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## Circular Letter to Priests on Missionary Identity

**"The Missionary Identity of the Priest in the Church Which Is Intrinsic to the Exercise of the 'Tria Munera'"**

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 6, 2011 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Here is the circular letter that Cardinal Mauro Piacenza, prefect of the Congregation for Clergy, wrote on "The Missionary Identity of the Priest in the Church Which Is Intrinsic to the Exercise of the 'Tria Munera.'" The letter is dated June 29, 2010, and was presented Jan. 21.

The "tria munera" refers to the clergy's ministries of teaching, sanctifying and governing, which correspond to Christ's threefold office of Prophet, Priest and King.

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### Introduction

*Ecclesia peregrinans natura sua missionaria est*

"The Church on earth is by her very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has her origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit".[1]

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council was, within the current of uninterrupted Tradition, quite explicit in affirming the intrinsically missionary nature of the Church. The Church does not exist of her-self or for herself: she draws her origin from the mission of the Son and the Spirit; the Church is called, of her nature, to go out of herself in a movement towards the world, to be a sign of Emmanuel, the Word made flesh, God-with-us.

This missionary nature is, from a theological point of view, found in each of the notes of the Church and is particularly to be seen both in her catholicity and her apostolicity. How can one faithfully fulfil the duty to be apostles, faithful witnesses of the Lord, heralds of the word, and humble and convinced ministers of grace, if not through missionary activity, understood as a true constitutive element of the Church?

The Church's mission is, moreover, the mission that she has received from Christ Jesus with the gift of the Holy Spirit. That mission is one, and it is entrusted to all the members of the people of God, made sharers in the priesthood of Christ through the sacraments of initiation in order to offer God a spiritual sacrifice and to bear witness to Christ before mankind. This mission extends to all peoples, all cultures, and all times and places. This one mission corresponds to the one priesthood of Christ, in which all the members of the people of God share, albeit in different ways and not simply by degree.

In that mission priests, as the highly valued fellow-workers of the bishops, successors of the apostles, certainly retain a central and absolutely irreplaceable function, entrusted to them by God's providence.

1. The ecclesial awareness of the need for renewed missionary commitment

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The intrinsic missionary nature of the Church is dynamically rooted in the trinitarian missions themselves. The Church is called by her very nature to proclaim the person of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, and to address the whole of humanity in accordance with the mandate she has received from the Lord: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation" (Mk 16:15); As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (Jn 20:21). Saint Paul's vocation also included a sending forth: "Depart; for I shall send you far away to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21).

In order to undertake this mission, the Church receives the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son at Pentecost. The Spirit who descended upon the apostles is the Spirit of Jesus: he enables Jesus' acts to be repeated (Acts 4:10), he enables the Word of Jesus to be proclaimed (Acts 4:30), he enables Jesus' prayer to be repeated (cf. Acts 7:59ff; Lk 23:34, 6), he perpetuates, in the breaking of the bread, the thanksgiving and the sacrifice of Jesus and he maintains unity amongst the brethren (Acts 2:42; 4:32). The Holy Spirit confirms and makes manifest the communion of the disciples as a new creation, a community of eschatological salvation, and he sends them out on mission: "You shall be my witnesses... to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Spirit spurs the newborn Church to missionary activity throughout the world, and thus shows that he has been breathed out upon "all flesh" (cf. Acts 2:17).

Today, the new global conditions in which the Church must be present and active urgently demands a renewed sense of mission, not only *ad gentes*, but also towards the Church's existing flock.

In recent decades the Petrine Magisterium has authoritatively expressed, with ever stronger and decisive tones, the need for a re–newed missionary commitment. We need but mention the documents *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI, *Redemptoris Missio* and *Novo Millennio ineunte* of John Paul II,[2] and the numerous statements of *Benedict XVI*. [3]

Nor has *Benedict XVI* shown any less concern for missionary activity *ad gentes*, as demonstrated by his tireless solicitude in this regard. The presence and activity of the many missionaries already sent *ad gentes*, and their activity in our own time, need to be emphasized and be encouraged. Obviously their numbers are still insufficient. We are also witnessing a new phenomenon: African and Asian missionaries who help the Church, for example, in Europe.

One must rejoice and thank God too for the many movements and ecclesial communities, even among the laity, which express this missionary fervour, both at home - among Catholics who for various reasons are not active in the ecclesial community - and *ad gentes*.

### 2. Theological and spiritual aspects of the missionary spirit of the priesthood

We cannot consider the missionary aspect of priestly theology and spirituality without specifying its relationship to the mystery of Christ himself. As already stated in No. 1, the Church has her foundations in the mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit: consequently every "mission", and the missionary dimension of the Church herself, which is intrinsic to her nature, are based on a sharing in the divine mission. The Lord Jesus is par excellence the one sent by the Father. All the New Testament writings bear witness to this, to a greater or lesser degree.

In the Gospel of Saint Luke, Jesus presents himself as the one who, consecrated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, was sent to proclaim the Good News to the poor (cf. Lk 4:18; Is 61:1-2). In the three synoptic Gospels, Jesus identifies himself as the beloved son who, in the parable of the murderous tenants of the vineyard, was finally sent by the owner of the vineyard, after he had sent his servants (cf. Mk 12:1-12; Mt 21:33-46; Lk 20:9-19). At other times he speaks of himself being the one who has been sent (cf. Mt 15:24). The idea of Christ as the one sent by the Father also appears in Paul (cf. Gal 4:4; Rm 8:3).

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It is above all, however, in the johannine texts that the "mission" of Jesus is most often evident.[4] To be the one "sent by the Father" is certainly part of Jesus' identity: it is he whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world, and this fact expresses his unique divine sonship (cf. Jn 10:36-38). Jesus accomplished the work of salvation as the one sent by the Father, as he who does the works of the one who sent him, and in obedience to his will. It was by carrying out this will that Jesus exercised his ministry as priest, prophet and king. At the same time it is only as the one sent by the Father that he in turn sends the disciples. Mission, in all its aspects, has its foundation in the mission of the Son in the world, and in the mission of the Holy Spirit.[5]

Jesus is the one sent and he, in turn, sends others (cf. Jn 17:18). Mission is first and foremost a dimension of the life and ministry of Jesus and, for this reason, it is such for the Church and for every individual Christian, according to the demands of each one's personal vocation. We see how Jesus exercised his saving ministry for the good of others in the three interrelated dimensions of teaching, sanctifying and governing; or, to put it in more biblical terms, as the prophet who reveals the Father, as priest, Lord, king, and shepherd.

While it is true that, in his proclamation of the kingdom and in his function as the one who reveals the Father, Jesus considered himself sent especially to the people of Israel (cf. Mt 15:24; 10:5), yet there are episodes in his life where the universal horizon of his message is made manifest: Jesus does not exclude the Gentiles from salvation; he praises the faith of some of them, like the centurion, and declares that the pagans will come from the ends of the earth to be seated at table with the patriarchs of Israel (cf. Mt 8: 10-12; Lk 7:9); similarly he says to the Canaanite woman, "Woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire" (Mt 15:28; cf. Mk 7:29). The Risen Jesus, in continuity with his own mission, sends his disciples out to preach the Gospel to all nations, a universal mission (cf. Jn 20:21-22; Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Acts 1:8). Christian revelation is directed to all men and women, without exception.

The revelation of God as Father that Jesus brings is rooted in his unique relationship with the Father, in his filial consciousness; it is only on the basis of this that he can serve as the revealer (cf. Mt 11:12-17; Lk 10:21-22; Jn 1:18; 14:6-9; 17:3,4,6). The ultimate aim of Jesus' entire teaching is to make the Father known, with all that this knowledge implies. His mission as the one who reveals the Father is so rooted in the mystery of his person that he continues his revelation of the Father even in eternity: "I made known your name to them, and I will make it known, that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them" (Jn 17:26; cf. 17:24). This experience of the divine fatherhood must impel the disciples to love everyone; it is in this that their perfection consists (cf. Mt 5: 5-48; Lk 6: 35-36).

The priestly ministry of Jesus cannot be understood except against the horizon of universality. The New Testament testifies to Jesus' clear consciousness of his mission, which led him to give his life for all (cf. Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28). Jesus, who is without sin, takes his place amid sinful men and offers himself to the Father on their behalf. The words of the institution of the Eucharist reflect the same consciousness and attitude: Jesus offers his very life in the sacrifice of the new covenant for our benefit: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (Mk 14:24; cf. Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:24-25).

The priesthood of Jesus is most clearly developed in the Letter to the Hebrews, where it is emphasized that he is the eternal priest, who possesses a priesthood that will never pass away (cf. Heb 7:24); he is the perfect priest (cf. Heb 7:28). As opposed to the multiplicity of the ancient priests and sacrifices, Jesus offered himself once and for all with the perfect sacrifice (Heb 7:27; 9:12,28; 10:10; 1 Pet. 3:18). The uniqueness of his person and sacrifice confers a singular and universal character on Christ's priesthood; the entire reality of his person and, concretely, the redeeming sacrifice which endures to eternity, bears the mark of that which will not pass away and which cannot be surpassed. Christ, our supreme high priest, continues even now, in his glorified state, to intercede for us before the Father (cf. Jn 14:16; Rom 8:32; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; 10:12; 1 Jn 2:1).

Sent by the Father, Jesus also appears as Lord in the New Testament (cf. Acts 2:36). Christ's lordship was made known to Christians in the resurrection event. This title was fundamental and is related to the

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resurrection in the earliest confessions of faith (cf. Rom 10:9). In many of the texts that speak of Jesus as Lord we find references to God the Father (cf. Phil 2:1). Jesus, who proclaims the kingdom of God, which is especially bound to his person, is king, as he himself indicates in the Gospel of John (cf. Jn 18:33-37). Finally, at the end of time, he "will deliver the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule, and every authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24).

Naturally, the Lord's dominion has little to do with the dominion of the mighty of this world (cf. Lk 22:25-27; Mt 20:25-27; Mk. 10:42-45), since, as he himself points out, his kingdom is not of this world (cf. Jn 18:36). For this reason, the kingship of Christ is that of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep and gives his life for them and desires to unite them in one flock (cf. Jn 10:14-16). Even the parable of the lost sheep refers indirectly to Christ as the good shepherd (cf. Mk 18:12-14; Lk 15:4-7). Jesus is also the chief shepherd (cf. 1 Pet 5:4).

In Jesus we see fulfilled all that the Old Testament had said about God as the shepherd of his people, Israel: "I will feed them with good pasture, and upon the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pas-ture [...] I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice" (Ez 34:14-16). And again: "And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God" (Ez 34:23-24; cf. Jer23:1-4; Zech 11:15-17; Ps. 23:1-6).[6]

It is only by starting with Christ that the traditional reflection on the tria munera, which characterize the sacred ministry of priests, can have any sense. We must not forget that Jesus considers himself present in all those whom he sends: "He who receives any one whom I send receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me" (Jn 13:20; cf. also Mt 10:40; Lk 10:16). There is, thus, a chain of "mis-sions", which originates in the mystery of the triune God who desires that all men and women become partakers in his life. The trinitarian, christological [7] and ecclesiological roots of the ministry of priests is the basis of their missionary identity. The universal salvific will of God, the one and necessary mediation of Christ (cf. 1 Tim 2:4-7; 4:10) allows no limits to be placed on the Church's work of evangeliza-tion and of sanctification. The entire economy of salvation has its origin in the plan of the Father to recapitulate all things in Christ (cf. Eph 1:3-10), and in the realization of this plan, which will attain ulti-mate fulfilment in the coming of the Lord in glory.

The Second Vatican Council refers clearly to the exercise of Christ's tria munera by priests as fellow-workers with the order of bishops: "Partakers of the function of Christ the sole Mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:5) on their level of ministry, they announce the divine word to all. They exercise their sacred function especially in Eucharistic worship or the celebration of the Mass by which, acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming his mystery, they unite the prayers of the faithful with the sacrifice of their Head and they renew and apply in the sacrifice of the Mass until the coming of the Lord (1 Cor 11:26) the one sacrifice of the New Testament, namely that of Christ offering himself once for all as a spotless victim to the Father (cf. Heb 9:11-28)... Exercising within the limits of their authority the function of Christ as shepherd and Head, they gather together God's family as a brotherhood all of one mind, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, to God the Father. In the midst of the flock they adore him in spirit and in truth (cf. Jn 4:24)".[8]

By virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which confers an in-delible spiritual character, [9] priests are consecrated, that is taken "from the world" and given "to the living God" as "his own property, so that, starting from him, they can exercise their priestly ministry for the world", preach the Gospel, be shepherds of the faithful and celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament (cf. Heb 5:1).[10]

In his address to those taking part in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy, Pope Benedict XVI stated that: "the missionary dimension of the priesthood is born from the priest's sac-ramental

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configuration to Christ. As a consequence it brings with it a heartfelt and total adherence to what the ecclesial tradition has identified as *apostolica vivendi forma*. This consists in participation in a 'new life', spiritually speaking, in that 'new way of life' which the Lord Jesus inaugurated and which the Apostles made their own. Through the imposition of the Bishop's hands and the consecratory prayer of the Church, the candidates become new men, they become "pres-byters". In this light it is clear that the *tria munera* are first a gift and only consequently an office, first a participation in a life, and hence a *potestas*".[11]

The Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests *Presbyterorum Ordinis* illustrates this truth when it refers to priests as ministers of God's word, ministers of sanctification through the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, and leaders and teachers of the people of God. The missionary identity of the priest is clearly present in these texts, even if it is not fully developed. The duty to proclaim the Gospel according to the Lord's mandate is expressly emphasized, with explicit reference to non-believers, as well as the need to summon to faith and the sacraments through the proclamation of the Gospel message. The priest who is "sent", who shares in the mission of Christ, who was sent by the Father, finds himself caught up in a missionary dynamism, apart from which he cannot live his authentic identity.[12]

The Post-Synodal Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* states that, while placed in a particular Church, the priest, by virtue of his ordination, has received a spiritual gift which prepares him for a universal mission, even to the ends of the earth, for "every priestly ministry shares in the universality of the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles".[13] For this reason the spiritual life of the priest must be characterized by a missionary outreach and dynamism; taking up the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Exhortation makes it clear that the priest must form the community that has been entrusted to him in order to make it an authentically missionary community.[14] The office of shepherd requires that this missionary ardour be evident and communicated to others, since the whole Church is essentially missionary. The missionary identity of the priests derives in a decisive manner from this dimension of the Church.

In speaking of mission, it must be kept in mind that the one sent, the priest in this instance, has a necessary relationship both with the one who sends him and with those to whom he is sent. Looking at the priest's relationship with Christ, the first to be sent by the Father, it must be emphasized that, according to the texts of the New Testament, it is Christ himself who sends and establishes ministers for his Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out in sacramental ordination; the latter cannot be regarded as merely elected by the community or priestly people. The sending comes from Christ; the ministers of the Church are living instruments of Christ the one mediator.[15] "The priest finds the full truth of his identity in being a derivation, a specific participation in and continuation of Christ himself, the one high priest of the new and eternal covenant".[16]

The missionary dimension of the priestly ministry emerges clearly from this christological starting-point: Jesus was crucified and risen for all people, whom he wishes to gather together into one flock; he had to die in order to reunite all the children of God who had been scattered (cf. Jn 11:52). If all die in Adam, in Christ all are returned to life (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-22); in Christ God has reconciled the world to himself (cf. 2 Cor 5:19); and he in turn commanded the apostles to preach the gospel to all peoples. The entire New Testament is pervaded by the notion of Christ's universal saving activity and his sole mediation.

The priest, configured to Christ as priest, prophet and king, cannot fail to open his heart to all people and, concretely, above all to those who do not know Christ and who have not yet received the light of his Good News.

With regard to those to whom the Church must proclaim the Gospel, [17] and to whom, as a consequence, the priest is sent, it must be pointed out that the Second Vatican Council repeatedly spoke of the unity of the human family, based on the creation of each person in the image and likeness of God, and on our common destiny in Christ: "One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race

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to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal, God. His providence, his manifestations of goodness, and his saving design extend to all men and women".[18] This unity is destined to reach its fulfilment in the recapitulation of all things in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10).[19]

The pastoral activity of the Church is wholly directed towards this final recapitulation of all things in Christ, which is human salva-tion. Since everyone is called to unity in Christ, no one should be excluded from the concern of the priest who is configured to Christ. All men and women await, even if unconsciously (cf. Acts 17:23-29), the salvation that comes from him alone: that salvation which consists in our entrance into the Trinitarian mystery, by our sharing in Christ's divine Sonship. There can be no distinctions between individuals and peoples, since all have the same origin and share the same destiny and a single vocation in Christ. To establish limits to "pastoral charity" would be completely contradictory to the priest's vocation, marked as he is by a particular configuration to Christ, head and shepherd of the Church and of all people.

The tria munera exercised by priests in their ministry cannot be understood apart from their essential relationship to the person of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. The priest is configured to Christ by the gift of the Holy Spirit received in ordination. Indeed, since the tria munera are essentially interconnected in Christ, they cannot be sepa-rated in any way. The filial identity of Jesus, sent by the Father, sheds light on all three, and the exercise of these three functions cannot be separated in priests.[20]

The priest is defined by his relationship to the person of Christ and not just by his priestly functions, which flow from and find their full meaning in the person of the Lord. This means that the priest discovers the specificity of his life and vocation by living out his per-sonal configuration to Christ; he is always an alter Christus. In his con-sciousness of having been sent by Christ, even as Christ was sent by the Father, for the salvation of souls, the priest will experience the universal dimension, and thus the missionary dimension, of his own deepest identity.

### 3. A renewal of the missionary praxis of priests

The urgency of mission at the present time demands a renewal of pastoral practice. The changed cultural and religious circumstances of our world, in all their diversity according to region and socio-cul- tural environment, point to the need to open new paths for mission-ary praxis. Benedict XVI said in his address to the German Bishops mentioned above: "I believe we must all try together to find new ways of bringing the Gospel to the contemporary world".[21]

In considering the role of priests in this mission, let us recall the missionary essence of the priestly identity of each and every priest and the history of the Church, which shows the indispensable role priests have in missionary activity. This role is brought into even clearer focus when we speak of the mission of evangelization within already es-tablished Churches, a mission which reaches out to the baptized who have "distanced themselves" and to all those who, in parishes and dio-ceses, know little or nothing of Jesus.

The ministry of priests in the particular and parish communi-ties shows the Church as a transforming and redeeming event which unfolds within the daily routine of life. There priests preach the word of God, evangelize and catechize, explaining sacred doctrine faithfully and integrally. They help the faithful to read and understand the Bible, gather the people of God to celebrate the Eucharist and the other sacraments, and encourage other forms of common prayer and devo-tion. They welcome those who come seeking relief, consolation, light, faith, reconciliation and nearness to God, and they convoke and lead meetings of the community aimed at studying, developing and im-plementing pastoral plans. They guide and encourage the community in the exercise of charity towards the needy and the poor in spirit by promoting social justice, human rights, the equal human dignity of all, authentic freedom, fraternal cooperation, and peace, according to the principles of the social doctrine of the Church. It is they who, as fel-low workers with the bishops, have immediate pastoral responsibility.

### 3.1. The missionary must be a disciple

The Gospel shows us that being a missionary means first being a disciple. Mark's Gospel states, "And he went up on the mountain, and called to him those whom he desired; and they came to him. And he appointed twelve, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" (Mk 3:13-15). "He called to him—self those whom he desired" and "to be with him": this is discipleship! These disciples will be sent out to preach and to cast out demons: these are missionaries.

In the Gospel of John we find the call of the first disciples, "Come and see" (Jn 1:39), their encounter with Jesus, and their first missionary outreach, as they go forth to call others, telling them of the Messiah whom they came to know and leading them to Jesus, who even now is calling men and women to become his disciples (cf. Jn 1:35-51).

The entire journey of discipleship begins with the Lord's call. The initiative is always his. This means that the call is always a grace which must be freely and humbly received and cherished with the help of the Holy Spirit. God loved us first. This is the primacy of grace. The call is then followed by an encounter with Jesus, in which we hear his word and experience his love for each person and for the whole of human—ity. He loves us and he reveals the true God to us, the Triune God who is love. In the Gospels we can see how in this encounter the Spirit of Jesus transforms those who have an open heart.

Indeed, all those who meet Jesus become deeply caught up in his person and his mission in the world; they believe in him, experience his love, cleave to him, and choose to follow him unconditionally wherever he may lead; they devote their entire lives to him and, if needed, are ready to die for him. They return from the encounter with Jesus with a joyful and enthusiastic heart, captivated by the mys—tery of Christ, and set out to proclaim him to all. The disciple thus becomes like the Master, sent forth by him and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

What people are asking for is the same thing asked by some Greeks who were in the city when Jesus made his messianic entry to Jerusalem: "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12:21). We too ask this in our own day. Where and how do we meet Jesus, now that he has returned to the Father, today, in the time of the Church?

Pope John Paul II, of beloved memory, spoke frequently of the need for all Christians to encounter Jesus, an encounter which would in turn inspire them to proclaim Christ to all humanity. He indicated a number of specific settings in which we can encounter Jesus. The first place, said the Pope, is the "sacred scripture read in the light of tradi—tion, the Fathers and the Magisterium, and more deeply understood through meditation and prayer", namely *lectio divina* or the prayerful reading of the Bible. A second place, stated the Pope, is the liturgy and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. In the account of the appear—ance of the Risen One to the disciples of Emmaus, we see the sacred scriptures and the Eucharist deeply united as places where we encoun—ter Jesus. A third setting can be seen in Matthew's Gospel where, in speaking of the final judgement, Jesus identifies himself with the poor (cf. Mt 25:31-46).[22]

Another fundamental and precious setting for encountering Jesus is prayer, both personal and communal, especially prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and the faithful recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. Even the contemplation of creation can become a setting for encounter with God.

Each Christian must be brought to Jesus Christ in order to forge, renew and deepen a powerful, personal and communal encounter with the Lord. It is from this encounter that the disciple is born and reborn; and from the disciple is born the missionary. If this is true for every Christian, how much more so it is for the priest.[23]

The disciple is a missionary who always necessarily remains a member of the community of disciples and missionaries which is the Church. Jesus came into the world and gave his life on the cross in order "to gather

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into one the children of God who are scattered" (Jn 11:52). The Second Vatican Council teaches that, "God, however, does not make men holy and save them merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather it has pleased him to bring men together as one people, a people that acknowledges him in truth and serves him in holiness".[24] Jesus, together with his group of disciples, particularly the Twelve, inaugurated this new community uniting the scattered children of God, which is the Church. Following his re–turn to the Father, the first Christians lived as a community, under the leadership of the apostles, and every disciple took part in community life and the assembly of the brethren, above all in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread. It is in the Church, and beginning with effective communion with the Church herself, that we live as and become disciples and missionaries.

### 3.2. The mission ad gentes

The whole Church is missionary by her very nature. This teaching of the Second Vatican Council also says something about the identity and the life of priests: "The spiritual gift which priests receive at their ordination prepared them not for a sort of limited and narrow mission but for the widest possible and universal mission of salvation 'even to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8) ... Let priests remember, therefore, that the care of all churches must be their intimate concern".[25]

Priests can take part in the mission ad gentes in a variety of ways, without ever going to mission lands. Yet they too may receive the special grace of being called by Christ and sent by their respective Bishops or Superiors to into those regions of the world where he has not yet been proclaimed and where the Church is not yet established (ad gentes), or to those places where there is a shortage of clergy. Here we can mention, with regard to the diocesan clergy, the *Fidei Donum* priests.

The horizons of the mission ad gentes are ever lengthening and call for a renewed missionary thrust. Priests are invited to heed the breath of the Spirit, true protagonist of the mission, and to share this concern of the universal Church.[26]

### 3.3. Missionary evangelization

The first part of this document referred to the pressing need for a new missionary evangelization within the Church's own flock, namely the baptized. In fact, a significant portion of our baptized Catholics takes little or no part in our ecclesial communities. This happens not only because other options appear more attractive to them, or for the simple reason that they have consciously decided to reject their faith, but also, and increasingly, because they were never adequately evangelized. They may never have met someone capable of testifying to the beauty of the authentic Christian life. No one brought them to a robust, personal and communal encounter with the Lord; an encounter which could impact and transform their lives, an encounter which would make them become true disciples of Christ.

Here we see the need for mission: we have to go out and seek the baptized and non-baptized alike, proclaiming, whether for the first time or yet once more, the kerygma, the initial proclamation of the person and the kingdom of Christ crucified and risen for our salvation, which leads to a personal encounter with him.

Some might ask whether the men and women of our post-modern culture, in the more advanced societies, are still capable of openness to the Christian kerygma. One must respond in the affirmative. The kerygma can be received and grasped by any human being, in every time and culture. Both the most intellectual and the most simple settings can be evangelized. We must believe that even so-called 'post-Christians' can be touched anew by the person of Jesus Christ.

The future of the Church also depends on our willingness to be missionaries in practice among our baptized faithful.[27] The saving event of baptism is the basis of the right and duty of pastors to evangelize the

baptized, as an act demanded by justice.[28]

Certainly, each particular Church in every continent and nation must find a way of reaching out, through a decisive and effective com–mitment to missionary evangelization, to its own Catholics who for various reasons do not live out their membership in the ecclesial com–munity. In this work of missionary evangelization, priests always have a unique and privileged role, especially in missionary outreach to the parishioners entrusted to their care. Within the parish, priests must convoke the members of the community, both consecrated persons and the laity, suitably prepare them to be sent out on a mission of evangelization to individuals and families, also through home visita–tions, and in the various social environments found in the area. The parish priest must personally take part in the parish mission.

Taking up the Council's teaching, and mindful of the Lord's prayer that "they may all be one... so that the world may believe it was you who sent me" (Jn 17:21), it is of utmost importance for a renewed mis–sionary praxis that priests renew their consciousness of being fellow- workers with the bishops. They have been sent by their bishops to serve the local Christian community. Unity with the bishop, who will be effectively and affectively united with the Supreme Pontiff, thus constitutes the principal guarantee of every missionary action.

We can seek some concrete guidelines for a renewed missionary praxis in the sphere of the *tria munera*.

In the sphere of the *munus docendi*

1. First, to be a true missionary within the flock of the Church, it is necessary and indispensable in the present circumstances for the priest to decide consciously and with determination not only to welcome and evangelize those who seek him out, whether in the parish or elsewhere, but to "rise and set out", first of all, to seek the baptized who, for what–ever reason, do not live their membership in the Church, as well as to seek out those who have little or no knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Priests who exercise their ministry in parishes should feel drawn to seek first people living within their parochial boundaries, making prudent use of those traditional forms of encounter, such as the blessing of families, which have borne great fruit in the past. Those priests who are called to the mission *ad gentes* should see in this a great grace of the Lord and set out joyfully and without fear. The Lord will always be at their side.

2. For the mission of evangelization within the Catholic flock itself, primarily in the parishes, there is also a need to recruit, train and send out the lay faithful and the religious. The priests of the parish are obviously the principal missionaries and must seek out people in their homes and every other social setting; likewise, the laity and religious, by virtue of their baptism and confirmation, are also called to share in this mission, under the guidance of their local pastor.

From a cultural standpoint, it needs to be clear that the exercise of "pastoral charity"[29] towards the faithful imposes the duty of not leaving them defenceless (i.e., without critical capacity) in the face of the indoctrination that often comes from the schools, television, the press, computer sites, and also at times from the universities and the world of entertainment.

Priests in turn need to be encouraged and supported by their Bishops in this sensitive pastoral work, and never completely hand over direct catechesis to others, so that the entire Christian people can be guided by authentic Christian principles in the contemporary multicultural setting. There is a need to discern between authentic doc–trine and theological interpretations, and then between these latter and those which pertain to the perennial Magisterium of the Church.

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3. The specifically missionary proclamation of the Gospel re–quires that the kerygma be given pride of place. An initial or a renewed kerygmatic proclamation of Jesus Christ crucified and risen and of his kingdom has, without doubt, a power and a special anointing which come from the Holy Spirit and which cannot be minimized or over–looked in the missionary enterprise.[30]

For this reason, this initial proclamation must be taken up anew, in season and out of season, with great constancy, conviction and evangelizing joy, be it in homilies or at Mass or in other occasions of evangelization, in catechesis, in home visits, in public places or in the media, and in personal encounters with the baptized who no longer take part in the ecclesial community; in a word, wherever the Spirit leads us and gives us an opportunity not to be wasted. A joyous and courageous proclamation is the sign of a missionary preaching which aims to lead the listener to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, the starting point of the journey of the true disciple.

4. It must also be made evident that the Church lives by the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the heart of the Church. In the Eucharistic celebration, the Church is made manifest in the fullness of her identity. In the Church's life and activity, everything leads to the Eucharist and everything flows anew from the Eucharist. Similarly, missionary evangelization, the proclamation of the kerygma, the entire exercise of the *munus docendi*, must lead to the Eucharist and ultimately bring the hearer to the Eucharistic table. Mission itself must start from the Eucharistic table and go forth towards the whole world. "The Eucharist is thus the source and summit not only of the Church's life, but also of her mission: an authentically Eucharistic Church is a missionary Church".[31]

5. The evangelization of the poor represents a particular priority, as Jesus himself has said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18). Jesus clearly wishes to be identified with the poor in St. Matthew's text on the final judgement (cf. Mt 25:31-46). The Church has always drawn inspiration from these texts.[32]

6. The Church never imposes her faith upon anyone; rather she proposes it always with love, conviction and courage, with respect for genuine religious freedom - which she also asks for herself - and with respect for the freedom of conscience of the hearer. Moreover, the method of true dialogue is increasingly indispensable: a dialogue that does not exclude proclamation but rather supposes it and, ultimately, is a way of evangelizing.[33]

7. The missionary needs to be prepared by means of a sound spiritual formation and an authentic life of prayer, especially by a constant hearing of the word of God, and in particular the reading of the Gospels. The method of *lectio divina*, or prayerful reading of the Bible, can be of great help. In any case, the preacher must be inflamed by a new fire that is sparked and kept burning by a personal contact with the Lord, and by living in grace, as we can see from the Gospels. Together with this listening to the word, there must also be constant study and a deeper knowledge of authentic Catholic doctrine, as found above all in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in sound theology. Priestly fraternity is also an integral part of missionary spirituality and helps to sustain it.

In the sphere of the *munus sanctificandi*.

1. The exercise of the *munus sanctificandi* is also linked to the ability to communicate and give a lively sense of the supernatural and the sacred, one which proves attractive and leads to a real and meaningful experience of God.

The proclamation of the Word of God is a part of every sacramental celebration, since the sacrament calls for faith in one who receives it. This in itself represents a first indication of how the priestly ministry of administering the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, contains an intrinsic missionary dimension, which can

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be developed as a proclamation of the Lord Jesus and his kingdom to those who hitherto have been barely evangelized, if at all.

2. It must be emphasized that the Eucharist is the goal of mission. The missionary seeks out persons and peoples in order to bring them to the Lord's Supper, the eschatological proclamation of the banquet of eternal life in the presence of God in heaven, which will be the fulfilment of salvation in accordance with God's redemptive plan. A warm, generous and fraternal welcome should await both those who approach the Eucharist for the first time, and those who return to the Eucharist after contact with missionaries.

The Eucharist also has a dimension of missionary sending. Every Mass concludes by sending the assembly forth to live as missionaries within society. The Eucharist, as the memorial of the Passover of the Lord, makes present ever anew the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who, for love of the Father and for love for us, gave his life for our redemption, thus loving us to the end. Christ's sacrifice is God's greatest act of love for us.

The Christian community, in celebrating the Eucharist and worthily receiving the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus, is profoundly united to the Lord and filled with his boundless love. On each occasion it receives anew Jesus' commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you", and feels impelled by the Spirit of Christ to go forth to proclaim the good news of God's love and hope to all creation, in the conviction of his saving mercy. In the Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* of the Second Vatican Council we read: "the Eucharist shows itself as the source and the apex of the whole work of preaching the Gospel" (No. 5). For this reason, attention to the daily celebration of the Eucharist is fundamental for priests, even when a congregation cannot be present.

3. The other sacraments also receive their sanctifying power from the death and resurrection of Christ and thus proclaim the unfailing mercy of God. The beautiful, dignified, recollected and devout celebration of the sacraments according to the liturgical norms becomes itself a very effective evangelization for the faithful who take part. God is Beauty, and the beauty of the liturgical celebration is one of the means to reach him in his mystery.

4. We need to pray that the Lord will reawaken the missionary vocation of the ecclesial community, its pastors and members. Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Mt 9:37-38). Prayer has a most powerful effect in the sight of God. Jesus says of this effect: "Ask, and it will be given you" (Mt 7:7); "whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith" (Mt 21:22); "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son; if you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (Jn 14:13-14).

5. It is fitting to note how the sacrament of Reconciliation, in the form of individual confession, has an intrinsic and profound missionary dimension. For the fruitfulness of the mission entrusted to him and for his own sanctification, the priest is called to attend to the faithful and regular celebration of this sacrament, above all for his own sake, and at the same time to be its faithful and generous minister.

6. The pastoral ministry of the priest is at the service of the entire Christian community. For this reason the rebirth of the Christian people and attention to the communal dimension of the Christian experience represent the principal missionary task of the priest.

7. Finally, the priest should understand more fully the nature of the thirst that afflicts, sometimes unconsciously, the men and women of our day: the thirst for God, for an experience and a teaching which bring true salvation, for the proclamation of the truth about the ultimate destiny of the person and the community, for a Christian religion capable of permeating every aspect of life and transforming it daily.[34] It is a thirst that only the Lord Jesus can ultimately satisfy, and thus it should always be kept in mind that "pastoral charity constitutes the internal and dynamic principle capable of uniting the multiple and diverse

pastoral activities of the priest."[35]

In the sphere of the *munus regendi*.

1. The preparation and organization of missionary activity in ecclesial communities and in parishes is indispensable. Good preparation and clear organization of mission work will make it all the more effective. Obviously, the primacy of grace cannot be forgotten, but must, rather, be made evident. The Holy Spirit is the first agent of mission, and thus we need to call upon him unceasingly and with great confidence. It is he who will ignite that new flame, that much-needed missionary passion in the hearts of the community. Yet human freedom also has a role to play. The pastors of the community must look to the most effective and suitable means of organizing mission work.

2. There is also a need to pursue a good missionary methodology. While the Church has two millennia of experience in this area, each age brings with it new situations which must be considered in carrying out missionary activity. A number of methodologies have already been developed and proved effective in the praxis of the particular Churches. Episcopal conferences and dioceses could provide appropriate guidelines on this point.

3. The first to be approached are the poor, who are frequently found on the outskirts of cities and in the countryside, since the Gospel is addressed to them as a matter of preference. This means that the proclamation of the Gospel must be accompanied by effective and loving activity that promotes an integral humanity. Jesus Christ must truly be proclaimed as Good News to the poor, who ought to feel themselves joyous and full of hope on account of this message.[36]

4. It is preferable that parish and diocesan missions not be reduced to one set period of time. Since the Church is missionary by her very nature, this means that mission must be a permanent aspect of the Church's life and activity. Obviously, there will be periods of greater intensity, but mission must never be considered complete or finished. Rather, the missionary endeavour must be solidly and broadly integrated into the very structure and life of the particular Church and her communities.

This could lead to an authentic renewal and become a powerful force for bringing fresh vigour and youth to the Church today. The missionary spirit of priests is likewise ongoing; regardless of their office or length of service, they are called to mission until the last day of their earthly lives, since mission is indissolubly bound to the ordination they have received.

### 3.4. The missionary formation of priests

All priests need to receive a specific and detailed missionary formation, given the fact that the Church wishes to commit herself with a renewed ardour and urgency to the mission *ad gentes* and to a missionary evangelization aimed particularly at the baptized who no longer take active part in the ecclesial community. This formation should begin in the seminary, especially in spiritual direction and through a precise and profound study of the sacrament of Holy Orders, one which brings out the missionary dynamism intrinsic to the same sacrament.

It will also be helpful, and perhaps even necessary, for priests already ordained to receive missionary formation as an integral part of programmes of ongoing formation. The awareness of the pressing need for a missionary spirit, on the one hand, and a possibly inadequate missionary formation or spirituality of the presbyterate on the other, should lead Bishops and Major Superiors to choose the right measures to adopt in arranging for a renewed training for mission and a profound and stimulating missionary spirituality in priests.

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It might be pointed out that one of the main aspects of mission is a realization of its urgency. This means that the training of candidates for the ministerial priesthood needs to be marked by a specifically missionary concern.

Although the number of vocations is growing worldwide, while still remaining insufficient, and despite the fact that the situation in the West is a cause for some concern, such a formation will nonetheless prove absolutely decisive for the future of the Church: a priest with a clear personal identity, possessed of a solid human, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral formation, will encourage new vocations with greater ease, since he will live his consecration as mission. Joyful and confident in the Lord's love for his priestly existence, he will be fragrant with the "good odour of Christ" and will live every moment of his being as a missionary opportunity.

It seems ever more necessary to create a "virtuous circle" which passes from the period of seminary formation to that of the first years of ministry and into ongoing formation.[37] These periods must be interconnected and absolutely harmonious, since in this way members of the clergy can become ever more what they truly are: an indispensable pearl of great price which Christ gives to the Church and to all humanity.

### Conclusion

If missionary spirit is a constitutive element in ecclesial identity, we must be grateful to the Lord who has renewed, thanks also to the recent Magisterium of the Popes, a clear realization of this in the entire Church, and among priests in particular.

The urgency of missionary activity in the world is indeed great and demands a renewal of pastoral practice, in the sense that the Christian community must understand itself to be in "permanent mission" both ad gentes and in places where the Church is already established, seeking out those whom we have baptized and thus are entitled to be evangelized by us.

The best energies of the Church and her priests are always engaged in the proclamation of the kerygma, which is the essence of the mission the Lord has entrusted to us. This ongoing "missionary tension" cannot fail to mark the identity of the priest who finds, in the missionary exercise of the tria munera, the principal path to his own salvation, and consequently to his authentic human fulfilment.

A real and active missionary engagement on the part of each member of the ecclesial body (bishops, priests, deacons, religious and laity) will contribute to that experience of visible unity which is so essential for an effective Christian witness.

The priest's missionary identity, to be such, must ceaselessly look to the Blessed Virgin Mary who, full of grace, went forth to bring the Lord to the world and who constantly visits the people of every time, as they make their earthly pilgrimage, in order to show them the face of Jesus of Nazareth, Lord and Christ, and to bring them into eternal communion with God.

From the Vatican, 29 June 2010  
Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

Cláudio Card. Hummes  
Archbishop Emeritus of Sao Paulo  
Prefect

X Mauro Piacenza  
Titular Archbishop of Victoriana

Secretary

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## NOTES

[1] Vatican Ecumenical Council II, Decree Ad Gentes, 2; cf. 5-6 and 9-10; Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, 8; 13; 17; 23; Decree Christus Dominus, 6.

[2] Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (8 December 1975), 2; 4-5; 14; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Missio (7 December 1990), 1; Id., Apostolic Letter Novo Millennio Ineunte (6 January 2001), 1; 40; 58.

[3] Benedict XVI, addressing the German Bishops during World Youth Day (2005) said: "We know that secularism and de-Christianization are gaining ground, that relativism is growing and that the influence of Catholic ethics and morals is in constant decline. Many people abandon the Church or, if they stay, accept only a part of Catholic teaching, picking and choosing between only certain aspects of Christianity. The religious situation in the East continues to be worrying. Here, as we know, the majority of the population is not baptized, has no contact with the Church and has often not even heard of either Christ or the Church. We should recognize these realities as challenges. Dear brothers, as you yourselves said [...]: "We have become a mission land [...] We should give serious thought as to how to achieve a true evangelization in this day and age, not only a new evangelization, but often a true and proper first evangelization. People do not know God, they do not know Christ. There is a new form of paganism and it is not enough for us to strive to preserve the existing flock, although this is very important: we must ask the important question: what really is life? I believe we must all try together to find new ways of bringing the Gospel to the contemporary world, of proclaiming Christ anew and of implanting the faith" (Address in the Piusaal of the Seminary of Cologne, 21 August 2005). At the beginning of his pontificate, Benedict XVI spoke to the clergy of Rome of the importance of the city-wide mission then in progress (cf. Address to the Clergy of Rome, 13 May 2005). In his visit to Brazil in May 2007 to open the Fifth General Conference of the Episcopate of Latin America and the Caribbean, whose theme was: "Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, that our Peoples may have Life in Him", the Pope encouraged the Brazilian bishops to undertake a true "mission" addressed to those who, even though baptized by us, have not yet, due to various historical circumstances, been sufficiently evangelized (cf. Address to the Bishops of Brazil in the Cathedral da Se in Sao Paulo [11th May 2007]).

[4] Amongst the texts referring to this mission, we find: Jn 3:14; 4:34; 5:23-24, 30,37; 6:39,44,57; 7:16,18, 28; 8: 18,26,29,42; 9:4; 11: 42; 14:24; 17:3, 18; 1 Jn 4:9,14.

[5] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 690.

[6] Cf. also John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Dabo Vobis (25th March 1992), 22.

[7] Ibid., 12: "Reference to Christ is thus the absolutely necessary key for understanding the reality of priesthood".

[8] Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, 28.

[9] Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1582.

[10] Cf. Benedict XVI, Homily for the Chrism Mass (9th April 2009); John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Pastores Dabo Vobis (25th March 1992), 12, 16.

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[11] Benedict XVI, Discourse to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for the Clergy (16 March 2009). Undoubtedly, it is the sacrament of Baptism that makes of the faithful "new men". The sacrament of Holy Orders, then, if from one perspective it specifies and actualizes that which the priest has in common with all the faithful, from another perspective reveals what is the proper nature of the ordained priesthood, that is, to be completely related to Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, to serve the new life which emerges from the baptismal cleansing: *Vobis enim sum episcopus - said Saint Augustine - vobiscum sum christianus.*

[12] Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 4-6. One can also find a substantial treatment of the *tria munera* in John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* (25 March 1992), 26.

[13] *Ibid.*, 32.

[14] Cf. *Ibid.*, 26; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 67.

[15] Cf. A. Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, prêtres nouveaux selon le Nouveau Testament*, Paris 1980, 346.

[16] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (25 March 1992), 12.

[17] Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Ad Gentes*, 1.

[18] Cf. Vatican Council II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 1; Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 24; cf. *ibid.*, 29; 32; 92.

[19] Cf. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 45.

[20] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastor Gregis* (16 October 2003), 9: "These three functions are, in fact, deeply interconnected; they explain, influence and clarify one another. For this reason, then, when the bishop teaches, he also sanctifies and governs the People of God; when he sanctifies, he also teaches and governs; when he governs, he teaches and sanctifies. Saint Augustine defines the entirety of this episcopal ministry as an office of love: *amoris officium*". What is said here of bishops can equally be applied to priests, taking account of the necessary distinctions.

[21] Address in the Piussaal of the Seminary of Cologne (21st August 2005).

[22] Cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in America* (22 January 1999), 12.

[23] Benedict XVI, in his address conveying Christmas greetings to the Roman Curia on the 21 December 2007, said: "One can never know Christ only theoretically. With great erudition one can know everything about the sacred scriptures without ever having met him. Journeying with him is an integral part of knowing him, of entering his sentiments, as the Letter to the Philippians (2:5) says. [...] The encounter with Jesus Christ requires listening, requires a response in prayer and in putting into practice what he tells us. By getting to know Christ we come to know God, and it is only by starting from God that we understand man and the world, a world that would otherwise remain a nonsensical question. Becoming disciples of Christ is thus an educational journey towards our true being, towards the proper way of being human".

[24] Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 9.

[25] Vatican Council II, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 10.

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[26] Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 28; Decree *Ad Gentes*, 39; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 68; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 67.

[27] Pope Benedict XVI, urging the Brazilian bishops to, "engage in apostolic activity as a true mission in the midst of the flock that is constituted by the Catholic Church in Brazil", added that, "No effort should be spared in seeking out those Catholics who have fallen away and those who know little or nothing of Jesus Christ... What is required, in a word, is a mission of evangelization capable of engaging all the vital energies present in this immense flock. My thoughts turn to the priests, the men and women religious and the laity who work so generously, often in the face of immense difficulties, in order to spread the truth of the Gospel. ... In this work of evangelization the ecclesial community should be clearly marked by pastoral initiatives, especially by sending missionaries, lay or religious, to homes on the outskirts of the cities and in the interior. . The poor living in the outskirts of the cities or the countryside need to feel that the Church is close to them, providing for their most urgent needs, defending their rights and working together with them to build a society founded on justice and peace. The Gospel is addressed in a special way to the poor, and the bishop, modelled on the Good Shepherd, must be particularly concerned with offering them the divine consolation of the faith, without overlooking their need for 'material bread'. As I wished to stress in the Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, 'the Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the sacraments and the word'." (Address to the Bishops of Brazil in the 'Catedral da Se' in Sao Paulo [11 May 2007]).

[28] Cf. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Canons 229, §1 and 757.

[29] Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 14.

[30] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 44.

[31] Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (22 February 2007), 84.

[32] Cf. Benedict XVI, Address to the Bishops of Brazil at the 'Catedral da Se' in Sao Paulo (11th May 2007), 3.

[33] Cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dominus Iesus* (6th August 2000), 4.

[34] Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 35.

[35] Congregation for the Clergy, Directory for the Ministry and Life of Priests *Tota Ecclesia* (31 January 1994), 43.

[36] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus caritas est* (25 December 2005), 22; Address to the Bishops of Brazil at the 'Catedral da Se' in Sao Paulo (11th May 2007), 3.

[37] Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 83.

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