

1/F

POPE

THE AMERICA PRESS

CATHOLIC CHURCH. POPE, 1963-
(PAULUS VI). ECCLESIAM SUAM.

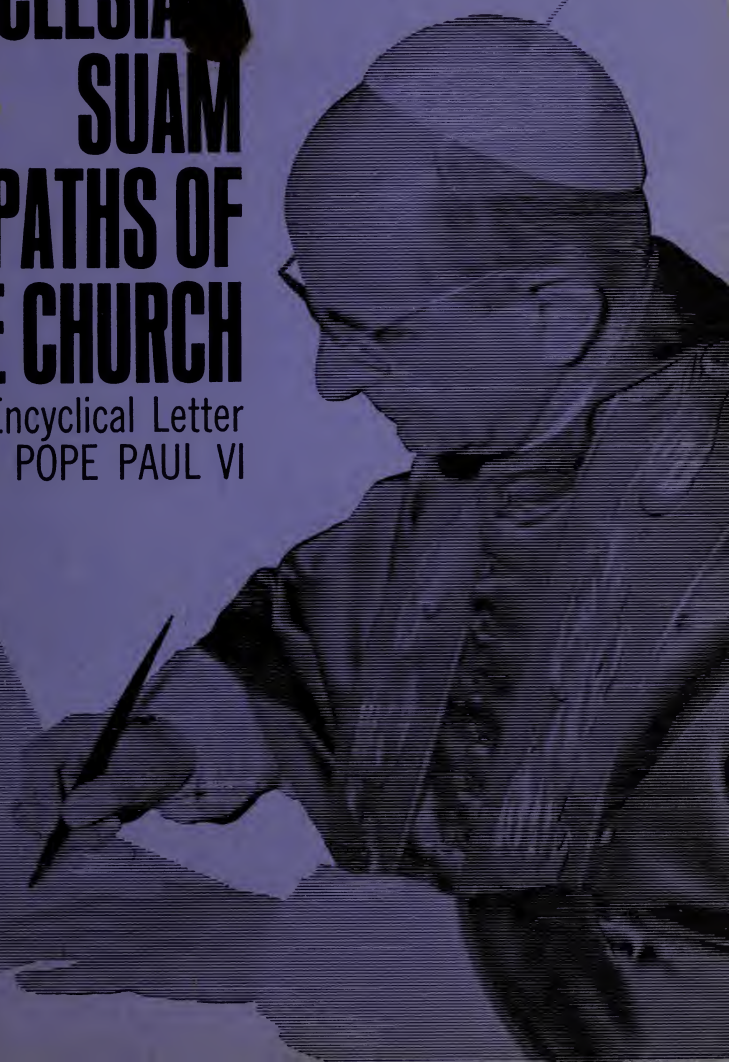
LIBRARY

SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE

NOTRE DAME, INDIANA

ECCLESIAM SUAM THE PATHS OF THE CHURCH

The First Encyclical Letter
of POPE PAUL VI



ECCLESIAM SUAM THE PATHS OF THE CHURCH

(PAGE 2)

Text of Ecclesiam Suam

(CENTER PAGES)

Topical Summary

(PAGE 60)

Review Questions

(INSIDE BACK COVER)

Selected Bibliography

To Our Venerable Brothers

The Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops

And Other Local Ordinaries

In Peace and Communion With the Apostolic See,

To the Clergy and Faithful of the Whole World

And to All Men of Good Will

POPE PAUL IV

Venerable Brothers

And Beloved Children,

Health and Apostolic Benediction

Prologue

PURPOSE OF ENCYCLICAL

1. Since Jesus Christ founded His Church to be the loving mother of all men and the dispenser of salvation, it is obvious why she has always been specially loved and cherished by those with the glory of God and the eternal salvation of men at heart, among whom, as is fitting, the Vicars of Christ on earth, vast numbers of bishops and priests and a wonderful host of saintly Christians have been conspicuous.

2. It will, then, not seem strange to anyone that, in addressing to the world this first encyclical after Our elevation, in God's inscrutable design, to the pontifical throne, We should turn Our thoughts with love and reverence toward Holy Church.

3. Consequently, We propose to Ourselves in this encyclical the task of showing more clearly to all men the Church's importance for the salvation of mankind, and her heartfelt desire that Church and mankind should meet each other and should come to know and love each other.

4. At the opening of the second session of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel last year, through the goodness of God We had the opportunity of speaking to all of you as you were gathered in the basilica of St. Peter. On that occasion We made clear Our intention to address you also in writing, as is customary at the

outset of each pontificate, with brotherly and fatherly words, in order to communicate to you some of the dominant thoughts in Our heart that seem useful as practical guidelines at the beginning of Our service as Pope.

5. It is truly difficult for Us to specify such thoughts, because We ought to derive them from the attentive meditation of the teaching of God, We Ourselves always keeping in mind those words of Christ: *My doctrine is not so much mine as that of him who sent me.*¹ Further, We ought to apply Our thoughts to the present situation of the Church at a time when both energy and toil characterize its internal spiritual experience as well as its external apostolic efforts. Finally, We ought not to ignore the contemporary state of humanity, in the midst of which Our mission is to be accomplished.

6. But it is not Our intention to express either ideas that are new or ideas that are fully developed. The Ecumenical Council exists for that purpose. Its work should not be disturbed by this simple conversational letter of Ours; rather, it is to be commended and encouraged.

7. This encyclical intends neither to claim a solemn and strictly doctrinal function, nor to propose particular moral or social teachings, but merely to communicate a fraternal and informal message.

8. In fact, through this document We wish simply to fulfill Our duty of revealing Our mind to you in order to impart closer cohesion and deeper joy to that unity in faith and charity which, thank God, binds us together. We hope thereby to inject new vigor into Our sacred work, to await more profitably the effective deliberations of the Ecumenical Council, and to impart greater clarity to some doctrinal and practical norms that can give helpful guidance to the spiritual and apostolic activity, not only of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and of all who respond to it

1. John 7:16.

THREE BASIC CONCERNS

with obedience and collaboration, but even of those who regard it merely with kindly attention.

9. We will tell you without further delay, Venerable Brethren, that there are three thoughts that continually disturb Our heart when We reflect on the exalted responsibility that, contrary to what We desire and out of all proportion to what We deserve, Providence has willed to entrust to Us.

We bear the responsibility of ruling the Church of Christ because We hold the office of Bishop of Rome and consequently the office of successor to the blessed Apostle Peter, the bearer of the master keys to the Kingdom of God, the vicar of the same Christ who made of him the supreme shepherd of His world-wide flock.

10. The first thought is that this is the hour in which the Church should deepen its consciousness of itself, in which it ought to meditate on that mystery which is peculiar to it, in which it ought to examine, for its own enlightenment and for its own development, a particular doctrine that it already knows and that it has formulated and made known during this past century.

That doctrine concerns the origin of the Church, its nature, its mission, its ultimate destiny—a doctrine never sufficiently investigated and understood inasmuch as it contains *the publication of a mystery, kept hidden from the beginning of time in the all-creating mind of God . . . in order that it may be made known . . . through the Church.*² This teaching is a mysterious storehouse, or, in other words, a treasury of the mysterious plans of God, which are to be revealed through the Church; it is today more than anything else conducive to meditation for everyone who wishes to be a docile follower of Christ

2. Eph. 3:9-10.

and, to an even greater degree, for every man whom, like Ourselves and you, Venerable Brethren, *the Holy Spirit has appointed as bishops to govern the very Church of God.*³

11. From this enlightened and effective realization arises the spontaneous desire to compare the ideal image of the Church, just as Christ sees it, wills it and loves it as His holy and immaculate spouse,⁴ with the actual image that the Church projects today, faithful, through the grace of God, to the features that its Divine Founder imparted to it and that, through the course of the centuries, the Holy Spirit has energized and developed in a way that is more comprehensive and more in accord with the initial concept of the Church and with the nature of the human race, which it is continually evangelizing and elevating.

But the actual image of the Church is never as perfect, as lovely, as holy or as brilliant as that formative divine idea would wish it to be.

12. Hence there arises the unselfish and almost impatient need for renewal, for correction of the defects that this conscience denounces and rejects, as if, standing before a mirror, we were to examine interiorly the image of Christ that He has left us. To find the contemporary duty, so clearly incumbent on the Church, of correcting the defects of its members and of leading them to greater perfection; to find the way to achieve wisely so sweeping a renovation—this is the second thought that burdens Our heart and that We would like to reveal to you, in order not only to find greater courage to undertake the necessary reforms but also to secure from your collaboration both advice and support in so delicate and difficult an undertaking.

13. Our third thought, certainly shared by you, follows from the first two, and concerns the relationships that the Church of today should establish with the world that surrounds it and in which it lives and labors.

3. Cf. Acts 20:28.

4. Cf. Eph. 5:27.

14. One part of this world, as everyone knows, has undergone the profound influence of Christianity and has assimilated it so completely that often it fails to realize that it owes the credit for its greatest gifts to Christianity itself, but in recent times has come to the point of separating and detaching itself from the Christian foundations of its culture. Another and larger part of the world extends to the boundless horizons of those that are termed emerging nations. But, taken as a whole, it is a world that offers the Church, not one, but a hundred forms of possible contacts, of which some are unimpeded and beckoning, some are sensitive and complex, and, unfortunately, in these days, many are hostile and impervious to friendly dialogue.

15. Thus we meet what has been termed the problem of the dialogue between the Church and the modern world. This is a problem that it will be for the Council to determine in its vastness and complexity, and to solve, as far as possible, to the best of its ability. But its existence and its urgency are such as to create a burden on Our soul, a stimulus, a vocation, one might term it, that we would wish, both Ourselves and you, Brothers, who are surely not less experienced than We in this apostolic anguish, to clarify in some way in order to prepare ourselves somehow for the discussions and deliberations that we shall try, together in the Council, to outline in our treatment of a matter so weighty and complex.

16. Surely you will notice that this summary outline of Our encyclical does not envisage the treatment of urgent and serious topics that involve not only the Church but humanity itself, such as peace among nations and among social classes, the destitution and famine that still plague entire countries, the rise of new nations toward independence and civic progress, the currents of modern thought and Christian culture, the sad conditions of so many people and of so many segments of the Church

where the rights of free citizens and human beings are denied, the moral problems associated with birth rates and so on.

17. Regarding the great and universal question of world peace, We say at once that We shall feel it specially incumbent upon Us not merely to devote a watchful and understanding interest, but also to entertain a more assiduous and efficacious concern. This will be, of course, within the limits of Our ministry and thus utterly divorced from purely temporal interests and strictly political forms, but it will be eager to make its contribution in educating mankind to sentiments and ways of acting contrary to violent and deadly conflict, and in fostering rational and civilized agreements for peaceful relations between nations.

We shall also be solicitous to help by proclaiming higher human principles, which should serve to temper the passions and selfishness from which armed conflicts spring, and promote the harmonious relations and fruitful collaboration of all peoples, and We shall be ready to intervene, where an opportunity presents itself, in order to assist the contending parties to find honorable and fraternal solutions for their disputes.

We do not, indeed, forget that this loving service is a duty that the development of doctrine, on the one hand, and of international institutions, on the other, has rendered all the more urgent in Our awareness of Our Christian mission in the world today. This mission is none other than making men brothers by virtue of the kingdom of justice and peace inaugurated by Christ's coming into the world.

18. But even if We now limit Ourselves to some methodological considerations concerning the life of the Church, We do not therefore forget those great problems. To some of them the Council will devote its attention, while We personally will make them the objects of Our study and of Our action in the course of the exercise of Our apostolic ministry, as it shall please the Lord to give Us the inspiration and the strength for the task.

I Self-Awareness

CALL FOR AWARENESS

19. We think that it is a duty today for the Church to deepen the awareness that she must have of herself, of the treasure of truth of which she is heir and custodian, and of her mission in the world. Even before proposing for study any particular question, and even before considering what attitude to assume before the world around her, the Church in this moment must reflect on herself to find strength in the knowledge of her place in the divine plan; to find again greater light, new energy and fuller joy in the fulfilment of her own mission; and to determine the best means for making more immediate, more efficacious and more beneficial her contacts with mankind, to which she belongs, even though distinguished from it by unique and unmistakable characteristics.

20. Indeed it seems to Us that such an act of reflection can look to the very manner chosen by God to reveal Himself to men and to establish with them those religious bonds of which the Church is both the instrument and the expression. Because if it is true that divine revelation was made *in many ways and by many means*⁵ in an established historical context, none the less it entered into human life by ways proper to the human word and the grace of God, who communicates Himself interiorly to men by their listening to the message of salvation

5. Heb. 1:1.

and by the act of faith that follows and that is at the beginning of our justification.

21. We should wish this reflection on the origin and on the nature of the new and vital relationship that the religion of Christ establishes between God and man to become an act of docility to the words the Divine Teacher spoke to His listeners, and especially to His disciples, among whom even today, and with good reason, We Ourselves like to be considered.

From among so many We will choose one of the weightiest and most often repeated recommendations made to them by our Lord, which is still valid today for whoever wishes to be His faithful follower, namely, vigilance.

22. It is true that this warning of our Master has to do principally with man's final destiny, be it proximate or remote in time. But precisely because this vigilance should always be present and operative in the conscience of the faithful servant, it determines his everyday behavior, characteristic of the Christian in the world.

The Lord's reminder about vigilance is also made with reference to close and immediate things, that is, to the dangers and temptations that can threaten damage or ruin to man's conduct.⁶ Thus, it is easy to discover in the gospel a continuous appeal to rectitude of thought and action.

Was this not indeed the theme of the Precursor's preaching, by which the public phase of the Gospel begins? And did not Jesus Christ Himself call for the Kingdom of God to be received interiorly?⁷ Is not His whole pedagogy an exhortation and an initiation to the interior life? Psychological awareness and moral conscience are both called by Christ to a simultaneous maturity, as a condition for receiving the divine gifts of truth and of grace, as ultimately befits man. And this

6. Cf. Matt. 26:41.

7. Cf. Luke 17:21.

awareness of the disciple will later become his recollection⁸ of what Jesus taught and of what took place around Him; it will develop and will lead the mind to understand who He was and what He taught and did.

SUMMONS TO ALL BELIEVERS

23. The birth of the Church and the enlightenment of her prophetic consciousness are the two characteristic events that coincide with Pentecost. Together they will progress: the Church will advance in her organization and in the development of her hierarchy and of the body of the faithful; more awareness of her vocation, of her mysterious nature, of her doctrine, of her mission will accompany this gradual development. This will be according to the desire of St. Paul: *And this is my prayer for you; may your love grow richer and richer yet, in the fullness of its knowledge and the depth of its perception.*⁹

24. We could express this invitation in another way, which We address to each of those who wish to receive it—that is, to each of you, Venerable Brothers, and to your followers, as also the *gathering of the faithful* considered as a whole, which is the Church. And thus We could invite all men to make a living, profound and conscious act of faith in Jesus Christ.

We should mark this moment of our religious life by such a profession of faith, firm and resolute, though always humble and timorous, similar to the one we read about in the Gospel, uttered by the man born blind, whose eyes Jesus Christ had opened with a goodness equal to His power: *I do believe, Lord!*¹⁰ Or that of Martha in the same Gospel: *Yes, Lord, I have learned to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,*

8. Cf. Matt. 26:75; Luke 24:8; John 14:26 and 16:4.

9. Phil. 1:9.

10. John 9:38.

*he who has come into this world,*¹¹ or that, specially dear to Us, of Simon, who was later to become Peter: *You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.*¹²

25. Why do We have the boldness to invite you to this act of ecclesiastical awareness? To this explicit, though interior, act of faith?

26. Many are the reasons, in Our opinion, and they all derive from the profound and key demands of the unique moment reached in the life of the Church.

27. The Church needs to reflect on herself. She needs to feel the throb of her own life. She must learn to know herself better, if she wishes to live her proper vocation and to offer to the world her message of brotherhood and of salvation.

She needs to experience Christ in herself, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: *May Christ find a dwelling place, through faith, in your hearts.*¹³

MISGUIDED EFFORTS

28. It is known to all that the Church has her roots deep in mankind, that she is part of it, that she draws her members from it, that she receives from it precious treasures of culture, that she suffers from its historical vicissitudes, that she favors its progress.

Now, it is likewise known that at present mankind is undergoing great transformations, upheavals and developments that are profoundly changing not only its exterior modes of life but also its ways of thinking. Mankind's range of thought, culture and spirit have been intimately modified either by scientific, technical and social progress or by the currents of philosophical and political thought that overwhelm or pass through

11. *Ibid.*, 11:27.

12. Matt. 16:16.

13. Eph. 3:17.

it. All this, like the waves of an ocean, envelops and agitates the Church itself. Men committed to the Church are greatly influenced by the climate of the world; so much so that a danger bordering almost on dizzying confusion and bewilderment can shake the Church's very foundations and lead men to embrace most bizarre ways of thinking, as though the Church should disavow herself and take up the very latest and untried ways of life.

Was not the phenomenon of Modernism, for example, which still crops up in certain attempts at formulating what is foreign to the authentic nature of the Catholic religion, an episode of subversion aimed at the faithful and genuine expression of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of Christ by psychological and cultural forces of the profane world? Now it seems to Us that to check the oppressive and complex danger coming from many sides, a good and obvious remedy is for the Church to deepen her awareness of what she really is according to the mind of Christ, as preserved in Sacred Scripture and in Tradition, and interpreted and developed by the authentic tradition of the Church. The Church is, as we know, enlightened and guided by the Holy Spirit, who is still ready, if we implore Him and listen to Him, to fulfill without fail the promise of Christ: *the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send on my account, will in his turn make everything plain, and recall to your minds everything I have said to you.*¹⁴

29. We could make a similar discourse concerning errors that circulate even within the Church, into which fall those who have but a partial understanding of its nature and of its mission, and who do not pay close enough attention to the documents of divine Revelation and of the teaching body established by Christ Himself.

30. Moreover, this need to consider in reflection things

14. John 14:26.

that are known, in order to contemplate them in the interior mirror of one's own mind, is characteristic of the mentality of modern man. His thought easily turns back upon itself and finds certitude and fullness in the light of its own conscience. We must say that this process is not free of serious danger. Philosophical movements of great renown have studied and extolled this form of man's spiritual activity as something definitive and supreme, as though it were the measure and source of reality, urging thought on to conclusions that are abstruse, barren, contradictory and radically fallacious.

But this does not mean that an education aiming at the search for reflex truth within man's consciousness is not to be appreciated and accepted today as a most refined expression of modern culture. Indeed, this habit, carefully coordinated with the development of thought for the purpose of discovering truth where it coincides with objective reality, does not prevent the exercise of the consciousness from manifesting to the one who undertakes it the fact of his existence, of his spiritual dignity and of his ability to know and to act.

LAUDABLE ADVANCES

31. It is well known, moreover, that in recent years the Church has undertaken a deeper study of herself through the work of outstanding scholars, of great and profound minds, of competent theological schools, of pastoral and missionary endeavors, of remarkable experiences in the field of religion, and above all, of noteworthy teachings of the Popes.

32. It would take too long even to allude to the abundant theological literature dealing with the Church and produced by her during the last and the present century. It would also take too long to recall the documents that the episcopacy and this Apostolic See have issued on this vast and important subject. From the time the Council of Trent sought to repair the con-

sequences of the crisis that separated from the Church many of her members in the 16th century, the doctrine concerning the Church was studied by eminent scholars and consequently made great progress.

Suffice it for us here to refer to the teachings of the First Ecumenical Vatican Council in this field to understand how studies on the Church are a subject that claims the attention of pastors and teachers, of the faithful and of all Christians. Thus they are made to dwell on a theme that is a necessary step on the path leading to Christ and His work. So much so that, as has already been said, the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council is but a continuation and a complement of the First, precisely because of the task incumbent upon it to take up again for study and definition the doctrine dealing with the Church. And if out of a desire for brevity We say no more, inasmuch as We are addressing those who are well acquainted with this subject of instruction and of spirituality currently of wide interest throughout the Church, there are two documents that We cannot fail to honor with specific mention: the encyclical *Satis Cognitum*,¹⁵ of Pope Leo XIII (1896), and the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*,¹⁶ of Pope Pius XII (1943). These documents offer us ample and clear teachings on the divine institution by which Christ continues His work of salvation in the world, which today is the subject matter of these words of Ours.

Let it be enough to cite the opening words of the second of these encyclicals, which has become, one might say, an authoritative text on the theology of the Church and a rich source of spiritual meditations on this work of divine mercy that concerns us all. Let it suffice to recall these masterly words of Our great predecessor:

We first learned of the Mystical Body of Christ, which

15. *Acta Leonis XIII*, VI (1896), 156-210.

16. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXV (1943), 193-248.

*is the Church, from the lips of the Redeemer Himself. Illustrating, as it does, the great and inestimable privilege of our intimate union with a Head so exalted, this doctrine is certainly calculated by its sublime dignity to draw all spiritually minded men to deep and serious study, and to give them, in the truths it unfolds to the mind, a strong incentive to such virtuous conduct as is conformable to its lessons.*¹⁷

33. It is in answer to such an invitation, which We consider still vital and meaningful and expressive of one of the fundamental needs of the Church in Our times, that We propose it again today. With an ever growing knowledge of this same Mystical Body, We may come to appreciate its God-given importance, and in this way strengthen Our souls with this incomparable source of consolation and always increase Our ability to fulfil the duties of Our mission and to meet the needs of mankind.

Nor does it seem to Us a difficult thing to do, when on the one hand We notice, as We have said, a vast renaissance of studies on the Church, and, on the other, We know that it is the principal object of attention of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council.

We should like to pay special tribute to those scholars who, especially during these last years, with perfect docility to the teaching authority of the Church and with outstanding gifts of research and expression, have with great dedication undertaken many difficult and fruitful studies on the Church. These scholars, both in theological schools and in scientific and literary discussions, as well as in apologetics and in the popularization of dogma, in the spiritual assistance rendered to the faithful and in conversations with the separated brethren, have offered many and diverse illustrations of the teaching on the Church. Some of these are of outstanding value and utility.

17. *Ibid.*, 193.

34. And so We are confident that the work of the Council will be assisted by the light of the Holy Spirit. It will be carried out and brought to a happy conclusion through docility to His divine inspirations, through earnest effort to undertake fuller and deeper investigations into the pristine thinking of Christ and the necessary and legitimate developments that have followed in the course of time, through eagerness to make of divine truth an argument for union and not a reason to divide men in sterile discussions or regrettable divisions. It will rather lead them to greater understanding and concord; the result will be a source of glory for God, joy for the Church and edification for the world.

AWAITING THE COUNCIL

35. In this encyclical We deliberately refrain from passing any judgment of Our own on doctrinal points concerning the Church that are at present under examination by the Council, over which We have been called to preside. It is Our desire to leave full liberty of study and discussion to such an important and authoritative assembly. In virtue of Our office as teacher and pastor, and placed at the head of the Church of God, We reserve to Ourselves the choice of the proper moment and manner of expressing Our judgment. We will be most happy if We can present it in full accord with that of the conciliar Fathers.

36. However, we cannot avoid alluding rapidly to the results We hope will derive from the Council, and from the efforts We mentioned above, which the Church must make to come to a fuller and firmer awareness of herself. These results are the aims We have set for Our apostolic ministry as We undertake its tremendous and consoling responsibilities. They are, so to speak, the program of Our pontificate. We tell you this, Venerable Brethren, briefly but in all sincerity, so that you will be willing to help Us put it into effect by your advice, by

your support, by your collaboration. We think that by opening Our heart to you, We are opening it not only to all the faithful of the Church of God, but especially to those whom Our voice can reach beyond the wide limits of the flock of Christ.

THE CHURCH: MYSTICAL BODY

37. The first benefit to be reaped from a deepened awareness of herself by the Church is a renewed discovery of her vital bond of union with Christ. This is something that is very well known, but it is something that is fundamental and indispensable and never sufficiently understood, meditated upon and honored.

What should We not say about this central theme of all our religious inheritance? Fortunately, you already have an excellent grasp of this doctrine. We will say no more at this time except to urge you to keep it always before your eyes as a directive principle both in your spirituality and in your preaching. Rather than to Our words, listen to the exhortation of Our Predecessor already mentioned, in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis*: *We must accustom ourselves to see Christ in the Church. It is Christ who lives in the Church, who teaches, governs and sanctifies through it. It is Christ, too, who manifests Himself differently in different members of His society.*¹⁸

How We should like to dwell on the thoughts that come to mind from Sacred Scripture, from the Fathers, the doctors and the saints when We consider this enlightening truth of our faith. Did not Jesus Himself tell us that He is the vine and we the branches?¹⁹ Do we not have before us all the riches of St. Paul's teaching, who never ceases to remind us: *you are all one person in Jesus Christ?*²⁰ And to recommend to us: *let us grow up, in everything, into a due proportion with Christ, who is our head;*

18. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, XXXV (1943), 238.

19. Cf. John 15:1 sqq.

20. Gal. 3:28.

on Him all the body depends?²¹ And to admonish us: *there is nothing but Christ in any of us?*²²

Suffice it to recall St. Augustine as the one teacher among many who could be cited: *Let us rejoice and give thanks that we have become not only Christians but Christ. My brothers, do you understand the grace of God our head? Stand in admiration, rejoice; we have become Christ. For if he is the head, we are the members; he and we are the complete man. . . . Therefore, the fullness of Christ is constituted by the head and members. What is the head and the members? Christ and the Church.*²³

THE CHURCH: MYSTERY

38. We know well that this is a mystery. It is the mystery of the Church. And if, with the help of God, we fix our gaze on this mystery, we will receive many spiritual benefits, the very ones We believe the Church today stands in greatest need of. The presence of Christ, His very life will become operative in each one and in the whole of the Mystical Body by reason of the working of a living and life-giving faith, according to the words of the Apostle: *May Christ find a dwelling place, through faith, in your hearts.*²⁴

Indeed, awareness of the mystery of the Church is a result of a mature and living faith. From such a faith comes that *feeling for the Church* that fills the Christian who has been raised in the school of the divine word. He has been nourished by the grace of the sacraments and of the ineffable inspirations of the Paraclete, has been trained in the practice of the virtues of the Gospel, has been imbued with the culture and community

21. Eph. 4:15-16.

22. Col. 3:11.

23. *In Ioannem Tract.*, 21:8. (P.L. XXXV, 1568).

24. Eph. 3:17.

life of the Church, and is profoundly happy to find himself endowed with that royal priesthood proper to the people of God.²⁵

39. The mystery of the Church is not a mere object of theological knowledge; it is something to be lived, something that the faithful soul can have a kind of connatural experience of, even before arriving at a clear notion of it. Moreover, the community of the faithful can be profoundly certain of its participation in the Mystical Body of Christ when it realizes that by divine institution the ministry of the hierarchy of the Church is there to give it a beginning, to give it birth,²⁶ to teach and sanctify and direct it. It is by means of this divine instrumentality that Christ communicates to His mystical members the marvels of His truth and of His grace, and confers on His Mystical Body, as it travels its pilgrim's way through time, its visible structure, its sublime unity, its ability to function organically, its harmonious complexity, its spiritual beauty.

Images do not suffice to translate into meaningful language the full reality and depth of this mystery. However, after dwelling on the image of the Mystical Body, which was suggested by the Apostle Paul, We should especially call to mind one suggested by Christ Himself, that of the edifice for which He is the architect and the builder, an edifice indeed founded on a man who of himself is weak but who was miraculously transformed by Christ into solid rock, that is, endowed with marvelous and everlasting indefectibility: *It is upon this rock that I will build my Church.*²⁷

40. If we can awaken in ourselves such a strength-giving feeling for the Church and instill it in the faithful by profound and careful instruction, many of the difficulties that today trouble students of ecclesiology—as for example, how the

25. Cf. 1 Peter 2:9.

26. Cf. Gal. 4:19; 1 Cor. 4:15.

27. Matt. 16:18.

Church can be at once both visible and spiritual, free and subject to discipline, communitarian and hierarchical, already holy and yet still being sanctified, contemplative and active, and so on—will be overcome in practice and solved by those who, after being enlightened by sound teaching, experience the living reality of the Church.

But above all, the Church's spirituality will come forth enriched and nourished by the faithful reading of Sacred Scripture, of the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and by all that brings about in the Church such an awareness. We mean systematic and accurate instruction, participation in that incomparable school of words, signs and divine inspirations that constitute the sacred liturgy, silent and fervent meditation on divine truths, and finally, wholehearted dedication to contemplative prayer.

The interior life still remains the great source of the Church's spirituality, her proper way of receiving the illuminations of the Spirit of Christ, the fundamental and irreplaceable manifestation of her religious and social activity, an impregnable defense as well as an inexhaustible source of energy in her difficult contacts with the world.

MEANING OF BAPTISM

41. It is necessary to restore to holy baptism, that is, to the fact of having been incorporated by means of this sacrament into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, all of its significance. It is specially important that the baptized person should have a highly conscious esteem of his elevation, or rather of his rebirth to the most happy reality of being an adopted son of God, to the dignity of being a brother of Christ, to good fortune—We mean to the grace and joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and to a vocation to a new life. This life has lost nothing human save only the unhappy fate of original

sin and, because it is human, it is capable of the finest manifestations and the most precious and sublime acts.

To be Christians, to have received holy baptism, must not be looked upon as something indifferent or of little importance, but it must be imprinted deeply and happily in the conscience of every baptized person. He must truly look upon it, as did the Christians of old, as an *illumination*, which, by drawing down upon him the life-giving ray of divine Truth, opens heaven to him, sheds light upon earthly life and enables him to walk as a child of the light toward the vision of God, the spring of eternal happiness.

42. It is easy to see what practical program this consideration imposes on us and our ministry. We are happy to see that this program is already being put into practice throughout the whole Church and that it is being furthered with prudent and ardent zeal. We encourage this activity, We commend it, We bless it.

SEARCH FOR PERFECTION

43. We are taken up by the desire to see the Church of God become what Christ wants her to be, one, holy, and entirely dedicated to the pursuit of perfection to which she is effectively called. Perfect as she is in the ideal conception of her Divine Founder, the Church should tend toward becoming perfect in the real expression of her earthly existence. This is the great moral problem that is uppermost in the life of the Church, a problem that reveals what she is, stimulates her, challenges her and sustains her.

This search for perfection fills her with groanings and prayers, with repentance and hope, with strength and confidence, with responsibility and merits. It is a problem inherent in those theological realities that give meaning to our human life.

Without reference to the teachings of Christ and to the magisterium of the Church, it is impossible to pass judgment on man. We cannot judge his nature, his primeval perfection, the ruinous consequences of original sin, man's capacities for good, his need for help to desire and achieve what is good, the meaning of the present life and his final end. We cannot judge those values that man desires or controls, the criterion of perfection and sanctity, or the means and ways of enriching life with the highest beauty and fullness.

A strong desire to know the ways of Christ is and

ought to remain ever present in the Church. From discussion, always fruitful and varied, regarding the questions having to do with perfection, fresh nourishment has been provided in the Church from century to century. We should therefore like to see the unique interest that these deserved reawakened, not so much for the sake of elaborating new theories as for generating new energies. They should be used to acquire that sanctity which Christ teaches. His example, His word, His grace and His method, sustained by ecclesiastical tradition, strengthened by divine action and exemplified in the lives of the saints, make it possible for us to know, desire and follow the path of sanctity.

44. In the pursuit of spiritual and moral perfection the Church receives an exterior stimulus from the conditions in which she lives. She cannot remain unaffected by or indifferent to the changes that take place in the world around.

This world exerts its influence on the Church in a thousand ways and places conditions on her daily conduct. The Church, as everyone knows, is not separated from the world, but lives in it. Hence, the members of the Church are subject to its influence; they breathe its culture, accept its laws and absorb its customs.

This imminent contact of the Church with temporal society continually creates for her a problematic situation, which today has become extremely difficult. On the one hand Christian life, as defended and promoted by the Church, must always take great care lest it be deceived, profaned or stifled as it strives to keep itself free from the contagion of error and of evil. On the other hand, Christian life should not only be adapted to the forms of thought and custom that the temporal environment offers and imposes on her, provided they are compatible with the basic exigencies of her religious and moral program, but it should also try to draw close to them, to purify

them, to ennoble them, to vivify and sanctify them. This task demands of the Church a perennial examination of her moral vigilance, which our times demand with particular urgency and exceptional seriousness.

HELP FROM THE COUNCIL

45. From this point of view the celebration of the Council is providential. The pastoral character it has assumed, the practical objectives of renewing canonical discipline, the desire to make the practice of Christian life as easy as possible without sacrificing its supernatural character—all these factors confer on the Council an especial merit at this moment when we are still awaiting the major part of its deliberations.

In fact, it awakens in pastors as well as in the faithful the desire to preserve and increase in Christian life its character of supernatural authenticity and reminds all of their duty of effectively and deeply imprinting that character in their own personal conduct, thus leading the weak to be good, the good to be better, the better to be generous, and the generous to be holy. It gives rise to new expressions of sanctity, urges love to be genial, and evokes fresh outpourings of virtue and Christian heroism.

46. Naturally, it will be for the Council to suggest what reforms are to be introduced into the legislation of the Church. The post-conciliar commissions, especially the one instituted for the revision of Canon Law and already appointed by Us, will formulate in concrete terms the deliberations of the Ecumenical Synod.

However, it will be your task, Venerable Brothers, to indicate to Us the means by which to render the face of our holy Church spotless and youthful.

But let Our determination to bring about such a reform be once again made manifest. How many times in centuries

past has this resolve been associated with the history of the councils, and so let it be, once more. But this time it is not to remove from the Church any specific heresies or general disorders, which, by the grace of God, do not exist within her today, but rather to infuse fresh spiritual vigor into the Mystical Body of Christ, insofar as it is a visible society, purifying it from the defects of many of its members and stimulating it to new virtue.

47. To bring this about, with divine help, let Us place before you some preliminary considerations suited to facilitate the work of renewal, to instill into it needed courage, since it cannot be done without sacrifice, and to indicate some broad outlines along which the reform can be better effected.

NORMS FOR TRUE REFORM

48. We should remember above all certain norms to guide us in this work of reform. The reform cannot concern either the essential conception of the Church or its basic structure. We would be putting the word reform to the wrong use if we were to employ it in that sense. We cannot attribute infidelity to this beloved and holy Church of God to which, as we believe, belongs the highest grace and from which rises up to Our spirit the testimony *that we are the children of God*.²⁸

This is neither pride nor presumption nor obstinacy nor folly but a luminous certitude and our joyous conviction that we are indeed living members of the Body of Christ, that we are the authentic heirs of the gospel of Christ, those who truly continue the work of the apostles. There dwells in us the great inheritance of truth and morality characteristic of the Catholic Church, which today possesses intact the living heritage of the original apostolic tradition. If this gives us cause to glory, or, to use a better expression, is a reason for which we must

28. Rom. 8:16.

always give thanks to God,²⁹ it also constitutes our responsibility before God, to whom we are accountable for so great a benefit, and before the Church, in which we must instill the unshakable desire and resolution to guard the *deposit* about which St. Paul speaks.³⁰ We have a responsibility also before our brothers who are still separated from us and before the entire world, so that all share with us the gift of God.

FALSE REFORMS

49. Hence, if the term reform can be applied to this subject, it is not to be understood in the sense of change, but of a stronger determination to preserve the characteristic features that Christ has impressed on the Church.

We should rather always wish to lead her back to her perfect form, corresponding to her original design yet fully consistent with the necessary development that has given to the Church, as to a seed grown into a tree, her legitimate and concrete form in history.

Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that the edifice of the Church, which has now become large and majestic for the glory of God as His magnificent temple, should be reduced to its early minimal proportions, as if they alone were true and good. Nor should we be fascinated by the desire of renewing the structure of the Church in some charismatic way, as if that ecclesiastical structure were new and good which sprang from the ideas of a few, who, zealous no doubt and sometimes even basing their claim on some divine inspiration, would thus introduce an arbitrary scheme of artificial renewal into the very constitution of the Church.

We must serve the Church and love her as she is, with a clear understanding of history, and humbly searching for the

29. Cf. Eph. 5:20.

30. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:20.

will of God, who assists and guides her even when at times He permits human weakness to eclipse the purity of her features and the beauty of her action. It is this purity and beauty that we are endeavoring to discover and promote.

50. We must deepen within us these convictions if we are to avoid the other danger that the desire for reform can produce, not only in us pastors, who are held back by a watchful sense of responsibility, but also in the many faithful who think that the reform of the Church should consist primarily in adapting its sentiments and habits to those of the world.

The fascination of worldly life today is powerful indeed. Conformity appears to many as an inescapable and a wise course. Those who are not well rooted in faith and in the observance of ecclesiastical law easily think that the time has come for concessions to be made to secular norms of life, as if these were better and as if the Christian can and must make them his own.

This phenomenon of adaptation is noticeable in the philosophical field (how much fashion counts even in the world of thought, which ought to be autonomous and free and only avid and docile before truth and the authority of approved masters!), as well as in the practical field, where it is becoming more and more troubling and difficult to point out the line of moral rectitude and right conduct.

51. Naturalism threatens to render null and void the original conception of Christianity. Relativism, which justifies everything and treats all things as of equal value, assails the absolute character of Christian principles. The inclination to throw overboard every restraint and inconvenience met in the conduct of life makes the discipline of Christian asceticism seem burdensome and futile.

Sometimes even the apostolic desire of approaching the secular milieu or of making oneself acceptable to the modern

mind, especially that of youth, leads to a rejection of the forms proper to Christian life and even of its very dignity, which must give meaning and strength to this eagerness for encounter and influence on others. Is it not perhaps true that often some of the younger clergy as well as some religious, moved by the good intention of penetrating the masses or particular groups, tend to get mixed up with them instead of remaining distinct, thus sacrificing the true efficacy of their apostolate to some sort of useless imitation?

The great principle enunciated by Christ presents itself again both in its actuality and in its difficulty: To be in the world, but not of the world. It is good for us even today to offer up that highest and most opportune prayer of Christ, *who always lives and intercedes for us*.³¹ *I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil.*³²

'AGGIORNAMENTO' AND GOSPEL

52. However it is not Our intention to say that perfection consists in remaining changeless as regards those external forms that the Church through many centuries has assumed. Nor does it consist in being stubbornly opposed to those new forms and habits that are commonly regarded as acceptable and suited to the character of our times.

The word *aggiornamento*, made famous by Our Predecessor of happy memory, John XXIII, should always be kept in mind as our program of action. We have confirmed it as the guiding criterion of the Ecumenical Council. We want to recall it to mind as a stimulus to preserve the perennial vitality of the Church, her continuous awareness and ability to study the signs of the times, and her constantly youthful agility in

31. Heb. 7:25.

32. John 17:15.

*scrutinizing it all carefully and retaining only what is good,*³³ always and everywhere.

53. But let Us repeat it once again for our common admonition and profit: the Church will rediscover her renewed youthfulness not so much by changing her exterior laws as by interiorly assimilating the true spirit of obedience to Christ and accordingly by observing those laws that the Church prescribes for herself with the intention of following Christ.

Here is the secret of her renewal, here her *metanoia*, here her exercise of perfection. Even though the Church's law might be made easier to observe by the simplification of some of its precepts and by placing confidence in the liberty of the modern Christian, with his greater knowledge of his duties and his greater maturity and wisdom in choosing the means to fulfil them, the law, nevertheless, retains its essential binding force.

The Christian life, which the Church interprets and sets down in wise regulations, will always require faithfulness, effort, mortification and sacrifice; it will always bear the mark of the *narrow way* of which our Lord spoke;³⁴ it will require, not less moral energy of us modern Christians than it did of Christians in the past, but perhaps more. It will call for a prompt obedience, no less binding today than in the past, that will be, perhaps, more difficult, and certainly more meritorious, in that it is guided more by supernatural motives than natural ones.

It is not conformity to the spirit of the world, not immunity from the discipline of reasonable asceticism, not indifference to the laxity of modern behavior, not emancipation from the authority of prudent and lawful superiors, not apathy with regard to the contradictory forms of modern thought, that can give vigor to the Church, or make her fit to receive the influence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or render her following

33. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:21.

34. Cf. Matt. 7:13.

of Christ more genuine, or give her the anxious yearning of fraternal charity and the ability to communicate her message. These things come from her aptitude to live according to divine grace, her faithfulness to the gospel of the Lord, her hierarchical and communal unity. The Christian is not soft and cowardly, he is strong and faithful.

54. We realize how long this letter would be if We were to indicate even the main lines of the modern program of the Christian life, and We do not intend to enter into such an undertaking now. You, moreover, know what the moral needs of our time are, and you will not cease to call the faithful to an understanding of the dignity, purity and austerity of the Christian life, nor will you fail to denounce, as best you can, even publicly, the moral dangers and vices from which our age is suffering.

We all remember the solemn exhortations that Holy Scripture addresses to us: *I know of all thy doings, all thy toil and endurance; how little patience thou hast with wickedness*,³⁵ and all of us will strive to be watchful and diligent pastors. The Council is to give us, too, new and salutary instructions, and all of us must prepare ourselves to hear them and carry them out.

55. But We do not wish to forgo commenting briefly on two points, which We consider to concern principal needs and duties and which can provide matter for reflection on the general lines of the renewal of ecclesiastical life.

SPIRIT OF POVERTY

56. We refer first of all to the spirit of poverty. We consider that it was so clearly proclaimed in the holy gospel and is so intimate a part of the plan of our destination to the Kingdom of God; that it is so much in danger today because of the great store the modern mind sets by possessions; that it is so neces-

35. Apoc. 2:2.

sary to help us to understand many of our weaknesses and failures in the past and to show us what our way of life should be and how best we can announce the religion of Christ to souls; finally, that it is so difficult to practice it as we ought—that We presume to mention it explicitly in this Our message. We do this, not because We have the intention of issuing special canonical regulations on the subject, but rather to ask of you, Venerable Brethren, the comfort of your agreement, your counsel and your example.

We look to you as to the authoritative voice that interprets the lofty impulses by which the Spirit of Christ manifests itself in the Church, to tell us how pastors and people ought to adapt their language and conduct to poverty today. As the Apostle admonishes us, *yours is to be the same mind which Christ Jesus showed*.³⁶ We look to you to say how we should, together, propose for the life of the Church those directives which must base our confidence more upon the help of God and the goods of the spirit than upon temporal means. These must remind us, and teach the world, that spiritual goods take precedence over economic goods, and that we should limit and subordinate our possession and use of them in keeping with the right exercise of our apostolic mission.

57. The brevity of this allusion to the nobility and necessity of the spirit of poverty that characterizes the gospel of Christ, does not exempt Us from Our duty of remarking that this spirit does not prevent us from understanding and making lawful use of economic reality. This has assumed an enormous and far-reaching importance in the development of modern civilization, particularly in its consequences for society. We consider, indeed, that the inner freedom derived from the spirit of evangelical poverty makes us more sensitive to—and more capable of understanding—the human aspects of economic questions, by apply-

36. Phil. 2:5.

(Continued on page 33)

The following pages are offered as a topical summary
and useful index to the encyclical.

—EDITOR

Prologue (1-18)

Christ's Church, as mother of all and dispenser of salvation, has been loved by all Christians (1) and thus is a fitting topic for this first encyclical (2), which seeks to reveal the Church's meaning for mankind and her desire to encounter all men (3).

Having promised this letter at the opening of the Council's second session (4), We found it difficult to write because of the need for meditation and the present state of the Church and the world (5). This simple conversational letter will not propose new doctrines (6), or make solemn pronouncements on faith or morals (7), but will seek to unite the hierarchy of the world in love and promote sound spiritual and apostolic activity (8).

Three concerns weigh especially upon Us in light of Our responsibility as Vicar of Christ (9). The first stems from the urgent present need, for the good of the Church, to examine its nature and God-given mission (10). Second, there rises a need to compare the present state of the Church with the ideal image left us by Christ, a comparison that always reveals current shortcomings (11), and arouses a desire for correction of existing defects and for courage in undertaking needed reforms (12). The third centers on the relation between the Church today and the world around it (13). This world includes both that part long Christianized but now in large measure forgetful of its heritage, as well as the growing number of "emerging" nations (14). Hence we see something of the problems involved in a dialogue between the Church and the modern world (15).

Though this encyclical will not treat of the urgent problems

TOPICAL SUMMARY

affecting the Church and mankind, such as peace, hunger, rising expectations, freedom, population increase and the like (16). We wish to emphasize Our constant concern for world peace and Our readiness to serve in any disinterested capacity to foster better international relations and reduce world tensions (17). These problems will, however, occupy the Council's attention and will continue to be the object of Our apostolic ministry (18).

I: Self-Awareness (19-42)

The Church's meditation on its role and nature will help it to approach specific problems and enter into fruitful contact with mankind (19). A start may be made by looking at God's method of communicating with men and the relationship it establishes (20). Here we must bear in mind especially our Lord's call for vigilance (21). This, it is true, referred primarily to concern for one's eternal destiny, but it also applies to care for things closer at hand, and demands maturity of psychological awareness and moral conscience (22).

The Church's growth in its organizational life and in self-awareness have coincided from the start (23), and this should prompt all of us as the "gathering of the faithful" to a firm profession of faith in the spirit of the gospel (24). Why do We invite you bishops to this act of ecclesiastical awareness? (25) Because of the present situation of the Church (26), which must know itself better to fulfill its vocation (27).

Since the Church is made up of men, it is influenced by the vast changes that affect modern man's thought, culture and spirit. Yet, as the unfortunate phenomenon of modernism showed, in adapting to these changes the Church must remain true to its authentic nature (28). Similar errors are proposed today by those who lack full understanding of the Church's nature and mission as revealed by Christ and taught by its authorities (29).

TOPICAL SUMMARY

Contemporary thought sometimes exaggerates the importance of introspection and makes man's mind the measure of reality, but this process of reflection on self can be and is a good thing (30).

In recent years, scholars, pastors and others have made such studies of the Church (31). The literature reaches back to the Council of Trent, but one must note particularly the teaching of Vatican I, and encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XII on the Church (32). More recently, academic and popular writers have further explored the mystery of the Church, at times in writings of outstanding value (33), and thus a good preparation has been made for the success of the Council's deliberations (34).

We will refrain from doctrinal judgments on matters before the Council in order to insure its full freedom (35), but We wish to state Our great hopes for the Council, to the gain of Our ministry and benefit of the whole Church of God (36). From a deepened awareness of the Church will come a renewed discovery of our vital union with Christ, the union of the Mystical Body, or of the Vine and branches (37). Further, awareness of the Church as a mystery will foster mature faith and a "feeling for the Church" (38). But full understanding of this mystery will come only from living experience of the reality of this mystery, this Mystical Body, this edifice built on a rock (39). A renewed "feeling for the Church" will also help to resolve some apparent difficulties in ecclesiology and deepen the Church's inner spirituality (40). At the same time, new emphasis must be given the meaning of baptism as incorporation into the Church (41). We encourage all efforts now being made to further these ends (42).

II: Renewal (43-59)

The Church stands challenged to meet the ideal set forth by Christ; this calls for intense study of how best to follow the path to sanctity (43). The historical situation in which the Church

TOPICAL SUMMARY

today finds itself is also a challenge, since Christians live in the world and must adapt without losing their true identity (44).

The Council has already accomplished much by awakening pastors and faithful to a new vision of Christian sanctity (45); while its decisions and those of postconciliar commissions will spell out all needed reforms, we must resolve now that reform will actually remove the defects of the Church's members (46).

Here are some considerations aimed at advancing the work of reform today (47). Reform cannot concern the basic structure of the Church. We insist it has not been unfaithful to its essence, but this claim stems not from pride but from humble consciousness of the authentic apostolic tradition we have in the Catholic Church (48).

Reform should not seek change that alters the Church's original design, nor aim at some arbitrary charismatic innovation, but serve to uncover its true beauty and purity (49). It is most necessary to resist the call of false change in a day when adaptation in every field is a fad (50). Naturalism and relativism assail Christian values; the desire to adapt to modern ways can lead even zealous priests and religious to sacrifice their supernatural identity despite Christ's prayer for His followers (51). Yet perfection does not consist in remaining changeless in externals, and "*aggiornamento*" is still the watchword for Council and Church (52).

Renewed youthfulness will come to the Church from true obedience to Christ's will, in following the "narrow way" and not through worldly relaxation of discipline (53). This letter cannot provide detailed instructions on renewal, but you bishops know the needs of the time and the Council will soon give us all some helpful guidance (54). There are, however, two key points calling for comment (55). First is the spirit of poverty, a gospel injunction, but one threatened by worldly values and difficult to practice; one on which you bishops and the Council must speak

TOPICAL SUMMARY

(56). Love of poverty need not mean failure to utilize economic realities; here We affirm our full support of the Church's social teaching (57). The second major point is the spirit of charity, hallmark of the true Christian and a special challenge in our day (58). Devotion to Mary, We note, is an excellent school of gospel precepts (59).

III: Dialogue (60-124)

The third basic concern for today's Church must be its contacts with mankind, because of its own distinctive mode of life (60). The gospel tells us of hostility from the "world," whose weakness it pities; but it also reminds the Christian of his new light and rebirth (61). This distinction between Christian and world is heightened by the gift of the Spirit and by baptism (62), and the Christian must be aware of his dignity in order to avoid degradation (63). St. Paul, and our Lord, taught us to preserve a sense of being distinct (64), but this distinction is not a separation and the Church maintains a loving interest in all men (65). The Church's apostolic commission to share Christ's patrimony with others rises out of an awareness of its blessings. We give the name of dialogue to this impulse (66).

The Church must open dialogue with the contemporary world (67). This topic will be treated by the Council and We wish the discussion of it to be free; here We will give only some correct attitudes toward dialogue (68). This is proper because of the pastoral tradition opened by Leo XIII, who dealt with the problems of the day (69), as did Pius XI, Pius XII and notably John XXIII; moreover the Council has the task of injecting the Christian message into the mainstream of modern thought and culture (70); We, too, will unfailingly seek loving contact with the world (71).

Dialogue is transcendent in origin, since God initiated dia-

TOPICAL SUMMARY

logue in the Incarnation; the whole history of salvation is a dialogue (72), a fact we must recall (73) and one that encourages us to open this dialogue with other men (74).

Since the dialogue of salvation began from God's charity, our dialogue must always be unselfish in motive (75); ours too should be apt and disinterested (76); it should likewise rely on the same methods of persuasion rather than force, thus respecting personal and civic freedom (77); it should also be universal (78); it will always be active and will allow for mankind's slow psychological and historical maturation (79).

It is possible to think of the Church's cutting itself off from secular society, or seeking to dominate it, but the proper relation should be one of suitable dialogue (80). This means shunning useless, negative polemic and aiming at deeper understanding (81); it will stem from our apostolic mandate to share the message of salvation (82). As an apostolic method, dialogue must exhibit clarity, meekness, mutual trust (83) and pedagogical prudence or flexibility (84). Such a dialogue will bring union of truth and charity (85); it will show how different paths can be made to converge, and the very dialectic will uncover elements of truth in the opinion of others and make us wise (86).

The dialogue of salvation can and must take many forms (87-88); the decision to adapt is important because the Church's mission is always to men in a given situation (89). Adaptation by the Church is necessary because men cannot be saved from outside; in dialogue one must listen, not only to his neighbor's voice, but to his heart (90). In all this there exists danger of fatal compromise of truth or discipline (91); thus only complete fidelity to Christ's teaching can preserve the apostle (92). The Council will offer helpful norms and the Church will periodically provide necessary directives for a living and fruitful dialogue (93).

Preaching is the primary apostolate and the ministry of the word is not supplanted by modern technical communications

TOPICAL SUMMARY

media (94). Hence we must improve our use of the word and seek the gift of speech (95).

Without wishing to anticipate the Council, We should say something about those with whom We dialogue (96). In general, the Church is ready to dialogue with all men of good will (97), since it has no enemies except those who wish to be such (98). The Church's approach is realistic and it recognizes obstacles in the way, but it also knows what it has to offer mankind: the word of salvation and the key to peace and justice, with special sympathy for various groups in society (99).

Our understanding of the dialogue can be seen from a review of the concentric circles in which God has placed us (100). The first, immense circle takes in all mankind, recognizing the common features Christians share with others (101). Here the aim is not to dominate, but to serve and sustain civilization (102). We see the immediate problems posed by the inclusion here of atheists (103). This is the most serious problem of our time; the theory of atheism defies logic and history; hence the Catholic must resist its assaults and help men to find their true vocation (104). Thus we must condemn ideological systems that deny God and oppress the Church, of which atheistic communism is chief; but we rather grieve for, than condemn them (105).

Dialogue here is difficult, if not impossible; particularly when truth is suppressed under such systems (106). All this ends dialogue, as the experience of the Church of Silence shows (107). Despite all this, we still look in the heart of the modern atheist for his motives; often one finds there noble social aims, a truncated philosophical vision, or impatience with contemporary mediocrity and self-seeking (108). Thus, in the spirit of *Pacem in Terris*, we can look for changes that make positive dialogue possible (109). Above all, we hope that such dialogue, disinterested, objective and sincere, may forward a free and honorable peace (110).

TOPICAL SUMMARY

The second great circle embraces all believers in the one God; Jews, first; Muslims; followers of the great Afro-Asian religions. We must insist on our belief that Christianity is the true religion (111); but still we respect the moral and spiritual values in these others, and we are ready to discuss common ideals with them (112).

The third, nearest to us, is the circle of Christianity, the area of ecumenical dialogue; here let us stress what we have in common with others, rather than what divides us; we stand ready to examine differences, with a view to satisfying others, but while preparing ourselves for reconciliation, we can never compromise the faith we hold (113). In this connection, it is especially grievous to find some Christians who regard papal primacy as a chief stumbling-block to reunion; We ask that it be seen rather as a principle of unity and a primacy of service and love (114). Here our dialogue is alert, and one prepared for in prayer (115). It has been a great joy to meet the Patriarch Athenagoras and the observers of various separated Churches at the Council; We pray for the "ecumenical movement" and follow with reverent interest all sound unity efforts (116).

Finally, We turn to dialogue among Catholics, one that is responsive and open, aimed at making Catholics truly good men, men wise, free, serene and strong (117). Though we make charity the constitutive principle of dialogue, we do not do away with the need for obedience to Christ's will (118). Here we mean obedience to authority exercised as a ministry of truth and charity, but free of the spirit of independence, of criticism, of rebellion (119).

We encourage and bless all that contributes to promoting the dialogue as a force for holiness within the Church (120). We rejoice to see it already widespread in the Church (121). We count on the co-operation of you bishops (122), and send our blessing, as brother and father, to you, the entire Church and all mankind (123-124).

(Continued from page 32)

ing to wealth and to the progress it can effect the just and often severe standard of judgment that they require, by giving to indigence our most solicitous and generous attention, and finally, by expressing the wish that economic goods should not be a source of conflicts, of selfishness and of pride among men, but that they be used in justice and equity for the common good and, accordingly, distributed with greater foresight.

Whatever concerns these economic goods—goods inferior to those that are spiritual and eternal, but necessary in this present life—find in the man who has studied the gospel the capacity needed to form a wise scale of values and to cooperate in projects beneficial to mankind. Science, technology and, particularly, labor become the object of our keenest interest. The bread they produce becomes sacred for table and for altar.

The social teachings of the Church leave no doubt on this subject, and We are pleased to take this opportunity of reaffirming Our close adherence to such salutary teachings.

SPIRIT OF CHARITY

58. The other point We should like to mention is that of the spirit of charity. But is not this subject already in the forefront of your minds? Is not charity the focal point of the religious economy of the Old Testament and the New? Is it not to charity that the progress of spiritual experience in the Church leads? May it not be that charity is the ever more illuminating and joyful discovery that theology, on the one hand, and piety, on the other, are making in the never-ending meditation on the scriptural and sacramental treasures of which the Church is heir, guardian, mistress and dispenser?

We consider, with Our predecessors and with the bright company of saints whom our age has given to the Church on earth and in heaven, who define for us the devout instincts of

The gospel is light, it is newness, it is energy, it is rebirth, it is salvation. Hence it both creates and defines a type of new life, about which the New Testament teaches us a continuous and remarkable lesson, expressed in the warning of St. Paul: *You must not fall in with the manners of this world; there must be an inward change, a remaking of your minds, so that you can satisfy yourselves what is God's will, the good thing, the desirable thing, the perfect thing.*³⁸

62. This distinction between the life of the Christian and the life of the worldling also derives from the reality and from the consequent recognition of the sanctification produced in us by our sharing in the Paschal mystery and, above all, in holy baptism, which, as was said above, is and ought to be considered a true rebirth. Again St. Paul reminds us of this truth: *We who were taken up into Christ by baptism have been taken up, all of us, into his death. In our baptism, we have been buried with him, died like him, that is, just as Christ was raised up by his Father's power from the dead, we too may live and move in a new kind of existence.*³⁹

63. It will not be amiss if the Christian of today keeps always in view his original and wondrous form of life, which should not only sustain him with the happiness that results from his dignity but also protect him from an environment that threatens him with the contagion of human wretchedness and with the seduction of human glory.

64. See how St. Paul himself formed the Christians of the primitive Church: *You must not consent to be yokefellows with unbelievers. What has innocence to do with lawlessness? What is there in common between light and darkness? How can a believer throw in his lot with an infidel?*⁴⁰ Christian education will always have to remind the student today of his privileged position and of his resulting duty to live in the world but not in the way

38. Rom. 12:2.

39. *Ibid.*, 6:3-4.

40. 2 Cor. 6:14-15.

of the world, according to the above-mentioned prayer of Jesus for His disciples: *I am not asking that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them clear of what is evil. They do not belong to the world, as I, too, do not belong to the world.*⁴¹ And the Church adopts this prayer at its own.

65. But this distinction is not a separation. Neither is it indifference or fear or contempt. When the Church distinguishes itself from human nature, it does not oppose itself to human nature, but rather unites itself to it. Just as the doctor who, realizing the danger inherent in a contagious disease, not only tries to protect himself and others from such infection, but also dedicates himself to curing those who have been stricken, so too the Church does not make an exclusive privilege of the mercy that the divine Goodness has shown it, nor does it distort its own good fortune into a reason for lack of interest in those who have not shared it. Rather, in its own salvation it finds an argument for interest in, and love of, all who are close at hand or can be reached to share its blessings.

66. If, as We said before, the Church has a true realization of what the Lord wishes it to be, then within the Church there arises a unique sense of fullness and a need for outpouring, together with the clear awareness of a mission that transcends the Church, of a message to be spread. It is the duty of evangelization. It is the missionary mandate. It is the apostolic commission.

An attitude of preservation of the faith is insufficient. Certainly we must preserve and also defend the treasure of truth and of grace that has come to us by way of inheritance from the Christian tradition. *Keep safe what has been entrusted to thee,*⁴² warns St. Paul. But neither the preservation nor the defense of the faith exhausts the duty of the Church in regard to the gifts it possesses.

41. John 17:15-16.

42. 1 Tim. 6:20.

The duty consonant with the patrimony received from Christ is that of spreading, offering, announcing it to others. Well do we know that *Going, therefore, make disciples of all nations*⁴³ is the last command of Christ to His apostles. By the very term *apostles* these men define their inescapable mission. To this internal drive of charity, which tends to become the external gift of charity, we will give the name of dialogue, which has in these days come into common usage.

67. The Church should enter into dialogue with the world in which it exists and labors. The Church has something to say; the Church has a message to deliver; the Church has a communication to offer.

DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD

68. It is no secret that this important facet of the contemporary life of the Church will be specially and fully studied by the Ecumenical Council, and we have no desire to undertake the concrete examination of the themes involved in such study, in order to leave to Fathers of the Council full freedom in discussing them. We wish only to invite you, Venerable Brethren, to preface such study with certain considerations in order that We and you may see more clearly the motives that impel the Church toward the dialogue, the methods to be followed and the goals to be achieved. We wish to give, not full treatment to topics, but proper dispositions to hearts.

69. Nor can We do otherwise in Our conviction that the dialogue ought to characterize Our apostolic office, heirs as We are of such a pastoral approach and method as has been handed down to Us by Our predecessors of the past century, beginning with the great and wise Leo XIII. Almost as a personification of the gospel character of the wise scribe, who, like the father of a family, *knows how to bring both new and*

43. Matt. 28:19.

*old things out of his treasure house,*⁴⁴ in a stately manner he assumed his function as teacher of the world by making the object of his richest instruction the problems of our time considered in the light of the word of Christ. So, also, did his successors, as you well know.

70. Did not Our predecessors, especially Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII, leave us a magnificently rich patrimony of teaching; which was conceived in the loving and enlightened attempt to join divine to human wisdom, not considered in the abstract, but rather expressed in the concrete language of modern man? And what is this apostolic endeavor if not a dialogue? And did not John XXIII, Our immediate predecessor of venerable memory, impart an even sharper emphasis to his teaching in the sense of approaching as close as possible to the experience and the understanding of the contemporary world? And was not the Council itself assigned—and justly so—a pastoral function that would be completely focused on the injection of the Christian message into the stream of the thought, speech, culture, customs and strivings of man as he lives today and acts in this life? Even before converting the world—nay, in order to convert it—we must meet the world and talk with it.

DIALOGUE BEGUN BY GOD

71. Concerning Our lowly self, although We are reluctant to speak of it and would prefer not to attract to it the attention of others, We cannot pass over in silence, in this deliberate communication to the episcopal hierarchy and to the Christian people, Our resolution to persevere, so far as Our weak energies will permit and, above all, so far as the grace of God will grant Us the necessary means, in the same direction and in the same effort to approach the world in which Providence has destined us to live. In this approach We will observe all due reverence,

44. Matt. 13:52.

solicitude and love, in order that We may understand the world and offer it the gifts of truth and grace, of which Christ has made Us custodian, in order that We may communicate to the world our wonderful destiny of redemption and of hope. Deeply engraved on Our heart are those words of Christ, which We would humbly but resolutely make Our own: *When God sent his Son into the world, it was not to reject the world, but so that the world might find salvation through him.*⁴⁵

72. See, then, Venerable Brethren, the transcendent origin of the dialogue. It is found in the very plan of God. Religion, of its very nature, is a relationship between God and man. Prayer expresses such a relationship in dialogue. Revelation, i.e., the supernatural relationship that God, on His own initiative, has established with the human race, can be considered as a dialogue in which the Word of God speaks, both in the Incarnation and in the gospel.

The fatherly and holy conversation between God and man, interrupted by original sin, was marvelously resumed in the course of history. The history of salvation narrates exactly this long and changing dialogue, which begins with God and brings to man a many-splendored conversation. It is in this conversation of Christ with men⁴⁶ that God allows us to understand something of Himself, the mystery of His life, unique in its essence, trinitarian in its Persons; He tells us, too, how He wishes to be known: He is Love; and how He wishes to be honored and served by us: love is our supreme commandment. The dialogue thus takes on full meaning and offers grounds for confidence. The child is invited to it; the mystic finds a full outlet in it.

73. We must keep ever present this ineffable, yet real relationship of the dialogue, which God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit, has offered to us and established with us, if

45. John 3:17.

46. Cf. Bar. 3:38.

we are to understand the relationship that we, i.e., the Church, should strive to establish and to foster with the human race.

74. The dialogue of salvation was opened spontaneously on the initiative of God: *He [God] loved us first.*⁴⁷ It will be up to us to take the initiative in extending to men this same dialogue, without waiting to be summoned to it.

DIALOGUE OF SALVATION

75. The dialogue of salvation began with charity, with the divine goodness: *God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son;*⁴⁸ nothing but fervent and unselfish love should motivate our dialogue.

76. The dialogue of salvation was not proportioned to the merits of those toward whom it was directed, nor to the results that it would achieve or fail to achieve: *Those who are healthy need no physician.*⁴⁹ So also, our own dialogue ought to be without limits or ulterior motives.

77. The dialogue of salvation did not physically force anyone to accept it; it was a tremendous appeal of love, which, although placing a vast responsibility on those toward whom it was directed,⁵⁰ nevertheless left them free to respond to it or to reject it. Even the number of miracles⁵¹ and their demonstrative power⁵² were adapted to the spiritual needs and dispositions of the recipients, in order that their free consent to the divine revelation might be facilitated, without, however, their losing the merit involved in such a consent. So, too, although our own mission is the announcement of the truth that is both indisputable and necessary for salvation, that mission will not be introduced with external force, but simply through the legitimate means of human education, of interior persuasion, and of ordinary conversation, and

47. 1 John 4:10.

48. John 3:16.

49. Luke 5:31.

50. Cf. Matt. 11:21.

51. Cf. *ibid.*, 12:38 sqq.

52. Cf. *ibid.*, 13:13 sqq.

it will offer its gift of salvation with full respect for personal and civic freedom.

78. The dialogue of salvation was made accessible to all; it was destined for all without distinction⁵³; in like manner, our own dialogue should be potentially universal, i.e. all-embracing and capable of including all, except those who either reject it or insincerely pretend to accept it.

79. The dialogue of salvation normally experienced a gradual development, successive advances, humble beginnings before complete success.⁵⁴ Ours, too, will take cognizance of the slowness of psychological and historical maturation and of the need to wait for the hour when God may make our dialogue effective. Not for this reason will our dialogue put off till tomorrow what it can accomplish today; it ought to be eager for the opportune moment; it ought to sense the preciousness of time.⁵⁵ Today, i.e., every day, our dialogue should begin again; we, rather than those toward whom it is directed, should take the initiative.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DIALOGUE

80. As is clear, the relationships between the Church and the world can assume many different aspects. Theoretically speaking, the Church could set its mind on reducing such relationships to a minimum, endeavoring to isolate itself from dealings with secular society; just as it could set itself the task of pointing out the evils that can be found in secular society, condemning them and declaring crusades against them, so also it could approach so close to secular society as to strive to exert a preponderant influence on it or even to exercise a theocratic power over it, and so on.

But it seems to Us that the Church's relationship to the world, without precluding other legitimate forms of expression, can be represented better in a dialogue, not, of course, a dialogue

53. Cf. Col. 3:11.

54. Cf. Matt. 13:31.

55. Cf. Eph. 5:16.

in a univocal sense, but rather a dialogue adapted to the nature of the interlocutor and to factual circumstances. (The dialogue with a child differs from that with an adult; that with a believer from that with an unbeliever.) This has been suggested by the custom, by now become widespread, of conceiving the relationships between the sacred and the secular in terms of the transforming dynamism of modern society, in terms of the pluralism of its manifestations; likewise in terms of the maturity of man, be he religious or not, enabled through secular education to think, to speak and to carry on a dialogue with dignity.

81. This type of relationship indicates a proposal of courteous esteem, understanding and goodness on the part of the one who inaugurates the dialogue; it excludes the a priori condemnation, the offensive and time-worn polemic, and the emptiness of useless conversation. This approach does not aim at effecting the immediate conversion of the interlocutor, inasmuch as it respects both his dignity and his freedom. But it does aim at helping him, and tries to dispose him for a fuller sharing of sentiments and convictions.

82. Hence the dialogue supposes that we possess a state of mind that we intend to communicate to others and to foster in all our neighbors. It is the state of mind of one who feels within himself the burden of the apostolic mandate, who realizes that he can no longer separate his own salvation from the endeavor to save others, and who therefore strives constantly to put the message of which he is custodian into the mainstream of human discourse.

83. The dialogue is, then, a method of accomplishing the apostolic mission. It is an example of the art of spiritual communication. Its characteristics are the following:

A. Clearness above all; the dialogue supposes and demands comprehensibility. It is an outpouring of thought; it is an invitation to the exercise of the highest powers that man possesses.

This fact alone is enough to classify the dialogue among the noblest manifestations of human activity and culture. This fundamental requirement is enough to enlist our apostolic care to review every angle of our language so as to make it understandable, acceptable and well-chosen.

B. A second characteristic of the dialogue is its meekness, the virtue that Christ bade us to learn from Him: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.*⁵⁶ The dialogue is not proud, it is not bitter, it is not offensive. Its authority is intrinsic to the truth it explains, to the charity it communicates, to the example it proposes; it is not a command, it is not an imposition. It is peaceful; it avoids violent methods; it is patient; it is generous.

C. Trust, not only in the power of one's words, but also in an attitude of welcoming the interlocutor's trust. Trust promotes confidence and friendship. It binds hearts in mutual adherence to the good that excludes all self-seeking.

84. D. Finally, pedagogical prudence, which esteems highly the psychological and moral circumstances of the listener,⁵⁷ whether he be a child, uneducated, unprepared, diffident or hostile. Prudence strives to learn the sensitivities of the hearer and requires that we adapt ourselves and the manner of our presentation in a reasonable way lest we be displeasing and incomprehensible to him.

85. In the dialogue, conducted in this manner, the union of truth and charity, of understanding and love is achieved.

86. In the dialogue one discovers how different are the ways that lead to the light of faith, and how it is possible to make them converge on the same goal. Even if these ways are divergent, they can become complementary by forcing our reasoning process out of worn paths and by obliging it to deepen its research, to find fresh expressions.

The dialectic of this exercise of thought and of patience

56. Matt. 11:29.

57. Matt. 7:6.

will make us discover elements of truth in the opinions of others, it will force us to express our teaching with fairness, and finally—what is most praiseworthy—we will present our teaching in such a way that our hearers can ask questions, if they wish, and assimilate our ideas step by step.

MODES OF DIALOGUE

87. And how is the dialogue to be carried on?

88. Many, indeed, are the forms that the dialogue of salvation can take. It adapts itself to the needs of a concrete situation, it chooses the appropriate means, it does not bind itself to ineffectual theories or cling to hard and fast forms when these have lost their power to speak to men and move them.

89. The question is of great importance, for it concerns the relation of the Church's mission to the lives of men in a given time and place, in a given culture and social setting.

90. To what extent should the Church adapt itself to the historic and local circumstances in which its mission is exercised? How should it guard against the danger of a relativism that would falsify its moral and dogmatic truth? And how can it, at the same time, fit itself to approach all men so as to save all, according to the example of the Apostle: *I became all things to all men that I might save all*⁵⁸?

The world cannot be saved from the outside. As the Word of God became man, so must a man identify himself to a certain degree with the forms of life of those to whom he wishes to bring the message of Christ. Without invoking privileges that would only widen the separation, without employing unintelligible terminology, he must share the common way of life—provided that it is human and honorable—especially of the most humble, if he would be listened to and understood.

And before speaking, it is necessary to listen, not only

58. 1 Cor. 9:22.

to a man's voice, but to his heart. A man must first be understood; and, where he merits it, agreed with. In the very act of trying to make ourselves pastors, fathers and teachers of men, we must make ourselves their brothers. The spirit of dialogue is friendship; even more, it is service. All this we must remember and strive to put into practice according to the example and commandment that Christ left to us.⁵⁹

91. But the danger remains. The apostle's art is a risky one. The desire to come together as brothers must not lead to a watering-down or subtracting from the truth. Our dialogue must not weaken our attachment to our faith. In our apostolate, we cannot make vague compromises about the principles of faith and action on which our profession of Christianity is based.

An immoderate desire to make peace and sink differences at all costs is, fundamentally, a kind of skepticism about the power and content of the word of God, which we desire to preach.

92. Only the man who is completely faithful to the teaching of Christ can be an apostle. And only he who lives his Christian life to the full can remain uncontaminated by the errors with which he comes into contact.

93. We believe that the Council, when it comes to deal with questions on the Church's activity in the modern world, will indicate a number of theoretical and practical norms for the guidance of our dialogue with men of the present day. We believe, too, that in matters concerning the Church's apostolic mission, on the one hand, and, on the other, the diverse and changing circumstances in which that mission is exercised, it will be for the wise, attentive government of the Church to determine, from time to time, the limits and forms and paths to be followed in maintaining and furthering a living and fruitful dialogue.

94. Accordingly, let us leave this aspect of the subject and confine ourselves to stressing once again the supreme importance

59. Cf. John 13:14-17.

of Christian preaching—an importance that grows greater daily—for the Catholic apostolate and specifically for the dialogue. No other form of communication can take its place; not even the enormously powerful technical means of press, radio and television. In a sense, the apostolate and preaching are the same.

Preaching is the primary apostolate. Our apostolate, Venerable Brothers, is above all the ministry of the word. We know this very well, but it seems good to remind ourselves of it now, so as to direct our pastoral activities aright. We must go back to the study, not of human eloquence or empty rhetoric, but of the genuine art of the sacred word.

95. We must search for the laws of its simplicity and clarity, for its power and authority, so as to overcome our natural lack of skill in the use of the great and mysterious spiritual instrument of speech and to enable us worthily to compete with those who today exert so much influence through their words by having access to the organs of public opinion.

We must beg the Lord for the great and uplifting gift of speech,⁶⁰ to be able to confer on faith its practical and efficacious principle,⁶¹ and to enable our words to reach out to the ends of the earth.⁶²

May we carry out the prescriptions of the Council's Constitution on Sacred Liturgy with zeal and ability. And may the catechetical teaching of the faith to the Christian people, and to as many others as possible, be marked by the aptness of its language, the wisdom of its method, and the zeal of its exercise, supported by the evidence of real virtues. May it strive ardently to lead its hearers to the security of the faith, to a realization of the intimate connection between the sacred word and life, and to the illumination of the living God.

60. Cf. Jer. 1:6.

61. Cf. Rom. 10:17.

62. Cf. Ps. 18:5; Rom. 10:18.

PARTNERS IN DIALOGUE

96. Finally, We must refer to those to whom our dialogue is directed. But even on this point, We do not intend to forestall the Council, which, please God, will soon make its voice heard.

97. Speaking in general on the role of partner in dialogue, a role that the Catholic Church must take up with renewed fervor today, we should like to observe that the Church must be ever ready to carry on the dialogue with all men of good will, within and without its own sphere.

98. There is no one who is a stranger to its heart, no one in whom its ministry has no interest. It has no enemies, except those who wish to be such. Its name, Catholic, is not an idle title. Not in vain has it received the commission to foster in the world unity, love and peace.

99. The Church is not unaware of the formidable dimensions of such a mission; it knows the disproportion in number between those who are its members and those who are not; it knows the limitations of its power; it knows its own human weaknesses and failings. It recognizes, too, that acceptance of the gospel does not depend, ultimately, on any apostolic efforts of its own or upon favorable temporal conditions, for faith is a gift of God and God alone defines in the world the times and limits of salvation.

But the Church knows that it is the seed, the leaven, the salt and light of the world. It sees clearly enough the astounding newness of modern times, but with frank confidence it stands upon the path of history and says to men: "I have that for which you search, that which you lack."

It does not thereby promise earthly felicity, but it does offer something—its light and its grace—that makes the attainment of it as easy as possible; and then it speaks to men of their transcendent destiny. In doing this, it speaks to them of truth, justice, freedom, progress, concord, peace and civilization.

These are words whose secret is known to the Church, for Christ entrusted the secret to its keeping. And so the Church has a message for every category of humanity: for children, for youth, for men of science and learning, for the world of labor and for every social class, for artists, for statesmen and for rulers. Most of all, the Church has words for the poor, the outcasts, the suffering and the dying. She speaks to all men.

FIRST CIRCLE: MANKIND

100. In speaking in this way, We may seem to be allowing Ourselves to be carried away in the contemplation of Our mission and to be out of touch with reality as regards the actual relations of mankind with the Catholic Church. But that is not so. We see the concrete situation quite clearly. To give a brief idea of it, We think it can be described as consisting of a series of concentric circles around the central point in which God has placed us.

101. The first of these circles is immense. Its limits stretch beyond our sight and merge with the horizon. It is that of mankind as such, the world. We gauge the distance that lies between us and the world; yet we do not consider the world a stranger. All things human are our concern.

We share with the whole of mankind a common nature; human life with all its gifts and problems. In this primary universal reality we are ready to play our part, to acknowledge the deep-seated claims of its fundamental needs, to applaud the new, and sometimes sublime, expressions of its genius.

We possess, too, vital moral truths, to be brought to men's notice and to be corroborated by their conscience, to the benefit of all. Wherever men are trying to understand themselves and the world, we can communicate with them. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of man, we are honored when they allow us to take our seat among them. If there exists in men "a soul which is naturally Christian,"

we desire to show it our respect and to enter into conversation with it.

102. Our attitude in this, as we remind ourselves and everyone else, is, on the one hand, entirely disinterested. We have no temporal or political aim whatever. On the other hand, its purpose is to raise up and elevate to a supernatural and Christian level every good human value in the world. We are not civilization, but we promote it.

DIALOGUE WITH ATHEISTS

103. We realize, however, that in this limitless circle there are many—very many, alas—who profess no religion. We are aware also that there are many who profess themselves, in various ways, to be atheists. We know that some of these proclaim their godlessness openly and uphold it as a program of human education and political conduct, in the ingenuous but fatal belief that they are setting men free from false and outworn notions about life and the world and are, they claim, putting in their place a scientific conception that fits the needs of modern progress.

104. This is the most serious problem of our time. We are firmly convinced that the theory on which the denial of God is based is utterly erroneous.

This theory is not in keeping with the basic, undeniable requirements of thought. It deprives the reasonable order of the world of its genuine foundation. This theory provides human life, not with a liberating formula, but with a blind dogma that degrades and saddens it. It destroys, at the root, any social system that attempts to base itself upon it. It does not bring freedom. It is a sham, attempting to quench the light of the living God.

We shall, therefore, resist with all our strength the assaults of this denial. This we do in the supreme cause of truth and in virtue of our sacred duty to profess Christ and His gospel, moved by deep, unshakable love for men and in the invincible

hope that modern man will come again to discover, in the religious ideals that Catholicism sets before him, his vocation to the civilization that does not die but ever tends to the natural and supernatural perfection of the human spirit, which is thus made capable, by the grace of God, of possessing temporal goods in peace and honor, and of living in the hope of attaining eternal goods.

105. These are the reasons that compel Us, as they compelled Our predecessors and, with them, all who have religious values at heart, to condemn the ideological systems that deny God and oppress the Church—systems that are often identified with economic, social and political regimes, among which atheistic communism is the chief. It can be said that it is not so much that we condemn these systems and regimes as that they express their radical opposition to us in thought and deed. Hence our expression of regret is really more a lament for wretched victims than the sentence of a judge.

DIFFICULT BUT POSSIBLE

106. Dialogue in such conditions is very difficult, not to say impossible, although even today we have no intention of excluding those who profess these systems and belong to these regimes. For the lover of truth, discussion is always possible.

The difficulties are enormously increased by obstacles of the moral order: the absence of sufficient freedom of thought and action, and the perversion of discussion so that the latter is used, not to seek and express objective truth, but to serve pre-determined utilitarian ends.

107. This is what puts an end to dialogue. The Church of Silence, for example, speaks only by sufferings, and with her speaks also the suffering of an oppressed and degraded society, in which the rights of the spirit are crushed by those who control its fate. If we begin to speak in such a state of affairs, how can we offer dialogue, when we cannot be anything more than a *voice*

*crying in the wilderness*⁶³?, Silence, groaning, patience and always love, in such conditions, are the witness that the Church can still offer, and not even death can silence it.

108. But though We must speak firmly and clearly in declaring and defending religion and the human values it proclaims and upholds, We are moved by Our pastoral office to seek in the heart of the modern atheist the motives of his turmoil and denial.

His motives are many and complex, so that we must examine them with care if we are to answer them effectively. Some of them arise from the demand that divine things be presented in a worthier and purer way than is, perhaps, the case in certain imperfect forms of language and worship, which we ought to try to purify so that they express as perfectly and clearly as possible the sacred reality of which they are the sign.

We see these men full of yearning, prompted sometimes by passion and desire for the unattainable, but often also by great-hearted dreams of justice and progress. In such dreams noble social aims are set up in the place of the Absolute and Necessary God, testifying thereby to the ineradicable need for the Divine Source and End of all things, whose transcendence and immanence it is the task of our teaching office to reveal with patience and wisdom.

Again, we see them, sometimes with ingenuous enthusiasm, having recourse to human reason, with the intention of arriving at a scientific explanation of the universe. Let us not despise this procedure, for it is often based upon laws of logical thought not unlike those of our classical school. It is a procedure that leads in a direction contrary to the will of those who would use it to find an unanswerable proof of their atheism and its intrinsic validity, for it leads them on toward the new and final metaphysical and logical assertion of the existence of the supreme God.

63. Mark 1:3.

In this cogent process of reasoning the atheistic politico-scientist stops short wilfully at a certain point and so extinguishes the sovereign light of the intelligibility of the universe. Who among us would not help him to reason on to a realization of the objective reality of the cosmic universe, a realization that restores to man the sense of the divine Presence, and bring to his lips the humble, halting words of a consoling prayer?

Sometimes, too, the atheist is spurred on by noble sentiments and by impatience with the mediocrity and self-seeking of so many contemporary social settings. He knows well how to borrow from our gospel modes and expressions of solidarity and human compassion. Shall we not be able to lead him back one day to the Christian source of such manifestations of moral worth?

109. Accordingly, bearing in mind the words of Our predecessor of venerable memory, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, to the effect that the doctrines of such movements, once elaborated and defined, remain always the same, whereas the movements themselves cannot help but evolve and undergo changes, even of a profound nature,⁶⁴ we do not despair that they may some day be able to enter into a more positive dialogue with the Church than the present one, which we now of necessity deplore and lament.

110. But we cannot turn our gaze away from the contemporary world without expressing a cherished desire, namely that our intention of developing and perfecting our dialogue in the varied and changing facets that it presents may assist the cause of peace between men, by providing a method that seeks to order human relationships in the sublime light of the language of reason and sincerity, and by making a contribution of experience and wisdom that can stir up all men to the consideration of the supreme values.

The opening of a dialogue such as ours would be, dis-

64. Cf. *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*, LV (1963), 300.

interested, objective and sincere, is in itself a decision in favor of a free and honorable peace. It excludes pretense, rivalry, deceit and betrayal. It cannot do other than condemn, as a crime and destruction, wars of aggression, conquest or domination. It cannot confine itself to relationships with the heads of nations, but must establish them also with the body of the nation and with its foundations, whether social, family or individual, so as to diffuse in every institution and in every soul the understanding, the relish and the duty of peace.

SECOND CIRCLE: NON-CHRISTIANS

111. Then we see another circle around us. This, too, is vast in its extent, yet it is not so far away from us. It is made up of those who adore the one, supreme God whom we too adore.

We mean the children, worthy of our affection and respect, of the Hebrew people, faithful to the religion that we call that of the Old Testament. Then, the adorers of God according to the conception of monotheism, the religion of the Muslims especially, deserving of our admiration for all that is true and good in their worship of God. And also the followers of the great Afro-Asiatic religions.

Obviously we cannot share in these various forms of religion, nor can we remain indifferent to the fact that each of them, in its own way, should regard itself as being the equal of any other and should authorize its followers not to seek to discover whether God has revealed the perfect and definitive form, free from all error, in which He wishes to be known, loved and served. Indeed, honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity. It is our hope that all who seek God and adore Him may come to acknowledge its truth.

112. But we do, nevertheless, recognize and respect the moral and spiritual values of the various non-Christian religions, and

we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare and civil order. For Our part, We are ready to enter into discussion on these common ideals, and will not fail to take the initiative where Our offer of discussion in genuine, mutual respect would be well received.

THIRD CIRCLE: SEPARATED BRETHREN

113. And so we come to the circle that is nearest to us, the circle of Christianity. In this field the ecumenical dialogue has already begun, and in some areas is making real headway. There is much to be said on this complex and delicate subject, but our discourse does not end here. For the moment we limit ourself to a few remarks, none of them new.

The principle that we are happy to make our own is this: Let us stress what we have in common rather than what divides us. This provides a good and fruitful subject for our dialogue. We are ready to carry it out wholeheartedly. We will say more: on many points of difference regarding tradition, spirituality, canon law, and worship, we are ready to study how we can satisfy the legitimate desires of our Christian brothers, still separated from us. It is our dearest wish to embrace them in a perfect union of faith and charity.

But we must add that it is not in our power to compromise in any way the integrity of the faith or the requirements of charity. We foresee that this will cause misgiving and opposition, but now that the Catholic Church has on its own initiative taken steps toward restoring the unity of Christ's fold, it will not cease to go forward with all patience and consideration.

It will not cease to show that the prerogatives that keep the separated brothers at a distance are not the fruits of historic ambition or of fanciful theological speculation, but derive from the will of Christ and that, rightly understood, they are for the

good of all and make for common unity, freedom and Christian perfection. The Catholic Church will not cease, by prayer and penance, to prepare worthily for the longed-for reconciliation. 114. In reflecting on this subject, it distresses Us to see how We, the promoter of such reconciliation, are regarded by many of the separated brethren as being its stumbling-block, because of the primacy of honor and jurisdiction that Christ bestowed upon the Apostle Peter, and which We have inherited from him.

Do not some of them say that if it were not for the primacy of the Pope, the reunion of the separated Churches with the Catholic Church would be easy?

We beg the separated brethren to consider the inconsistency of this position, not only in that without the Pope the Catholic Church would no longer be Catholic, but also because without the supreme, efficacious and decisive pastoral office of Peter the unity of the Church of Christ would utterly collapse.

It would be vain to look for other principles of unity in place of the one established by Christ Himself. As St. Jerome justly wrote: *There would arise in the Church as many sects as there are priests.*⁶⁵ We should also like to observe that this fundamental principle of Holy Church has not as its objective a supremacy of spiritual pride and human domination. It is a primacy of service, of ministration, of love. It is not empty rhetoric that confers upon the Vicar of Christ the title of "Servant of the servants of God."

115. It is along these lines that our dialogue is alert, and, even before entering into fraternal conversation, it speaks in prayer and hope with the heavenly Father.

116. We must observe, Venerable Brethren, with joy and confidence, that the vast and varied circle of separated Christians is pervaded by spiritual activities that seem to promise consoling developments in regard to their reunion in the one Church of

65. Cf. *Dialogus Contra Luciferianos*, 9. (P.L. XXIII, 173).

Christ. We beg that the Holy Spirit will breathe upon the "ecumenical movement," and we recall the emotion and joy We felt at Jerusalem in Our meeting, full of charity and new hope, with the Patriarch Athenagoras.

We wish to greet with gratitude and respect the participation of so many representatives of separated Churches in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

We want to give Our assurance, once again, that we have an attentive, reverent interest in the spiritual movements connected with the problem of unity, which are stirring up vital and noble religious sentiments in various individuals, groups and communities. With love and reverence We greet all these Christians, in hope that we may promote together, even more effectively, the cause of Christ and the unity that He desired for His Church, in the dialogue of sincerity and love.

DIALOGUE AMONG CATHOLICS

117. And lastly We turn to speak with the children of the House of God, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, of which this Roman Church is "mother and head." It is Our ardent desire that this conversation with Our own children should be full of faith, of charity, of good works, should be intimate and familiar.

We would have it responsive to all truth and virtue and to all the realities of our doctrinal and spiritual inheritance. Sincere and sensitive in genuine spirituality, ever ready to give ear to the manifold voice of the contemporary world, ever more capable of making Catholics truly good men, men wise, free, serene and strong; that is what We earnestly desire our family conversation to be.

118. This desire to impress upon the internal relationships of the Church the character of a dialogue between members of a body whose constitutive principle is charity does not do away

with the exercise of the virtue of obedience, since the right order necessary in all well-constructed societies and, above all, the hierarchic constitution of the Church require that, on the one side, authority should be exercised according to its proper function and that, on the other side, there should be submission.

The Church's authority was instituted by Christ; it is, indeed, representative of Him; it is the authorized channel of His word; it is the expression of His pastoral charity. Obedience, therefore, is motivated by faith, develops into a school of evangelical humility and links the obedient man to the wisdom, unity, constructiveness and charity by which the body of the Church is sustained. It confers upon him who imposes it and upon him who conforms himself to it the merit of being like Christ, who was *made obedient unto death*.⁶⁶

119. By obedience, therefore, in the context of dialogue, We mean the exercise of authority in the full awareness of its being a service and ministry of truth and charity, and We mean the observance of canonical regulations and respect for the government of legitimate superiors in the spirit of untroubled readiness, as becomes free and loving children.

The spirit of independence, of criticism, of rebellion ill accords with the charity that gives life to the Church's solidarity, concord and peace, and easily transforms the dialogue into argument, dispute and disagreement. This most regrettable attitude, so easy, alas, to produce, is condemned by the Apostle Paul in his warning: *Let there be no divisions among you*.⁶⁷

PROMOTING DIALOGUE

120. It is, therefore, Our ardent desire that the dialogue within the Church should take on new fervor, new themes and new participants, so that the holiness and vitality of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth may be increased.

66. Phil. 2:8.

67. 1 Cor. 1:10.

Anything that makes known the teachings of which the Church is both custodian and dispenser receives Our approbation. We have already mentioned the liturgy, the interior life and preaching. We could add also: schools, the press, the social apostolate, the missions, the exercise of charity.

All these are themes to which the Council will direct our attention. And We bless and encourage all those who, under the guidance of competent authority, take part in the Church's life-giving dialogue, priests especially and religious, and our beloved laity, dedicated to Christ in Catholic Action and in so many other associations and activities.

121. It is a cause of joy and comfort for Us to see that such a dialogue already exists in the Church and in the areas that surround it. The Church today is more than ever alive. But if we consider it closely, it seems that everything still remains to be done; the work begins today and never comes to an end. This is the law of our temporal, earthly pilgrimage. This is the ordinary task, Venerable Brothers, of our ministry, which everything today stimulates us to renew and to make more devoted and intense.

122. As for Ourselves in speaking to you of these things, We are pleased to trust in your co-operation and offer you Ours in return. This union of aims and labor We ask for and offer not long after Our elevation to the Chair of the Apostle Peter, bearing the name and sharing, please God, something of the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

123. And so, celebrating the unity of Christ among us, We send to you with this, Our first letter, in the name of the Lord, Our blessing as brother and father, a blessing that We gladly extend to the whole Church and to all mankind.

124. From the Vatican, on the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Jesus Christ, August 6, 1964.

Review Questions

**The number in parentheses refers to the paragraph in the encyclical which treats the matter in question.*

PROLOGUE (1-18)

1. Why did Pope Paul VI choose the words *Ecclesiam Suam* (His Church) as the opening words of his first encyclical? (1-3) *
2. What are the objects of "the dominant thoughts" in the Pope's heart at this time? (4-5)
3. What effect does the Pope intend his encyclical to have on the work of Vatican Council II? (6-8)
4. What doctrine does the Pope propose, as of primary importance, to the Church's consideration today? (9-10)
5. What effect is to be expected from a deeper self-awareness on the part of the Church? (11)
6. What task must the Church undertake as a result of comparing her actual condition with God's intentions for her? (12)
7. What are the two parts into which the Pope divides the world with which the Church must establish relationships? What attitude must the Church take toward this world? (13-16)
8. What role does the Pope propose to play in promoting world peace? (17)

I SELF-AWARENESS (19-42)

9. What must the Church do internally before addressing herself to the world and to its particular problems? (19-20)
10. What interior attitudes should result from reflection on the new relationship that the religion of Christ establishes between God and man? (21-23)
11. In what other way could this invitation to interior awareness be expressed? (24)

12. Why does the Church particularly need to reflect on herself at this moment in history? (25-27)
13. What changes are taking place in mankind and what effect do they have on the Church? (28)
14. What antidote does the Pope propose to modernism and similar errors? (28-29)
15. Why is reflection within the mind particularly appealing to modern man? (30)
16. What kind of scholarly work does the Pope single out for praise? Which papal documents? Why does he praise them? (31-33)
17. What effect does the Pope hope that study of the doctrine concerning the Church will have on ecumenism? (34)
18. What relationship does he see existing between himself and the Ecumenical Council in respect to this doctrine? (35)
19. What kind of help does he hope for from the Council? (36)
20. What is the first benefit to be reaped from a deepened awareness of herself by the Church? (37)
21. What is the "feeling for the Church" that results from meditating on the "mystery of the Church"? (38)
22. What good results follow from the strengthening of a feeling for the Church? (39-40)
23. What is the true significance of baptism? (41)

II RENEWAL (43-59)

24. In what sense is the Church perfect? In what sense must she strive for perfection? (43)
25. What human realities cannot be properly judged apart from the teachings of Christ and His Church? (43)
26. Why is a reawakened interest in the life of Christ desirable today? (43)
27. What problematic situation is created for the Church by her existence in temporal society? (44)
28. In general terms, what kind of reform does the Church need today? (45-47)

29. What wrong use of the word "reform" is to be rejected? (48)
30. What is the right sense of the word "reform" as applied to the Church? (49)
31. What other danger can the desire for reform produce? In what fields in particular does this danger show itself? (50-51)
32. How does the Pope interpret the program for the *aggiornamento* of the Church? (52)
33. Which lines of conduct do and which do not give vigor to the Church in her work? (53)
34. What function does the spirit of poverty have in the work of the Church today? (56-57)
35. What role must charity play in the Christian life? (58)
36. In the Pope's view, what is the place of Mary, the Mother of God, in the scheme of Christian perfection? (59)

III DIALOGUE (60-124)

37. In what sense is the Church radically different from the human environment in which she exists? (60-63)
38. What duty must Christian education perform for the student today? (64)
39. Why is the distinction between Christianity and the world not a separation? (65)
40. Why must the Church go out to meet the world and enter into dialogue with it? (66-67)
41. How does the Pope describe the pastoral function of the Holy See and of the Ecumenical Council? (68-70)
42. What program does the Pope himself propose to follow as regards dialogue with the world? (71)
43. What is the transcendent origin of the dialogue? (72)
44. How is the dialogue between God and man related to the dialogue between the Church and the world? (73)
45. What qualities should characterize the Church's approach to the world, in imitation of God's approach to man in the dialogue of salvation? (74-79)

46. What approaches to the world could the Church take, and which is preferable? (80)
47. What qualities should be found in the proper approach to the world in dialogue? (81)
48. From the Pope's point of view, what is the dialogue? (82-83)
49. What are the characteristics of the dialogue? (83-85)
50. What does the Pope mean by the "dialectic" of the dialogue? What benefits does he expect from it? (86)
51. How is the dialogue to be carried on? (87-89)
52. Why must the Church adapt herself to historic and local circumstances? (90-92)
53. What are the limits on this adaptation? (90-92)
54. What is the primary apostolate? What is needed in order to carry it on effectively? (94-95)
55. With whom must the Church be prepared to enter into dialogue? (96-98)
56. What makes the Church's mission to the world such a formidable one? (99)
57. What is the substance of the Church's message today? (99)
58. In what circles does the Pope see mankind as lying, around the central point which is the Holy See? (100 ff.)
59. What is the primary, universal reality in which the Church is ready to play her part? What part is she ready to play? (101-102)
60. What is the Church's attitude toward civilization? (102)
61. What does the Pope see as the most serious problem of our time, and why? (103-104)
62. What attitude does he intend to take toward the denial of God? Why? (104)
63. What is his attitude toward political and economic regimes based on the denial of God, of which communism is the chief example? (105)
64. Does the Pope exclude dialogue with the Communists? What obstacles to it does he see? (106-107)
65. What pastoral approach to the modern atheist does the Pope advocate? (108)

66. What religious truth is implicit in the noble, although distorted, social aims of atheists? (108)
67. Is science to be feared because it disproves the existence of God? (108)
68. What good results could follow from the honest moral indignation of some atheists? (108)
69. What principle of historical development gives ground for hoping for an eventual more positive dialogue between atheistic movements and the Church? (109)
70. What contribution would the dialogue, which the Pope envisions, make to the cause of peace? (110)
71. What judgment is passed on the morality of war? (110)
72. What bodies or groups must participate in a dialogue aimed at peace? (110)
73. How does the Pope describe the non-Christian religions and in what terms does he describe dialogue with them? (111-112)
74. What principle does the Pope take as his own for the conduct of that dialogue which is properly called ecumenical? (113)
75. On what points can the Church contemplate satisfying the legitimate desires of Christians separated from her? On what points is compromise impossible? (113)
76. How does the Church hope to persuade separated Christians of the rightness of her position on those points? (113)
77. Why must the Church insist on papal primacy? (114)
78. What is the Pope's attitude toward the ecumenical movement among separated Christians? (116)
79. What fruits does the Pope wish from his conversation with the members of the Catholic Church? (117)
80. How do charity and obedience interact with each other in the dialogue within the Church? (118-119)
81. What are the media of the dialogue within the Church? (120)
82. What is the law of our temporal, earthly pilgrimage? (121)

Selected Bibliography

Commentators on papal pronouncements recognize the special character of a Pope's first encyclical, seeing it as a statement of policy that sets the tone for a new pontificate. Readers of "The Paths of the Church" (*Ecclesiam Suam*) may better grasp its significance by comparing it with two preceding inaugural encyclicals: Pius XII's "The Unity of Human Society" (*Summi Pontificatus*), issued on October 20, 1939, and John XXIII's "On Truth, Unity and Peace" (*Ad Petri Cathedram*), issued on June 29, 1959. (The first appeared as an America Press pamphlet (25¢); the second was published in the November-December, 1959 issue of the *Catholic Mind*, pp. 541-70).

Two collections of Pope Paul's speeches and pastorals dating from his years as Cardinal Archbishop of Milan have appeared in English. They serve admirably as an introduction to the personal outlook and thought processes of the Holy Father, and reveal the extent to which some of the basic themes touched on in his first encyclical have preoccupied him for many years. One is *The Church* (Helicon. 1964. 232p.). The other, *The Mind of Paul VI* (Bruce. 1964. 267p.), also contains a remarkably candid essay by Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., on "The Image of Paul VI in the Light of the First Months of His Government."

Since the encyclical takes on added meaning in that it appears during an intersession of the Second Vatican Council, it can best be appreciated against a background of the two discourses, by John XXIII and Paul VI respectively, opening the first and second sessions of the Council. Full texts appear in the December, 1962 issue (pp. 48-54) and November, 1963 issue (pp. 50-63) of the *Catholic Mind*. In view of the new encyclical's explicit citations from Pius XII's magisterial encyclical "The Mystical Body" (*Mystici Corporis*), and John XXIII's great testament, "Peace on Earth" (*Pacem in Terris*), it may help to review the texts in America Press pamphlet editions (25¢ and 50¢, respectively).

The two great encyclicals of Pope John XXIII

PACEM IN TERRIS

Two years after his outstanding *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John gave the world this great companion encyclical. Here is the English text, reviewed and collated by the editors of *America*, with a masterly and penetrating analysis by John Courtney Murray, S.J., a commentary by Thurston N. Davis, S.J., copious questions for study-club use, an extended reading list and a twelve-page tabular breakdown of the encyclical's contents. (C-76) 50¢

MATER ET MAGISTRA

Pope John's historic encyclical on "Christianity and Social Progress" is produced in a precise translation from the official *Acta* version. Attuned to the times, this providential encyclical is an answer to many of the great questions of a revolutionary age. Extended analysis, discussion outline and bibliography are included with the text. (C-65) 50¢

AMERICA PRESS, 920 Broadway, New York 10, N.Y.