuries. Let us seek out others and embrace the world as it is, without fear of pain or a sense of inadequacy, because there we will discover all the goodness that God has planted in human hearts. Difficulties that seem overwhelming are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation that can lead only to acquiescence. Yet let us not do this alone, as individuals. The Samaritan discovered an innkeeper who would care for the man; we too are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members. For "the whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts." Let us renounce the pettiness and resentment of useless in-fighting and constant confrontation. Let us stop feeling sorry for ourselves and acknowledge our crimes, our apathy, our lies. Reparation and reconciliation will give us new life and set us all free from fear.

The Samaritan who stopped along the way departed without expecting any recognition or gratitude. His effort to assist another person gave him great satisfaction in life and before his God, and thus became a duty. All of us have a responsibility for the wounded, those of our own people and all the peoples of the earth. Let us care for the needs of every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked the Good Samaritan.

Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 178

I would repeat that “true statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good. Political powers do not find it easy to assume this duty in the work of nation-building,” much less in forging a common project for the human family, now and in the future. Thinking of those who will come after us does not serve electoral purposes, yet it is what authentic justice demands.

USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* 1

As a nation, we share many blessings and strengths, including a tradition of religious freedom and political participation. However, as a people, we face serious challenges that are both political and moral. This has always been so and as Catholics we are called to participate in public life in a manner consistent with the mission of our Lord, a mission that he has called us to share.

In this fight for justice, God gives us a special gift, hope, which Pope Benedict describes in *Caritas in Veritate* as “burst[ing] into our lives as something not due to us, something that transcends every law of justice” (no. 34). Thus we take up the task of serving the common good with joy and hope, confident that God, who “so loved the world that he gave his only Son,” walks with us and strengthens us on the way (Jn 3:16). God is love, and he desires that we help to build a “civilization of love”—one in which all human beings have the freedom and opportunity to experience the love of God and live out that love by making a free gift of themselves to one another. Pope Francis encourages

us in *The Joy of the Gospel* to meditate on the:

inseparable bond between our acceptance of the message of salvation and genuine fraternal love . . . God's word teaches that our brothers and sisters are the prolongation of the incarnation for each of us: "As you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40). The way we treat others has a transcendent dimension: "The measure you give will be the measure you get" (Mt 7:2). It corresponds to the mercy which God has shown us: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you . . . For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (Lk 6:36-38). What these passages make clear is the absolute priority of "going forth from ourselves toward our brothers and sisters" as one of the two great commandments which ground every moral norm and as the clearest sign for discerning spiritual growth in response to God's completely free gift (no. 179).

Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 180-182

Recognizing that all people are our brothers and sisters, and seeking forms of social friendship that include everyone, is not merely utopian. It demands a decisive commitment to devising effective means to this end. Any effort along these lines becomes a noble exercise of charity. For whereas individuals can help others in need, when they join together in initiating social processes of fraternity and justice for all, they enter the "field of charity at its most vast, namely political charity." This entails working for a social and political order whose soul is social charity [166]. Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as "a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good."

Every commitment inspired by the Church's social doctrine is "derived from charity, which according to the teaching of Jesus is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36-40)." This means acknowledging that "love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world." For this reason, charity finds expression not only in close and intimate relationships but also in "macro-relationships: social, economic and political."

This political charity is born of a social awareness that transcends every individualistic mindset: “Social charity makes us love the common good; it makes us effectively seek the good of all people, considered not only as individuals or private persons, but also in the social dimension that unites them.” Each of us is fully a person when we are part of a people; at the same time, there are no peoples without respect for the individuality of each person. “People” and “person” are correlative terms. Nonetheless, there are attempts nowadays to reduce persons to isolated individuals easily manipulated by powers pursuing spurious interests. Good politics will seek ways of building communities at every level of social life, in order to recalibrate and reorient globalization and thus avoid its disruptive effects.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (*Fratelli Tutti*) 186

It follows that “it is an equally indispensable act of love to strive to organize and structure society so that one’s neighbour will not find himself in poverty.” It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering. If someone helps an elderly person cross a river, that is a fine act of charity. The politician, on the other hand, builds a bridge, and that too is an act of charity. While one person can help another by providing something to eat, the politician creates a job for that other person, and thus practices a lofty form of charity that ennobles his or her political activity.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (*Fratelli Tutti*) 195

All this can help us realize that what is important is not constantly achieving great results, since these are not always possible. In political activity, we should remember that, “appearances notwithstanding, every person is immensely holy and deserves our love. Consequently, if I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life. It is a wonderful thing to be God’s faithful people. We achieve fulfilment when we break down walls and our hearts are filled with faces and names!” The great goals of our dreams and plans may only be achieved in part. Yet beyond this,

those who love, and who no longer view politics merely as a quest for power, “may be sure that none of our acts of love will be lost, nor any of our acts of sincere concern for others. No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted. All of these encircle our world like a vital force.”

USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* 1

Love compels us “to ‘go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation’ (Mk 16:15)” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 181). “Here,” Pope Francis continues, “‘the creation’ refers to every aspect of human life; consequently, ‘the mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ has a universal destination. Its mandate of charity encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it’” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 181). This “mandate” includes our engagement in political life.





Chapter IV

The How of the Mission



The “How” of the Mission

Fourth Week of Easter

The Acts of the Apostles has a prominent place in the liturgies of the Easter Season. Acts tells the saga of how, in the wake of the Resurrection, the good news was brought from Jerusalem to Rome. The conspicuous place this book holds in our Easter liturgies highlights a cornerstone of the faith: that once a person has come to believe in the Risen Jesus, it is mission that is the response.

One of the important moments in this saga was Paul’s appearance before the elders of Athens in the Areopagus, as described in Chapter 17 of Acts. To set the stage, Paul has been talking about Jesus in the Jewish synagogues and the Greek (that is, pagan) marketplaces in the city. Remember that Athens was the cultural hub of the Mediterranean world and the center of philosophical thought. The Greek gods were many and varied, and temples and shrines to these gods were everywhere you looked (the Parthenon was one of those temples, dedicated to the goddess Athena, after whom the city was named). In this setting, Paul begins to speak. (Before reading any further here, take a look at pp.35-36 to see just what Paul said.)

Paul’s proclamation in the Areopagus furnishes some important lessons for us in how we too should be carrying out our mission in the public square – our own Athens, so to speak.

First: When in Athens, speak Greek.

Perhaps this is obvious, but when Paul addressed the Athenians, he spoke in Greek, not Aramaic or Hebrew. And it is not simply that Paul used the Greek language. Paul’s jumping off point in his discussion about Jesus Christ was not the Hebrew Scriptures (which would have been almost entirely unfamiliar to the Athenians), but rather the Greeks’ own religious beliefs, in particular their worship of “an unknown god.”

In other words, Paul did not demand that the Athenians listen to him on his own terms, but rather he “translated” the Christian message into words and examples that the Athenians would be able to grasp in their own cultural universe. This should prompt us, in our discussions in the public square, to frame what we say in terms that listeners can understand and make their

own. We cannot expect to convince anyone of anything if the reason we give is simply “because we say so,” or “because the Church says so.” We need to be able to explain ourselves in ways that are understandable and that connect with the real-life experiences of the people that we encounter.

Second: When in Athens, have courage.

It is possible that Paul’s appearance in the Areopagus was more in the nature of a defense against a criminal charge than a mere sermon. The accusation that Paul was a “promoter of foreign deities” was very similar to one of the charges that (as all present that day would well have known) had resulted in the death of the philosopher Socrates in Athens 400 years earlier. Even if Paul was there voluntarily, we can well imagine how difficult it was to stand in that place and challenge the religious underpinnings of all that the people in attendance held dear.

In our day, the Church’s witness still is often counter-cultural. Obviously, there is no political party that has a platform which is consistent in every way with what the Catholic Church teaches. And it might be said that our culture still has many gods – celebrity, power, wealth, and so on – which are far removed from the humility and love embodied in the life of Jesus Christ. As was the case with Paul, our desire to serve the society at large may demand a certain amount of courage at times, but we can be sure that the strength of our desire to serve will bring with it all else that is required.

Third: When in Athens, be respectful to the Athenians.

Notice also that Paul treats the Athenians with respect. Even though Athenian religious beliefs were completely contrary to Paul’s Christian faith – many gods and

idols, versus the one God of Israel – Paul starts off his speech with a compliment to the religiousness of the Athenians. Compare this to what we frequently see in the nature of political discourse in our country today, which not rarely is conducted in a coarse and adversarial manner. This type of political engagement is absolutely out of bounds for the Christian, for two reasons.

First, is this how a Christian acts? As Paul told the Colossians, we are to put on “heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another.” (Col 3:12-13). It is by living in line with Paul’s urging that we will be what Pope Francis calls “credible witnesses” to the Gospel. Our work in the public square requires us to have empathy for where other people are coming from. Respectful dialogue, not argumentative harangue, is the mode of communication for us. What will people think of the Christian message if we act in any other way?

Second, from a purely practical perspective, is hostility a good way to persuade someone? If something would offend or insult us, then we can be pretty certain that it will offend or repulse others as well. This is why the path of respectful dialogue is not just the sole way that a Christian can approach an issue in the public square; it is the only method that can reasonably be expected to work at all.

So how do we carry out the mission? We will always remain on the right path if we keep before our eyes the example of the Lord Jesus. The mission in the public square is about loving service. If we find ourselves tempted to be angry about what someone else is thinking or saying, just remember that you cannot point a finger in someone’s face if you are busy washing their feet.

Resources | Chapter IV

Acts 17: 16-31

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he grew exasperated at the sight of the city full of idols.

So he debated in the synagogue with the Jews and with the worshipers, and daily in the public square with whoever happened to be there.

Even some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers engaged him in discussion. Some asked, “What is this scavenger trying to say?” Others said, “He sounds like a promoter of foreign deities,” because he was preaching about ‘Jesus’ and ‘Resurrection.’

They took him and led him to the Areopagus and said, “May we learn what this new teaching is that you speak of?”

For you bring some strange notions to our ears; we should like to know what these things mean.”

Now all the Athenians as well as the foreigners residing there used their time for nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said:
“You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious.

For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.

The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands,

nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything.

He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us.

For ‘In him we live and move and have our being,’ as even some of your poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

Since therefore we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divinity is like an image fashioned from gold, silver, or stone by human art and imagination.

God has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now he demands that all people everywhere repent

because he has established a day on which he will ‘judge the world with justice’ through a man he has appointed, and he has provided confirmation for all by raising him from the dead.”

Col 3: 12-15

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,

bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.”

1 Pt 3: 8-9

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble.

Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

1 Pt 2: 17

Give honor to all, love the community, fear God, honor the king.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 194

Politics too must make room for a tender love of others. “What is tenderness? It is love that draws near and becomes real. A movement that starts from our heart and reaches the eyes, the ears and the hands... Tenderness is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women.” Amid the daily concerns of political life, “the smallest, the weakest, the poorest should touch our hearts: indeed, they have a ‘right’ to appeal to our heart and soul. They are our brothers and sisters, and as such we must love and care for them.”

Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)* 4

However, in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one’s right and a violation of the right of others.

Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)* 7

The right to religious freedom is exercised in human society: hence its exercise

is subject to certain regulatory norms. In the use of all freedoms the moral principle of personal and social responsibility is to be observed. In the exercise of their rights, individual people and social groups are bound by the moral law to have respect both for the rights of others and for their own duties toward others and for the common welfare of all. People are to deal with one another in justice and civility.

Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) 43

Often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter. Even against the intentions of their proponents, however, solutions proposed on one side or another may be easily confused by many people with the Gospel message. Hence it is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed in the aforementioned situations to appropriate the Church's authority for his opinion. They should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, preserving mutual charity and caring above all for the common good.

Since they have an active role to play in the whole life of the Church, laypeople are not only bound to penetrate the world with a Christian spirit, but are also called to be witnesses to Christ in all things in the midst of human society.

Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes) 76

The Apostles, their successors and those who cooperate with them, are sent to announce to mankind Christ, the Savior. Their apostolate is based on the power of God, Who very often shows forth the strength of the Gospel on the weakness of its witnesses. All those dedicated to the ministry of God's Word must use the ways and means proper to the Gospel which in a great many respects differ from the means proper to the earthly city.

There are, indeed, close links between earthly things and those elements of man's condition which transcend the world. The Church herself makes use of temporal things insofar as her own mission requires it. She, for her part, does not place her trust in the privileges offered by civil authority. She will even give up the exercise of certain rights which have been legitimately acquired, if it becomes clear that their use will cast doubt on the sincerity of her witness or that new ways of life demand new methods. It is only right, however, that at all times and in all places, the Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to teach her social doctrine, to exercise her role freely among men, and also to pass moral judgment in those matters which regard public order when the fundamental rights of a person or the salvation of souls require it. In this, she should make use of all the means—but only those—which accord with the Gospel and which correspond to the general good according to the diversity of times and circumstances.

Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)* 14

The disciple is bound by a grave obligation toward Christ, the Master, ever more fully to understand the truth received from Him, faithfully to proclaim it, and vigorously to defend it, never—be it understood—having recourse to means that are incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel. At the same time, the charity of Christ urges people to love and have prudence and patience in their dealings with those who are in error or in ignorance with regard to the faith.

All is to be taken into account—the Christian duty to Christ, the life-giving word which must be proclaimed, the rights of the human person, and the measure of grace granted by God through Christ to human beings who are invited freely to accept and profess the faith.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 238

Evangelization also involves the path of dialogue. For the Church today, three areas of dialogue stand out where she needs to be present in order to promote full human development and to pursue the common good: dialogue

with states, dialogue with society – including dialogue with cultures and the sciences – and dialogue with other believers who are not part of the Catholic Church. In each case, “the Church speaks from the light which faith offers,” contributing her two thousand year experience and keeping ever in mind the life and sufferings of human beings. This light transcends human reason, yet it can also prove meaningful and enriching to those who are not believers and it stimulates reason to broaden its perspectives.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 239

The Church proclaims “the Gospel of peace” (Eph 6:15) and she wishes to cooperate with all national and international authorities in safeguarding this immense universal good. By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (cf. Eph 2:14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life. In a culture which privileges dialogue as a form of encounter, it is time to devise a means for building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society. The principal author, the historic subject of this process, is the people as a whole and their culture, and not a single class, minority, group or elite. We do not need plans drawn up by a few for the few, or an enlightened or outspoken minority which claims to speak for everyone. It is about agreeing to live together, a social and cultural pact.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship (Fratelli Tutti)* 222

Consumerist individualism has led to great injustice. Other persons come to be viewed simply as obstacles to our own serene existence; we end up treating them as annoyances and we become increasingly aggressive. This is even more the case in times of crisis, catastrophe and hardship, when we are tempted to think in terms of the old saying, “every man for himself.” Yet even then, we can choose to cultivate kindness. Those who do so become stars shining in the midst of darkness.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Care for Our Common Home* (*Laudato Si'*) 230-231

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux invites us to practise the little way of love, not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sows peace and friendship. An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms.

Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world. Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also “macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones.” That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization of love.” Social love is the key to authentic development: “In order to make society more human, more worthy of the human person, love in social life – political, economic and cultural – must be given renewed value, becoming the constant and highest norm for all activity.” In this framework, along with the importance of little everyday gestures, social love moves us to devise larger strategies to halt environmental degradation and to encourage a “culture of care” which permeates all of society. When we feel that God is calling us to intervene with others in these social dynamics, we should realize that this too is part of our spirituality, which is an exercise of charity and, as such, matures and sanctifies us.

Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (*Fratelli Tutti*) 222

Saint Paul describes kindness as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). He uses the Greek word *chrestótes*, which describes an attitude that is gentle, pleasant and supportive, not rude or coarse. Individuals who possess this quality help make other people’s lives more bearable, especially by sharing the weight of their problems, needs and fears. This way of treating others can take different forms: an act of kindness, a concern not to offend by word or deed, a readiness to alleviate their burdens. It involves “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement” and not “words that demean,

sadden, anger or show scorn.”

USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* 14

Unfortunately, politics in our country often can be a contest of powerful interests, partisan attacks, sound bites, and media hype. The Church calls for a different kind of political engagement: one shaped by the moral convictions of well-formed consciences and focused on the dignity of every human being, the pursuit of the common good, and the protection of the weak and the vulnerable. As Pope Francis reminds us, “Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good. . . . I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor!” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 205). The Catholic call to faithful citizenship affirms the importance of political participation and insists that public service is a worthy vocation. As citizens, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to a political party or interest group. When necessary, our participation should help transform the party to which we belong; we should not let the party transform us in such a way that we neglect or deny fundamental moral truths or approve intrinsically evil acts. We are called to bring together our principles and our political choices, our values and our votes, to help build a civilization of truth and love.



Chapter V

The When of the Mission



The “When” of the Mission

Fifth Week of Easter

At the Easter Vigil, we heard from the Prophet Baruch: “Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life; listen, and know prudence!”

Prudence is the virtue that tells us when and how to act in any particular situation. If you have ever said to a child “just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should do it,” you have been a teacher of this virtue. In Catholic thought, prudence is known as “the charioteer of the virtues.” Because this virtue governs how we make our decisions, it is the cornerstone of how Catholics (and indeed all people) should carry out their activities in the political realm.

Although the word “prudence” has come to suggest hesitancy or undue cautiousness (if you are of a certain age, try to deny that you have the phrase “wouldn’t be prudent” running through your head right now), in reality this is a virtue that is anything but an excuse for delay. While prudence sometimes does require that we refrain from taking an action, at other times prudence requires swift and decisive action. Prudence is about doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way.

From American history comes an outstanding example of prudence in action in the political world: Abraham Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. The proclamation is worth a look here in Week 5 of our series, because it combined outstanding moral purposes with a shrewd, creative, and ultimately successful political strategy.

There are many ways that the proclamation employed the virtue of prudence, but since our focus this week is on the “when” of the mission in the public square, let’s take a look at the timing considerations that factored into these events.

To start with, we know now that the president first unveiled emancipation to his cabinet early in the summer of 1862. He did not issue the proclamation at that time, however. This was a point in the Civil War when there had been a string of significant Union military defeats. This led the president to conclude that, in order to avoid making it appear that the proclamation was being issued simply as an act of desperation, it was better not to formally issue the proclamation until after there had been

some substantial Union military victory. (This idea came from one of the members of the cabinet; we could do a separate discussion on President Lincoln and the virtue of humility as well). In the end, the public announcement of the proclamation did not happen until September.

The president further decided that he would not make the proclamation effective immediately. Instead, he announced that the effective date would be over two months later, on January 1, 1863. This was ostensibly to give the Confederate states the chance to end the war and avoid having emancipation imposed on them (the proclamation only applied in states that were in rebellion against the United States). Realistically, there was no chance of that happening, but the inclusion of this particular timing provision emphasized that the proclamation was a war measure being undertaken by the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, something that was a critical component of the legal and political underpinnings of the proclamation.

The president's timing decisions here also depended on a longer term strategy as well. Because the proclamation only applied to areas then in rebellion against the United States, the proclamation at first only applied in places where the U.S. government was not able to enforce it. Ultimately, in order to achieve complete abolition of slavery, it was necessary that the Constitution be amended, which happened with the adoption of the 13th Amendment in 1865. President Lincoln's strategy was based on an understanding that, for legal and political reasons, the slavery question would not be able to be completely resolved in one fell swoop through the use of a presidential war power.

So let's consider some lessons that we can draw from this.

First, while there can be a natural tendency to want to avoid conflict or dispute, sometimes the issues presented in a political setting are of such importance that we cannot sit on the sidelines. We simply have to act.

Second, though, the need to act does not answer the questions of when and how to act. This is where the virtue of prudence comes in. As the Emancipation Proclamation exemplified, it may well be the case that the best available outcome at a particular time is not the perfect outcome. It sometimes may be advisable or necessary to leave in place (temporarily, we'd hope) a situation to which we are greatly opposed (much as the success of the Emancipation Proclamation depended in the first instance precisely on the fact that for a time it did not actually free anyone).

The Church recognizes that politics is "the art of the possible." The bishops have made it clear that, consistent with the demands of prudence, even if it is impossible to achieve complete justice on a particular legislative issue, we should still work for incremental gains. This makes sense from a practical perspective, because in the political arena the principle of all or nothing at all often produces just that: nothing at all. Prudence gives us the ability to judge rightly between the various approaches that are available to us.

Baruch proclaims that God "has traced out the whole way of understanding." We believe this to be true, and so we know that we are called to bring the virtue of prudence to whatever we do in the public square. If you think that prudence is indeed a virtue that the political world can always use in greater abundance, then that is just one more reason why the body politic needs citizens like you, who will let the charioteer of the virtues drive the horse.

Resources | Chapter V

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1806

Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; “the prudent man looks where he is going.” “Keep sane and sober for your prayers.” Prudence is “right reason in action,” writes St. Thomas Aquinas, following Aristotle.

It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues); it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure. It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience. The prudent person determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.

USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* 19

The Church fosters well-formed consciences not only by teaching moral truth but also by encouraging its members to develop the virtue of prudence, which St. Ambrose described as “the charioteer of the virtues.” Prudence enables us “to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act decisively. Exercising this virtue often requires the courage to act in defense of moral principles when making decisions about how to build a society of justice and peace.

USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* 20

We have a responsibility to discern carefully which public policies are morally sound. Catholics may choose different ways to respond to compelling social problems, but we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means, so that the weak and vulnerable are protected and human rights and dignity are defended.



Chapter VI

The Resurrection and Caesar



The Resurrection and Caesar, Then and Now

Sixth Week of Easter

Jesus Christ is Lord.

- St. Paul, Letter to the Philippians (c. 55 AD)

He demanded to be called Lord and God.

- Suetonius, *The Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (c. 121 AD) (on the Emperor Domitian)

Sometime in the late summer of 111 AD, a new governor arrived in the Roman Province called Bithynia-Pontus, located in what is now northern Turkey. The governor's name was Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus; we know him today simply as Pliny.

Fortunately for us, Pliny was a cautious sort of bureaucrat and he had a habit of frequently writing his boss, the Emperor Trajan, concerning various routine matters. The texts of many of those letters have been preserved for us.

Around 112 AD, Pliny wrote a letter to Trajan concerning the people whom the governor referred to as *christiani* (the earliest surviving mention of Christians in a document outside ancient Christian or Jewish writings). He wrote to ask Trajan about the procedures to be followed in the trials of Christians. (The text of Pliny's letter can be found beginning on p. 52).

Pliny told Trajan that his practice had been to put the accused to death if they confessed to the charge of being a Christian. He also told the Emperor about a test that he had devised for those who denied the charge. The governor would have images of Trajan and the Roman gods brought into the room, and then he would call on the accused person to revile Christ and to make an offering of wine and incense before the images. To Pliny, this test was quite fool-proof (the modern reader can almost sense Pliny's self-satisfaction at having come up with such a brilliant plan). The payoff is explained in the letter: it was well-known that no real Christian would ever worship the Roman emperor or pay obeisance to the pagan gods.

One of the things that is notable about the Christians who were the subjects of Pliny's letter is that they lived in the same region to which the First Letter of Peter had been sent several decades earlier. This means that it is entirely possible that some of the people involved in Pliny's trials had also been on hand when Peter's letter first arrived among the local Christian communities. In any event, the Christians of Bithynia-Pontus

unquestionably would have been quite familiar with the apostolic letter (which, as you'll recall, reminded the Christians to pray for the emperor and to "always be ready to give a reason for this hope of yours.") In many ways, these forebears of ours embodied the complex relationship that has always existed between Caesar and the Church.

At one end of the spectrum, where totalitarian regimes demand total allegiance in all things (and thus inevitably require atheism as a state "creed"), the Church is very much in the same position as those Bithynian Christians on trial were, because it can never be the case that Christians can acknowledge anyone but Jesus Christ as Lord. This is the sense brought forward in the ancient text of the *Exsultet* from the Easter Vigil, which says that the power of the night of the Resurrection "curvat imperia;" literally that it "bends low earthly powers." (Note the present tense of the verb).

The question of allegiances does not come up only under totalitarian regimes, though. It can also arise with respect to the choices we are free to make ourselves. In this vein, we should always reflect on how our political decisions intermesh with our baptismal calling as followers of Christ. If we confess Jesus as Lord, then we need to ensure that we see our political allegiances through the lens of baptism, and not the other way around.

The other pole of the relationship between the Church and Caesar is one of service. Even when the Church was being persecuted in apostolic times, the Christians were reminded to pray for their rulers. This is still an important aspect of our public prayer life, as shown by the inclusion of a prayer for those in public office during the

Good Friday liturgy. This prayer may seem unexceptional for those of us who live with religious freedom, but think of the humility which that prayer demands from our brothers and sisters who are being persecuted by those same people that they are praying for.

Our service as citizens is to bring the light of faith to the political world so that Caesar can rule justly. Fortunately for us here in the United States, our state and national constitutions protect our rights as citizens to practice our religious faith. Both the civil law and the teaching of the Church contemplate that the religious world and the political world, though independent of one another, can and must work together for the common good.

We will follow the example of our ancestors in faith if we live out the call to be (as St. Thomas More put it) "the King's good servant, but God's first."

Resources | Chapter VI

1 Peter 2: 13-17

Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the approval of those who do good.

For it is the will of God that by doing good you may silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Be free, yet without using freedom as a pretext for evil, but as slaves of God.

Give honor to all, love the community, fear God, honor the king.

Exodus 15: 1

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:
I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.

Is 52: 7

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the one bringing good news,
Announcing peace, bearing good news,
announcing salvation, saying to Zion,
“Your God is King!”

Phil 2: 5-11

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus,

Who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.

Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance,

he humbled himself,
becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name
that is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue confess that
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Psalm 2

Why do the nations protest
and the peoples conspire in vain?

Kings on earth rise up
and princes plot together
against the LORD and against his anointed one:

Let us break their shackles
and cast off their chains from us!”

The one enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord derides them,

Then he speaks to them in his anger,
in his wrath he terrifies them:

“I myself have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD,
he said to me, “You are my son;
today I have begotten you.

Ask it of me,
and I will give you the nations as your inheritance,
and, as your possession, the ends of the earth.

With an iron rod you will shepherd them,
like a potter's vessel you will shatter them.”

And now, kings, give heed;
take warning, judges on earth.

Serve the LORD with fear;
exult with trembling,

Accept correction
lest he become angry and you perish along the way
when his anger suddenly blazes up.

Blessed are all who take refuge in him!

United States Constitution - Amendment 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

George Washington's Farewell Address (1796)

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.

Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)* 9

The declaration of this Vatican Council on the right of man to religious freedom has its foundation in the dignity of the person, whose exigencies have come to be are fully known to human reason through centuries of experience. What is more, this doctrine of freedom has roots in divine

revelation, and for this reason Christians are bound to respect it all the more conscientiously. Revelation does not indeed affirm in so many words the right of man to immunity from external coercion in matters religious. It does, however, disclose the dignity of the human person in its full dimensions. It gives evidence of the respect which Christ showed toward the freedom with which man is to fulfill his duty of belief in the word of God and it gives us lessons in the spirit which disciples of such a Master ought to adopt and continually follow. Thus further light is cast upon the general principles upon which the doctrine of this declaration on religious freedom is based. In particular, religious freedom in society is entirely consonant with the freedom of the act of Christian faith.

Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)* 76

It is very important, especially where a pluralistic society prevails, that there be a correct notion of the relationship between the political community and the Church, and a clear distinction between the tasks which Christians undertake, individually or as a group, on their own responsibility as citizens guided by the dictates of a Christian conscience, and the activities which, in union with their pastors, they carry out in the name of the Church.

The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified in any way with the political community nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person.

The Church and the political community in their own fields are autonomous and independent from each other. Yet both, under different titles, are devoted to the personal and social vocation of the same people. The more that both foster sounder cooperation between themselves with due consideration for the circumstances of time and place, the more effective will their service be exercised for the good of all. For man's horizons are not limited only to the temporal order; while living in the context of human history, he preserves intact his eternal vocation. The Church, for her part, founded on the love of the Redeemer, contributes toward the reign of justice and charity within the borders of a nation and between nations. By preaching the truths of the Gospel, and bringing to bear on all fields of human endeavor the light of her doctrine and of a Christian witness, she respects and fosters the political

freedom and responsibility of citizens.

New Hampshire Constitution - Part 1, Article 6

As morality and piety, rightly grounded on high principles, will give the best and greatest security to government, and will lay, in the hearts of men, the strongest obligations to due subjection; and as the knowledge of these is most likely to be propagated through a society, therefore, the several parishes, bodies, corporate, or religious societies shall at all times have the right of electing their own teachers, and of contracting with them for their support or maintenance, or both. But no person shall ever be compelled to pay towards the support of the schools of any sect or denomination. And every person, denomination or sect shall be equally under the protection of the law; and no subordination of any one sect, denomination or persuasion to another shall ever be established. (June 2, 1784)

Acts 17: 16-31

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he grew exasperated at the sight of the city full of idols.

So he debated in the synagogue with the Jews and with the worshipers, and daily in the public square with whoever happened to be there.

Even some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers engaged him in discussion. Some asked, “What is this scavenger trying to say?” Others said, “He sounds like a promoter of foreign deities,” because he was preaching about ‘Jesus’ and ‘Resurrection.’”

They took him and led him to the Areopagus and said, “May we learn what this new teaching is that you speak of?”

For you bring some strange notions to our ears; we should like to know what these things mean.”

Now all the Athenians as well as the foreigners residing there used their time for nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

Then Paul stood up at the Areopagus and said:
“You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very religious.

For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I even discovered an altar inscribed, ‘To an Unknown God.’ What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.

The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands,

nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything.

He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions,

so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us.

For ‘In him we live and move and have our being,’ as even some of your poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’

Since therefore we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the divinity is like an image fashioned from gold, silver, or stone by human art and imagination.

God has overlooked the times of ignorance, but now he demands that all people everywhere repent

because he has established a day on which he will ‘judge the world with justice’ through a man he has appointed, and he has provided confirmation for all by raising him from the dead.”

Pope Emeritus Benedict, Address to the Representatives of British Society (2010)

Each generation, as it seeks to advance the common good, must ask anew: what are the requirements that governments may reasonably impose upon

citizens, and how far do they extend? By appeal to what authority can moral dilemmas be resolved? These questions take us directly to the ethical foundations of civil discourse. If the moral principles underpinning the democratic process are themselves determined by nothing more solid than social consensus, then the fragility of the process becomes all too evident - herein lies the real challenge for democracy.

The inadequacy of pragmatic, short-term solutions to complex social and ethical problems has been illustrated all too clearly by the recent global financial crisis. There is widespread agreement that the lack of a solid ethical foundation for economic activity has contributed to the grave difficulties now being experienced by millions of people throughout the world. Just as “every economic decision has a moral consequence” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 37), so too in the political field, the ethical dimension of policy has far-reaching consequences that no government can afford to ignore. A positive illustration of this is found in one of the British Parliament’s particularly notable achievements – the abolition of the slave trade. The campaign that led to this landmark legislation was built upon firm ethical principles, rooted in the natural law, and it has made a contribution to civilization of which this nation may be justly proud.

The central question at issue, then, is this: where is the ethical foundation for political choices to be found? The Catholic tradition maintains that the objective norms governing right action are accessible to reason, prescinding from the content of revelation. According to this understanding, the role of religion in political debate is not so much to supply these norms, as if they could not be known by non-believers – still less to propose concrete political solutions, which would lie altogether outside the competence of religion – but rather to help purify and shed light upon the application of reason to the discovery of objective moral principles. This “corrective” role of religion vis-à-vis reason is not always welcomed, though, partly because distorted forms of religion, such as sectarianism and fundamentalism, can be seen to create serious social problems themselves. And in their turn, these distortions of religion arise when insufficient attention is given to the purifying and structuring role of reason within religion. It is a two-way process. Without the corrective supplied by religion, though, reason too can fall prey to distortions, as when it is manipulated by ideology, or applied in a partial way that fails to take full account of the dignity of the human person.

Such misuse of reason, after all, was what gave rise to the slave trade in the first place and to many other social evils, not least the totalitarian ideologies of the twentieth century. This is why I would suggest that the world of reason and the world of faith – the world of secular rationality and the world of religious belief – need one another and should not be afraid to enter into a profound and ongoing dialogue, for the good of our civilization.

Religion, in other words, is not a problem for legislators to solve, but a vital contributor to the national conversation. In this light, I cannot but voice my concern at the increasing marginalization of religion, particularly of Christianity, that is taking place in some quarters, even in nations which place a great emphasis on tolerance. There are those who would advocate that the voice of religion be silenced, or at least relegated to the purely private sphere. There are those who argue that the public celebration of festivals such as Christmas should be discouraged, in the questionable belief that it might somehow offend those of other religions or none. And there are those who argue – paradoxically with the intention of eliminating discrimination – that Christians in public roles should be required at times to act against their conscience.

These are worrying signs of a failure to appreciate not only the rights of believers to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, but also the legitimate role of religion in the public square. I would invite all of you, therefore, within your respective spheres of influence, to seek ways of promoting and encouraging dialogue between faith and reason at every level of national life.

Letter of Gaius Plinius, Roman Governor of Bithynia-Pontus, to the Emperor Trajan (c. 112 AD); Pliny *Letters* 10.96

It is my customary practice, my lord, to submit questions to you regarding issues where I am in doubt. After all, who is better situated to set me on the right path and dispel my ignorance?

I have never been present at trials of Christians. Thus, I am unaware of the reasons for, or the limits on, their punishment or questioning. I am particularly uncertain whether there should be any distinctions drawn between the young and the old; whether to relieve those who recant;

whether it should matter that a person was a Christian only in the past; and whether punishment is due to Christians simply on account of the name, or if there need to be offenses in addition to the name.

This is the procedure that I have been following so far in cases involving people brought before me as Christians.

First I ask if they are Christians. If they admit to this, I ask a second and third time, holding out the threat of punishment. If they persist, I have them executed. I do this because it is undeniably true, whatever the nature of their confession, that they certainly merit punishment on account of their obstinacy and inflexible stubbornness. There are actually some citizens of Rome who share in this madness; I have ordered that these ones be remanded to Rome.

Not surprisingly, soon after this process was put into place, many sorts of accusations began to be made. An anonymous letter was circulated that listed the names of a number of people. I dismissed the charges against the ones who denied that they had ever been Christians, but only if they invoked the gods using a formula dictated to them by me, made an offering of incense and wine before your image and some statues of the gods which I directed to be brought in for this purpose, and then renounced Christ. I am told that these are things that no actual Christian could ever be made to do.

Some of the ones who were named by the informer admitted that they had indeed been Christians at one time in the past, but only briefly (for some of them it was three years previously; for some others it had been many years; and for not a few it was as many as twenty years ago). Everyone in this group participated in the veneration of your image and the statues of the gods, and made the renunciation of Christ.

These people said that the full extent of their guilt or error was that they would regularly assemble before dawn on a fixed day of the week to sing a hymn to Christ as if to a god, and bind themselves together by a pledge – not a pledge to commit some sort of crime, but rather a pledge that they would commit no robbery, theft, or adultery, that they would break no agreement, and that they would never refuse to pay back a trust when called on to do so. The members of the group would then go their separate ways but reconvene later on in order to partake of food (of a common and harmless sort). They

said that they stopped engaging in these activities after I issued my edict forbidding political associations, in accordance with the directives you had given.

I thought it quite necessary to get to the truth by torturing two female slaves (called assistants). But I learned nothing other than a depraved and unrestrained superstition.

Therefore, I put the trials on hold and hastened to consult with you, because it seemed to me that this issue is of sufficient importance to ask you about, given the large numbers of people who are imperiled. There are many men and women of every age and rank who are now being drawn (or who will be drawn) into danger here. The contagion of this contemptible superstition has spread widely not just throughout the cities, but also through the villages and farms as well.

It seems to me, however, that it is possible to stem this tide and put things back in order. It is clearly evident that the temple areas, which were nearly deserted, are now beginning to be filled with worshippers once again. The sacred rites, which were neglected for a long time, have been recommenced. And although up until recently there was barely any market for sacrificial animals, those animals are now coming in for sale from all the surrounding regions. So it is easy to imagine just how many people can be freed of this error if an opportunity for repentance is provided.





Chapter VII

The Spirit and the Mission



The Spirit and the Mission

Seventh Week of Easter

Not surprisingly for a Gospel that starts with the words “In the beginning,” the Passion and Resurrection narratives in the Gospel of John highlight many connections between the historical events of the first Holy Week and the beginning of the Book of Genesis. On Friday, the sixth day of the week, the day when Genesis describes the creation of man and woman, Pilate presents Jesus to the crowd with the proclamation “Behold the man.” On that same sixth day of the week, when Genesis says that “the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed,” Jesus’ last words on the cross are “It is finished.” On Saturday, the seventh day, when Genesis says that God rested from his work of creation, Jesus rests in the tomb. And then on Sunday, the first day of the week, the day when creation first began, the new creation begins – and where else, but in a garden. Mary Magdalene is not really wrong when she mistakes Jesus for the gardener, because John would have us understand that Jesus is indeed the man in the garden—the new Adam.

If we are talking about creation, it means that we are talking about the Holy Spirit,

the animating presence that is looming everywhere behind creation both old and new. To stay with the Gospel of John, for instance, at the first meeting between the Risen Jesus and the disciples on the evening of Easter Sunday, Jesus breathes on them and says “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Although the days of Easter and Pentecost are 50 days apart in the liturgical calendar, the Church makes it clear that the 50-day Season of Easter is celebrated as if it were a single feast day. As St. Paul would say in the Letter to the Romans: “If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.”

So here during this last week of the Easter Season let’s ask ourselves what it means to be a part of this New Creation that God has brought into being.

For one thing, we are called to share in God’s own judgment concerning creation as described in the first chapter of Genesis: that it is “very good.” This “first judgment,” so to speak, is definitively affirmed by the

bodily resurrection of Jesus (not to mention the resurrection of our own bodies). As we have talked about earlier in this series, this means that we are not simply biding time until the next life; we have a job to do in the here and now.

Our work in the public square is part of that task. When we play our part in the political world, we are proving the point that we believe that creation is good and that religion is not just a matter for the world to come. The mission in the public square is an act of witness that, in the face of the “throwaway culture” which sees worth in wealth or celebrity or power, each and every human being has been given an inalienable dignity simply as a child of God, our all-loving Creator.

The other point to consider here is that the Spirit is always present with us to inspire and guide our work. In the back and forth of life and of politics in particular, the Spirit

elevates us to see the world through a different sort of lens. As Pope Francis said in his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*:

You need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today's world.

Each Easter Season is God's annual invitation to recommit ourselves to our baptismal calling as priests, prophets and kings. May this Easter inspire us to be missionaries of the Risen Jesus in the public square, and to dedicate ourselves to bringing the joy and hope of Easter to every person we will encounter over the coming year.

Resources | Chapter VII

1 Gen - 2 Gen: 1-3

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth—

and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters—

Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light.

God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” Evening came, and morning followed—the first day.

Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other.

God made the dome, and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened.

God called the dome “sky.” Evening came, and morning followed—the second day.

Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.

God called the dry land “earth,” and the basin of water he called “sea.” God saw that it was good.

Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened:

the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good.

Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

Then God said: Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the seasons, the days and the years,

and serve as lights in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth. And so it happened:

God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night, and the stars.

God set them in the dome of the sky, to illuminate the earth,

to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good.

Evening came, and morning followed—the fourth day.

Then God said: Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.

God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of crawling living creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw that it was good,

and God blessed them, saying: Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth.

Evening came, and morning followed—the fifth day.

Then God said: Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: tame animals, crawling things, and every kind of wild animal. And so it happened:

God made every kind of wild animal, every kind of tame animal, and every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. God saw that it was good.

Then God said: Let us make* human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

God created mankind in his image;
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.

God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened.

God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.

On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

Gal 4: 4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.

As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'

So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Micah 4: 2

Many nations shall come, and say,
“Come, let us climb the LORD’s mountain,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
That he may instruct us in his ways,
that we may walk in his paths.”
For from Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Rom 8: 11

If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Is 61: 1-4

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
release to the prisoners,

To announce a year of favor from the LORD
and a day of vindication by our God;
To comfort all who mourn;

to place on those who mourn in Zion
a diadem instead of ashes,
To give them oil of gladness instead of mourning,
a glorious mantle instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of justice,
the planting of the LORD to show his glory.

They shall rebuild the ancient ruins,
the former wastes they shall raise up
And restore the desolate cities,
devastations of generation upon generation.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium)* 178

To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that “he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity.” To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennoble each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because “God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men.” To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds: “The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, even the most complex and inscrutable.”

Evangelization is meant to cooperate with this liberating work of the Spirit. The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfilment or salvation purely by our own efforts. From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)* 23-24

This is a powerful summons to all of us. You too need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today’s world.

May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.



Afterword

You may have noticed that there is no chapter in this Sourcebook concerning the “What” of the mission. In part this is because the Resources section of this Sourcebook will give you links to places where you can learn more about how the Church looks at various issues that are at stake in the public square.

Perhaps naturally enough we Catholics have tended to think of victory or defeat on those individual issues as the ultimate goal of the Church’s mission in the public square.

As important as that part of the mission is, though, it is not the ultimate goal. The “What” of the mission cannot be reduced merely to individual issues. The Church, especially through the sacraments, sets before us a far more profound and audacious goal: the transformation of the public square itself in the love of God.

And so we end with these two sources for reflection, and the prayer that we who have been transfigured by the love of God in Christ Jesus will be inspired to transfigure the public square in that love by making our lives an offering on behalf of our brothers and sisters.

The Church, the sign in history of God’s love for humanity and of the vocation of the whole human race to unity as children of the one Father, intends...to propose to all men and women a humanism that is up to the standards of God’s plan of love in history, an integral and solidary humanism capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity. This humanism can become a reality if individual men and women and their communities are able to cultivate moral and social virtues in themselves and spread them in society. “Then, under the necessary help of divine grace, there will arise a generation of new men and women, the molders of a new humanity.”

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 19

Jesus' gift of himself in the sacrament which is the memorial of his passion tells us that the success of our lives is found in our participation in the trinitarian life offered to us truly and definitively in him. The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love. The offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers and our solidarity with all men and women are essential aspects of that *logiké latreía*, spiritual worship, holy and pleasing to God (cf. Rom 12:1), which transforms every aspect of our human existence, to the glory of God.

Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, 94.

If you would like to learn about the issues that Catholics are working on in Concord and in Washington DC, or if you want to find out how you, too, can play a role in the Mission in the Public Square, here are some further resources to review:

For information on the public policy work of the Diocese of Manchester:
<http://www.catholicnh.org/community/public-policy>

For information on national advocacy efforts by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops:
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm>

To see the full text of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*:
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

The full versions of the other documents from which the excerpts in this Sourcebook are taken can be accessed through the web addresses that may be found in the Acknowledgments section that follows.

Acknowledgement and Reference Attribution for Images

Scripture quotes and references are adapted and reprinted from USCCB.org and retrieved from:

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/index.cfm>

USCCB.org quotes and references are adapted and reprinted from USCCB.org as follows:

- USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, retrieved from <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm>

Conciliar, Papal, Catechism quotes and references are adapted and reprinted from Vatican.va as follows:

- Second Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on The Church (Lumen Gentium)*, retrieved from: https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
- Second Vatican Council, *Decree of the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem)*, retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html
- Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html
- Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae), retrieved from: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html

- Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudi-um)*, retrieved from: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html
- Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Rejoice and Be Glad (Gaudete et Exsultate)*, retrieved from: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20180319_gaudete-et-exsultate.html
- Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, retrieved from: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, retrieved from: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/>
- Pope Emeritus Benedict, Address to the Representatives of British Society (2010), retrieved from: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100917_societa-civile.html
- Pliny Letters - translation by R. Dunn (2020), used with permission.
- United States Constitution - Amendment 1, retrieved from: <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/bill-of-rights-transcript#toc-amendment-1>
- New Hampshire Constitution - Part 1, Article 6, retrieved from: <https://www.nh.gov/glance/bill-of-rights.htm>
- George Washington's Farewell Address (1796), retrieved from: https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.pdf

Image attribution

Cover Photo

Hafun, J. (2011, July 24). Milan Cathedral [Photograph]. Wikimedia Commons.

Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:20110724_Milan_Cathedral_5266.jpg [Accessed 4 April 2023].

Chapter 1

S, Katrina. No title. [image] Available at:

https://pixabay.com/users/katrina_s-5565009/ [Accessed 9 April 2020].
License <https://pixabay.com/service/license/>

Chapter 2

Perugino, Pietro. Delivery of the Keys. 1481-1482. [image] Available at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delivery_of_the_Keys_\(Perugino\)#/media/File:Entrega_de_las_llaves_a_San_Pedro_\(Perugino\).jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delivery_of_the_Keys_(Perugino)#/media/File:Entrega_de_las_llaves_a_San_Pedro_(Perugino).jpg)
[Accessed 9 April 2020]

Chapter 3

Giampietrino. The Last Supper. circa 1520. [image] Available at:

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Giampietrino-Last-Supper-ca-1520.jpg> [Accessed 9 April 2020].

Nheyob. St Michael the Archangel, Findlay, OH - bread and wine. 2011.

[image] Available at: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17356823>. [Accessed 9 April 2020]. CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17356823>

Chapter 4

Fontebasso, Francesco. St Leonard between Lawrence Giustiniani, Andrew the Apostle and Saint Nicholas. 18th century. Church of San Salvatore (Venice, Italy). Photo by Descouens, Didier (May 12, 2015). [image] Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Salvador_Interno - Francesco Fontebasso San Leonardo tra i santi Lorenzo Giustiniani, Andrea e Nicolo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Salvador_Interno_-_Francesco_Fontebasso_San_Leonardo_tra_i_santi_Lorenzo_Giustiniani,_Andrea_e_Nicolo.jpg). This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Chapter 5

RobertCheaib. No Title. [image] Available at: <https://pixabay.com/users/robertcheaib-616663/>. [Accessed 9 April 2020]. License: <https://pixabay.com/service/license/>

Michalangelo. The Creation of Adam. circa 1511. [image] Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo - Creation of Adam \(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo_-_Creation_of_Adam_(cropped).jpg) [Accessed 9 April 2020].

Chapter 6

Rubens, Peter Paul. The Tribute Money. circa 1612. [image] Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rubens_tribute_money.jpg [Accessed 9 April 2020].

Two Coins

Aureus. Auguste (Gold coin). 10 BCE. Lyon. 7.90 g. [image] Available at: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aureus, Auguste, Lyon, btv1b104440369.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aureus,_Auguste,_Lyon,_btv1b104440369.jpg) [Accessed 9 April 2020]. In the public domain under the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Calaphates, Michael V. +IhS XIS REX REgNANTIhM, Christ enthroned facing, raising right hand in benediction & holding book of Gospels in left (Gold histamenon nomisma). Circa 1041-1042. 4.44 gm. [image] Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Histamenon_nomisma-Micael_V-sb1776.jpg [Accessed 9 April 2020]. GNU Free Documentation License (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:GNU_Free_Documentation_License)

Chapter 7

PetrusSilesius. Stained Glass Window In A Chapel Beside Saint Joseph's Church In Zabrze. 2007.[image] Available at: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zabrze_St._Joseph%27s_Church_window.jpg> [Accessed 9 April 2020]. License https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/en:GNU_Free_Documentation_License

Bernini, Gian Lorenzo. Isolated crop of just the Dove of the Holy Spirit in the stained glass window above the Cathedra Petri in St. Peter's Basilica. Circa 1660. Photo by Becks (February 18, 2013). [image] Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dove_of_the_Holy_Spirit.png [Accessed 9 April 2020].

[Inside Back Cover; Intentionally Blank]



For more information,
please visit catholicnh.org