

## Session 4: The History of Our Salvation

**HYMN:** Praise to the Holiest in the  
Height



Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise:  
in all His words most wonderful,  
most sure in all His ways.

O loving wisdom of our God!  
When all was sin and shame,  
a second Adam to the fight  
and to the rescue came.

O wisest love! that flesh and blood,  
which did in Adam fail,  
should strive afresh against the  
foe,  
should strive and should prevail.

And that a higher gift than grace  
should flesh and blood refine:  
God's presence and His very Self  
and essence all divine.

O generous love! that He Who smote  
in man, for man, the foe,  
the double agony, in man,  
for man should undergo.

And in the garden secretly,  
and on the cross on high,  
should teach His brethren, and  
inspire,  
to suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,  
and in the depth be praise:  
in all His words most wonderful,  
most sure in all His ways.

**PRAYER:** See Eph 1:17-19.  
Let us pray:  
O God,  
grant us a spirit  
of wisdom and insight  
to know You clearly.  
Enlighten our innermost vision,  
that we may know the great hope

to which You have called us,  
the wealth of Your glorious heritage  
to be distributed  
among the members of the Church,  
and the immeasurable scope  
of Your power  
in us who believe.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
Your Son,  
Who lives and reigns with You  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
— Amen

**READING:** Jer 18:1-10

A reading from the Book of the  
Prophet Jeremiah

This word came to Jeremiah  
from the LORD:

"Rise up,  
be off to the potter's house;  
there I will give you My message."

"I went down to the potter's house  
and there he was,  
working at the wheel.  
Whenever the object of clay  
which he was making  
turned out badly in his hand,  
he tried again,  
making of the clay another object  
of whatever sort he pleased.

"Then the word of the Lord  
came to me:

"Can I not do to you,  
House of Israel,  
as this potter has done?"  
says the Lord.

"Indeed,  
like clay in the hand of the potter,  
so are you in My hand,  
House of Israel.

"Sometimes I threaten  
to uproot and tear down  
and destroy a nation or a kingdom.  
But if that nation  
which I have threatened  
turns from its evil,  
I also repent of the evil  
which I threatened to do.

"Sometimes, again,  
I promise to build up and plant  
a nation or a kingdom. —

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But if that nation  
does what is evil in My eyes,  
refusing to obey My voice,  
I repent of the good  
with which I promised to bless it.'"   
The Word of the Lord  
— *Thanks be to God*

### IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

In the Apostles' Creed,  
we say that Jesus Christ  
"suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died,  
and was buried."

His chief sufferings  
were His agony in the garden,  
His flogging,  
His crowning with thorns,  
His carrying His cross,  
His crucifixion,  
and His death between two thieves  
on Mount Calvary, on Good Friday.  
Together, we call these sufferings  
His *Passion*.

He did all this  
to atone for our sins  
and to purchase eternal life for us.

We call Him our *Redeemer*  
because His Blood is the price  
by which we were ransomed.  
Accordingly,  
Christians frequently make  
the *sign of the cross*, saying,  
"In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit."

Jesus truly died,  
but "on the third day  
He rose again from the dead";  
that is,  
after He had been dead and buried  
part of three days,  
He raised His Body to life again,  
on Easter Sunday.

Forty days later,  
"He ascended into Heaven,"  
Body and Soul.  
There He "is seated  
at the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty."  
By this, we do not mean  
that God the Father has hands,  
for He is a spirit;  
we mean that Christ, as God,

is equal to the Father,  
and, as Man,  
is in the highest place in Heaven.

### BIBLE READING

Ex 1-18

In the Bible this week,  
you will see how the Israelites  
gradually became slaves  
to the Egyptians,  
and how God called Moses  
to save them.

In this history,  
the Church has always seen  
the whole of our salvation  
in brief, so to speak.

Just as Moses saved the Israelites  
from slavery in Egypt  
during an event  
the Jews call the *Passover*,  
so Jesus saved the whole human race  
from slavery to sin and Satan  
during the Jewish commemoration  
of the *Passover*:  
what Catholics now call  
the new *Passover*.

God continues His saving work  
to this day,  
through the Catholic Church,  
the topic of our next talk:  
"What is the Catholic Church?"

## The History of Our Salvation

### Introduction

Two weeks ago, we talked about "Creation and the Fall": what we might call "Creation and Counter-Creation."<sup>1</sup> Last week we discussed Who Jesus Christ is: namely "God the Son, made Man for us."<sup>2</sup>

Now we can study the history of our salvation.<sup>3</sup> But first, let us review.

### The Fall

When God made Adam and Eve, He planned to make them Godlike, and He invited them into intimate, loving communion with Himself.

Accordingly, He created them holy and righteous; He gave them free will so that they might seek their Creator of their own accord;<sup>4</sup> and He manifested Himself to them from the very beginning.<sup>5</sup>

A certain likeness to God had been stamped upon Adam and Eve from their creation. Now they had within themselves the possibility of perfecting that likeness, just as an acorn has within it the possibility of growth into a perfect oak tree.<sup>6</sup>

It was as if they stood at the foot of a mountain, with a path leading straight to the top, where God awaited them. They could see the path — not all of it, but enough to begin the journey — and they knew that God wanted them to take it.<sup>7</sup>

However, Adam and Eve tried to be Godlike without God.<sup>8</sup> As a result, they lost their friendship with God, their marital harmony, and their harmony with the rest of creation; their souls' control of their bodies was shattered; and they became subject to decay and death.<sup>9</sup>

The development of their perfection was arrested. It was as if a grub had eaten into the acorn; it could still germinate and grow a little, but it could never be more than a poor, stunted thing, a mere parody of what God had planned for it.<sup>10</sup>

At the very foot of the mountain, Adam and Eve had got side-tracked into a dead end. With their natures unfallen, they had chosen it freely; now, with their natures fallen, they could not get out of it and back on to the main path.<sup>11</sup>

### God's options

What could God do? Could He give up His plan to divinize<sup>12</sup> humans and simply leave them in their fallen state?

No. God, Who is love, and Who had created Adam and Eve out of love, is constant and permanent.<sup>13</sup> He is "a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity, continuing His kindness for a thousand generations, and forgiving wickedness and crime and sin."<sup>14</sup>

Could God simply lift Adam and Eve out of the dead end and up to the top of the mountain?

No. They had chosen the dead end of their own free will. And God had given them free will so they could relate to Him in love. To lift them out of their dead end would be to override their free will and thus abandon the perfection He planned for them. "In a certain sense, one could say that confronted with our

1 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*. Sr. Penelope (1890-1977) belonged to the Anglican Community of St. Mary the Virgin in Wantage England.

2 *The Penny Catechism*, 32

3 From the Latin *salvare* ("to save").

4 See Vatican II: *Gaudium et Spes*, 17; Sir 15:14.

5 See CCC 54.

6 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, II.

7 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, II.

8 See CCC 398.

9 See CCC 400.

10 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, III.

11 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, III.

12 See CCC 398, 1988, 2670.

13 See Ps 102:27-28; Jas 1:17.

14 Ex 34:6-7

human freedom, God decided to make Himself 'impotent,'<sup>15</sup> or "powerless."

Could God ignore Adam and Eve's fall and somehow nullify its effects?

No. God, Who forgives "wickedness and crime and sin," does not declare "the guilty guiltless," but punishes "children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation for their fathers' wickedness!"<sup>16</sup>

### Punishment, judgement, consequence, debt

To understand, we must realize what "punishment" means.<sup>17</sup> Consider three cases.

First: A parent tells a child, "If you don't tidy up, you won't have ice cream for supper." Here there is no natural connection between the punishment — no ice cream — and the offence — untidiness.<sup>18</sup> This punishment does not, of itself, make up for the offence. It is an artificial punishment and, for various reasons, the parent might decide to let the child off.

Second: A teacher tells a student, "If you don't work in class, you will stay in after school." Again, the punishment is not the natural consequence of the offence, but now there is some connection. By staying in after school, the student can do the work he should have done in class and thus make up for the offence. Nevertheless, it would not be impossible or unreasonable for the teacher to let the student off.

Third: A teacher tells a student, "If you don't learn this material now, you will repeat the course." This example is quite different. Repeating the course is much more than a *punishment* for not learning: it is an unavoidable consequence and the only way to make up for the offence.

Here the teacher cannot possibly let the student off. If he wrote "Pass" on the student's report card, he would be dishonest. It would imply that the subject was not worth learning or the student worth teaching. It would be not kindness, but a total lack of respect and concern for the student.<sup>19</sup>

Now this third kind of punishment is most like the punishment God threatened when He told Adam and Eve that the moment they disobeyed, they would be "doomed to die."<sup>20</sup> He did not say, "I will kill you," for He was not so much *threatening a punishment as warning about a consequence*. Death was not an arbitrary, artificial punishment for Adam and Eve's disobedience, but an unavoidable consequence of their refusal to trust God.<sup>21</sup>

When Adam and Eve failed their test, therefore, God *could not* "pass" them or "let them off" the consequences, for "He Who is, is Truth and Love."<sup>22</sup>

What, then, could He do?

### Another chance

As a Math teacher, what I do is give students another chance to write the test. Whatever the reason for their failure<sup>23</sup> — laziness, lack of preparation, ill health, distraction by other affairs, lack of ability — I always let them write another test.<sup>24</sup>

I do it so they can see that I am on their side: I want them to learn. In their attempts to master the subject, they are not up against me; rather they and I together are up against the unchangeable laws of Math.

15 Pope John Paul II: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, "Why Does God Tolerate Suffering?"

16 Ex 34:6-7

17 Former generations called God's punishments His "judgements"; e.g., "It's a judgement on him." Mothers today threaten children with "consequences." See the talk on "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ," Appendix 2, 3.

18 Probably the parent uses this threat because the child cannot see the natural benefits of being tidy but can see the benefits of ice cream.

19 I knew a teacher who neither taught nor tested, but guaranteed students a "pass" if, during the year, they copied out, in class, a sufficient number of answers to the questions in their textbooks.

20 Gn 2:17

21 "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23). "Sin leads to death; not so much to the 'act' of dying — which lasts only a moment — as to the 'state' of death; that is, precisely to what has been called 'mortal illness,' a state of chronic death" (Raniero Cantalamessa: *Life in Christ*, 3, 3).

22 CCC 214

23 That is, relatively speaking. For example, an "A" student will think of a "B" as a failure.

24 On their own time, outside class time.

Similarly, God had wanted humans to freely co-operate with Him in the attainment of their perfection. Instead, they had co-operated with Satan in their own unmaking; they had failed their test. But God was on their side, and He persisted in His plan to divinize them.

God had *created*; Satan and humans had *counter-created*; now God set out to win humans back to work with Him in their *re-creation*.<sup>25</sup>

Think of it as the potter with his pot.<sup>26</sup> "Whenever the object of clay which he was making turned out badly in his hand, he tried again, making of the clay another object of whatever sort he pleased." As God said to Jeremiah, "Can I not do to you, House of Israel, as this potter has done? Indeed, like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand, House of Israel."<sup>27</sup>

In our re-creation, as in our creation, God's motive was "His sheer gratuitous love": stronger than a father's for his son, a mother's for her children, or a bridegroom's for his beloved, and "victorious" over even the worst infidelities.<sup>28</sup> And He undertook our re-creation "while we were still sinners."<sup>29</sup>

But Adam and Eve's rebellion had damaged human nature. In their fallen state, they and their descendants were now incapable of full co-operation with God.

Rewrites would not solve this problem. If a student does not have the ability to pass, he will never succeed, no matter how many times he rewrites the test.

What, then, could God do?

### Re-creation: the plan

Right after Adam and Eve's fall, God said to the serpent — Satan, who had deceived them — "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at His heel."<sup>30</sup>

In these words — called the *Protoevangelium*, Latin for "Proto-Gospel" or "First Good News" — God promised a victory over evil and the restoration of what humans had lost. It was the first hint of a Saviour, a Messiah,<sup>31</sup> a Redeemer,<sup>32</sup> Who would make amends for Adam and Eve's disobedience and lack of trust.<sup>33</sup>

To "redeem" is to "free" by "buying back" or "paying a ransom." We had to be *freed* from the three things that have enslaved us ever since the Fall: the pleasures of the senses, covetousness for earthly goods, and the desire for self-assertion.<sup>34</sup> We had to be *ransomed* or *bought back* from Satan, who, by his success with Adam and Eve, had acquired a certain domination over us, including the power of death.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, someone had to *make amends for* — to *mend* — what Adam and Eve had broken. Imagine a small child smashing a window. He may repent, and his father may forgive him, but the window remains broken, and the child can neither repair it himself nor pay for its repair. Similarly, we needed someone to *take on the consequences* of Adam and Eve's rebellion — chiefly death: to make "*reparation*" (from the verb "to repair") or "*restitution*" (from the verb "to restore").<sup>36</sup>

God solved these problems by *Himself becoming our Redeemer*. He became a Man like us and — as a Man — did for all men what needed to be done, what only He could do. His love for humanity "is so great that it turned God against Himself, His love against His justice." It is so great "that by becoming Man He followed him even into death, and so reconciled justice and love."<sup>37</sup>

25 See 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; Rv 21:5.

26 See Is 45:9, 64:8.

27 Jer 18:1-6

28 See CCC 219.

29 Rom 5:8

30 Gn 3:15. Notice that the serpent's *head* is beneath the Man's *heel*.

31 "Messiah" is the English version of the Hebrew *mashiah*, which was translated into Greek as *Christos* ("anointed one"), from which we derive "Christ."

32 CCC 410

33 See CCC 411.

34 See CCC 377.

35 See CCC 407.

36 Similarly, the payments demanded of Germany after both World Wars were called "reparations."

37 Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 10

**Re-creation: the pattern**

The history of our re-creation is given in the Bible.<sup>38</sup>

In the first creation, God took time. Creation "did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator," but was created "in a state of journeying" toward an "ultimate perfection yet to be attained."<sup>39</sup> From the beginning of the universe to the creation of Adam and Eve, God took 13-14 billion years.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, in His re-creation of humans, God took time, but much less — perhaps 200,000 years.<sup>41</sup> However, the times are not important: "In the Lord's eyes, one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years are as a day."<sup>42</sup>

In the first creation, we can discern two themes: *excluding* and *including*, or *narrowing down* and *broadening out*.

As His creation evolved, God made choices. He chose the star and the planet that would become a fitting home for life; the rest were excluded. Again and again He chose the species whose evolution would culminate in humans; the rest were excluded. Finally He narrowed it down to two individuals of a species on whom He could stamp His own image; the rest were excluded.

But that is not the whole of the story. God makes nothing without purpose.<sup>43</sup> He "cares for all, from the least things to the great events of the world and its history."<sup>44</sup> Once God had created man, He made him His "fellow-worker,"<sup>45</sup> giving him dominion over the earth "in order to complete the work of creation, to perfect its harmony."<sup>46</sup> Now everything was included. God narrowed down His choice to a single man and woman, but He did so with a view to perfecting the whole of creation and its history.

And we can discern the same themes in God's re-creation. In about 2091 BC, He chose Abraham.<sup>47</sup> Of Abraham's sons, He chose Isaac.<sup>48</sup> Of Isaac's sons, He chose Jacob,<sup>49</sup> whom He renamed Israel.<sup>50</sup> Gradually, He fashioned the tribes fathered by Jacob's twelve sons into a people.

"You are a people sacred to the Lord, your God," Moses told the Israelites<sup>51</sup> about 1440 BC. "He has chosen you from all the nations on the face of the earth to be a people peculiarly His own."<sup>52</sup>

In about 1000 BC, God chose David, from the Tribe of Judah, as King of Israel,<sup>53</sup> and He promised that his "house" and "kingdom" would "endure forever."<sup>54</sup>

Finally, God chose Mary, a young woman betrothed to "Joseph, of the House of David,"<sup>55</sup> who freely gave her will completely to Him. Now He could give us His own Son as our Saviour, sharing "our human nature in all things but sin."<sup>56</sup>

In the Man Jesus Christ, God completed this phase of His re-creation. Jesus *is* the New Man. In Him, humanity has the fullness of the perfection to which God had called it from the beginning. In this one Man, humanity is now complete.<sup>57</sup>

38 For convenience, we divide it into the Old and the New Testaments, but the story is continuous. It is just as accurate as any other history, but its authors selected and organized their facts in light of God's plan to re-create humans. Accordingly, unlike other histories, it uses "literary figures, poetry, parable, [and] prophecy." See Scott Hahn: *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*, 1.

39 CCC 302

40 Cosmologists' estimate of the age of the universe.

41 Archaeologists' estimate of the age of the human race.

42 2 Pt 3:8. See also 2 Pt 3:3-9.

43 See C.S. Lewis' description of the Great Dance in his *Peregrinanda*, 17.

44 CCC 303

45 CCC 307

46 CCC 307

47 See Gn 17:1-14.

48 See Gn 17:15-22.

49 See Gn 25:19-34, 27:1-45.

50 See Gn 32:23-31.

51 See Is 65:9; Col 3:12; 1 Pt 2:9.

52 Dt 7:6. He chose Israel from "all the nations" (Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 9).

53 See 1 Sm 16:1-13.

54 See 2 Sm 8:16.

55 See Lk 1:26-38. Also see the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

56 Eucharistic Prayer 4

57 "In His mother, creation reached its climax; in Himself, it began again, for in the humanity of Jesus,

But again, that is not the whole of the story. God made one Man new with a view to re-creating the whole human race, rescuing them from their dead end and setting them back on the road to the top of the mountain.<sup>5 8</sup>

Accordingly, Jesus, when He returned to His Father, "sent the Holy Spirit" so that "He might sanctify creation to the full."<sup>5 9</sup> The story of how He does that will occupy the rest of this course.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Re-creation: the preparation**

Now let us look at the history of our salvation in more detail.

Time and again, from the Fall onward, God offered His people "covenants, and through the prophets taught them to look forward to salvation."<sup>6 0</sup>

"Prophet"<sup>6 1</sup> means one who speaks, acts, or writes under the extraordinary influence of God to make known God's counsels<sup>6 2</sup> and will. Often, by God's power, a prophet foretells future events, but only so as to confirm that he is indeed speaking and acting for God, Who sees everything.<sup>6 3</sup>

A "covenant" is a contract or agreement, but with two principal differences.<sup>6 4</sup>

First, a covenant is an exchange of persons instead of goods or services. Covenants between people make them spouses, parents, children, or siblings, while contracts make them customers, employees, or clients. For example, a child has a covenant relationship with his adoptive parents, but a contract relationship with a hired babysitter.<sup>6 5</sup> By covenant, God forged "bonds of sacred kinship" with His people: "I will be your God, and you shall be My people."<sup>6 6</sup>

Second, a covenant is sealed not just with a promise, but with an oath solemnized by a sacrifice, ratified in blood. For example, Moses sacrificed young bulls. Then he "took half the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar. Taking the book of the covenant, he read it aloud to the people, who answered, 'All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do.' Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.'"<sup>6 7</sup>

For their part, the Israelites agreed to abide by God's laws — not as "arbitrary stipulations," but as "fixed moral principles" reflecting "the inner life" of God and its image in human nature — as fixed as the laws of Mathematics. They also accepted the so-called "covenant curses" — not as arbitrary punishments, but as the natural,

God sat again for His portrait, and this time it was a perfect likeness" (Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, VI).

58 God's love "is an elective love: among all the nations He chooses Israel and loves her — but He does so precisely with a view to healing the whole human race" (Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 9). In fact, we can see God's pattern of *excluding* and *including*, or *narrowing down* and *broadening out*, in the life of Jesus Himself; see the Appendix.

59 Eucharistic Prayer 4

60 Eucharistic Prayer 4

61 Used to translate the biblical *nabi*.

62 Or advice.

63 The Old Testament contains 18 prophetic books. The four "major" prophets (so called because of the length of their books), are Isaiah (c 739-680 BC), Jeremiah (627-570 BC), Ezekiel (593-570 BC), and Daniel (605-536 BC). The twelve "minor" prophets are Hosea (c 755-710 BC), Joel (c 835-796 BC), Amos (c 763-755 BC), Obadiah (c 850-840 BC), Jonah (c 755 BC), Micah (c 735-710 BC), Nahum (c 650-630 BC), Habakkuk (620-605 BC), Zephaniah (635-625 BC), Haggai (520-505 BC), Zechariah (520-470 BC), and Malachi (437-417). The classic New Testament prophet is John the Baptist, born six months before Jesus. Jesus Himself was called a prophet and, although He never used the title of Himself, He never refused it either. See John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary* and *Our Sunday Visitor's Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Prophet."

64 What follows on covenants comes from Scott Hahn: *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*, 1.

65 Jesus distinguished between these two kinds of relationship when He said, "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand — who is no shepherd nor owner of the sheep — catches sight of the wolf coming and runs away, leaving the sheep to be snatched and scattered by the wolf. That is because he works for pay; he has no concern for the sheep. I am the good Shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me in the same way that the Father knows Me and I know My Father; for these sheep I will give My life" (Jn 10:11-15).

66 See Gn 17:8; Ex 6:7; Jer 7:23, 11:4, 24:7, 30:22, 31:33, 32:38; Ez 11:20, 14:11, 36:28, 37:23, 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16-18; Heb 8:10.

67 Ex 24:5-8

inevitable consequences of trying to live in ways that run counter to our nature<sup>68</sup> — as unavoidable as the "x" a teacher puts against a mistake in Mathematics.<sup>69</sup>

God made five "old" covenants: with 1) Adam,<sup>70</sup> 2) Noah,<sup>71</sup> 3) Abraham,<sup>72</sup> 4) Moses,<sup>73</sup> and 5) David.<sup>74</sup> In each one, He reminded His people of the commands that governed their human nature and sought to win them back to Himself.

These covenants are like rewrites of the test Adam and Eve had failed. However, like Adam and Eve, the Israelites failed them all, as the Bible shows.

#### Re-creation: the Annunciation<sup>75</sup>

However, God persisted. In fact, the name *Israel* is properly *yisrā-'El*: *El* means "God" and *yisrā* means "He persists," although the verb has no tense. "God persisted, He persists, He will persist; there could indeed be no better summary" of what God has done, is doing, and will do for us.<sup>76</sup>

And finally, with Mary,<sup>77</sup> God got what He wanted.

Mary was a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee, a virgin.<sup>78</sup> In an event we call the *Annunciation*,<sup>79</sup> God invited her, through the angel Gabriel,<sup>80</sup> to conceive Jesus, in Whom the "whole fullness" of God would dwell "bodily."<sup>81</sup>

For Mary to give full assent to this invitation, she had to be totally free<sup>82</sup> from the effects of Adam and Eve's sin.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, from the first moment of her existence, God enriched her with gifts appropriate to her role.<sup>84</sup> That is why, at the Annunciation, Gabriel saluted her as "full of grace"<sup>85</sup> — one who fully accepted and rejoiced in God's graciousness.

When Mary asked how she could conceive Jesus, since she did not "know man," Gabriel said that the Holy Spirit would "come upon" her, making her Offspring "Son of God,"<sup>86</sup> and Mary replied, "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."<sup>87</sup> Thus she gave her consent to God's plan and, without a single sin to hold her back, gave herself entirely to the Person and the work of her Son.<sup>88</sup>

Just as a woman — Eve — had had a share in the coming of death, so now a woman — Mary — contributed to the coming of life;<sup>89</sup> "death [came] through Eve, life through Mary."<sup>90</sup> It was as though Mary's obedience "untied" the knot of Eve's disobedience,<sup>91</sup> "putting the ends through in reversed direction."<sup>92</sup> "Being obedient, she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race."<sup>93</sup>

#### Re-creation: the Incarnation

The Church uses the word *Incarnation*<sup>94</sup> for the fact that "the Son of God," Who

68 Like the attempt made by Adam and Eve.

69 See Dt 28:1-2,15.

70 See Gn 1:26-2:3, 3:15.

71 See Gn 9:8-17.

72 See Gn 12:1-3, 22:16-18.

73 See Ex 19:5-6, 24:3-8.

74 See 2 Sm 7:8-16.

75 "What the Catholic faith believes about Mary is based on what it believes about Christ, and what it teaches about Mary illumines in turn its faith in Christ" (CCC 487).

76 See Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, Postscript.

77 See the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

78 See Lk 1:26-27.

79 From the Latin *annuntiatio* ("an announcing," "announcement").

80 See Lk 1:26-38.

81 Col 2:9

82 See CCC 491.

83 See CCC 490.

84 See CCC 490. Also see the talk on "Mary and Joseph."

85 Lk 1:28

86 Lk 1:35

87 Lk 1:28-38

88 See CCC 494.

89 See Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

90 CCC 494

91 CCC 494

92 Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, VI

93 CCC 494



was God by nature, existing forever without beginning or end, "assumed a human nature," body and soul, "in order to accomplish our salvation in it."<sup>95</sup>

For the first 30 years of His life, Jesus remained in Nazareth. For the next three, He went about publicly. "To the poor He proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; and to the sorrowful of heart, joy."<sup>96</sup>

Throughout His life, He "recapitulated"<sup>97</sup> salvation history<sup>98</sup> — with this difference: that He gave His human will perfectly to His Father<sup>99</sup> and thus fulfilled our part in the covenants.<sup>100</sup> In short, He got 100% on the rewrites.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets," He said: "I have come not to abolish [it], but to fulfil [it]."<sup>101</sup> He did so in three ways:<sup>102</sup>

- He kept it "in its all-embracing detail," down to "the least of the commandments,"<sup>103</sup> as no fallen human being possibly could.
- He gave it its ultimate, divine interpretation. "You have heard the commandment imposed on your forefathers," He said. "[But] what I say to you is...."<sup>104</sup>
- He took upon Himself "the curse of the Law" (punishments, judgements, consequences) incurred by those who do not "abide by the things written in the book of the Law," in order to redeem them "from the transgressions" committed under the Old Covenant.<sup>105</sup>

### Re-creation: passion and death

When Jesus was 33, He freely gave Himself up to death,<sup>106</sup> thus accomplishing "once for all"<sup>107</sup> what was necessary to save us.

We noted that repeating a course is much more than a *punishment* for not learning the subject. It is an unavoidable consequence, and enduring that consequence is the only possible way to make up for the offence.

Similarly, death had been much more than a *punishment* for Adam and Eve's disobedience and distrust toward God. It had been an unavoidable consequence, and the obedient, trusting endurance of that consequence was the only possible way to make up for the offence.<sup>108</sup>

Jesus' death, therefore, can be said to be the reason for His Incarnation. He Himself said that He had come "to give His own life as a ransom for the many."<sup>109</sup> During His agony, He asked, "What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour."<sup>110</sup>

As a matter of history, Jesus was "rejected" by the Jewish elders, chief priests, and scribes,<sup>111</sup> who handed Him over "to the Gentiles to be made sport of and flogged and crucified."<sup>112</sup> However, the Church teaches that it was "sinners" — all

94 From the Latin *in* ("in") plus *caro, carnis*, ("flesh," "meat").

95 CCC 461. "Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God" in the Person of Jesus Christ "is the distinctive sign of Christian faith" (CCC 463).

96 Eucharistic Prayer 4

97 Meaning "went over the headings of, summarized, went quickly through again."

98 See CCC 518.

99 On coming into the world, Jesus said: "I have come to do Your will, O God" (see Heb 10:7).

100 God had always fulfilled His part.

101 Mt 5:17

102 See CCC 578, 580-581.

103 Mt 5:19

104 Mt 5

105 See Gal 3:13; Heb 9:15.

106 Notice that Jesus chose the time. He had previously escaped the Jewish authorities because His "hour had not yet come" (Jn 7:6,30, 8:20). "No one takes [my life] from Me," He declared; "I lay it down freely" (Jn 10:18). After raising Lazarus from the dead, knowing that the authorities were planning to kill Him, He withdrew to Ephraim. Then, knowing that His hour had come, He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (see Mt 21:1-11; Jn 12:23) and ate His Last Supper with His apostles on Holy Thursday (see Jn 13:1, 17:1). After that, "though He was harshly treated, He submitted, and opened not His mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, He was silent and opened not His mouth" (Is 53:7).

107 Heb 9:26

108 See the talk on "Death and the End of the World."

109 Mt 20:28

110 Jn 12:27

111 See Mk 8:31.

112 Mt 21:19

of us — who were "the authors and the ministers" of His sufferings. It imputes to Christians "the gravest responsibility" for His torments and says that all too often we have tried to foist it on to the Jews alone.<sup>113</sup> In fact, it says, "we must regard as guilty all those who continue to relapse into their sins."<sup>114</sup>

Jesus died *for us*. "By His obedience unto death," He accomplished the substitution<sup>115</sup> of the suffering Servant,<sup>116</sup> a figure described by Isaiah 742 years earlier: "Through His suffering, My Servant shall justify<sup>117</sup> many, and their guilt He shall bear."<sup>118</sup> Jesus "was pierced for our offences, crushed for our sins; upon Him was the chastisement that makes us whole; by His stripes we were healed."<sup>119</sup> His death was "redemptive":<sup>120</sup> by it, He redeemed the whole human race.<sup>121</sup>

No other man, not even the holiest, could have taken on the sins of the whole world and endured the covenant curses, including death, for all of us.<sup>122</sup> It is the existence in Christ of the divine Person of God the Son that made it possible.<sup>123</sup>

### Re-creation: "He descended into hell"

In the crucifixion, Jesus allowed death to separate His human Soul from His human Body.<sup>124</sup> It was a real death, for it put an end to His previous human existence.<sup>125</sup> He truly "descended into hell"<sup>126</sup> — "to the realm of the dead"<sup>127</sup> (not to "the place of eternal damnation"<sup>128</sup>).

The Hebrew word for this "realm" — *sheol*<sup>129</sup> — means "the state after death." It was vaguely imagined as a "shadow existence, more non-being than being."<sup>130</sup>

No one knows quite what death is. But let us start with Jesus' cry from the cross — "My God, why have You forsaken Me?"<sup>131</sup> — a cry of "radical loneliness."<sup>132</sup>

In our innermost being, we are each utterly alone. However, no one can live like this:<sup>133</sup> we need human company. That is why "loneliness is the region of fear," like that of a child alone in the dark, or a man alone with a dead person. It is "not fear of anything in particular, but simply fear in itself." It cannot be overcome by reason, but only by the presence of another person.<sup>134</sup>

The Old Testament has the same word — *sheol* — for death and hell because it regards them as ultimately identical. Death and hell are "absolute loneliness."

"The place of eternal damnation" is "the loneliness into which love can no longer

113 CCC 598. Under the Roman Emperor, the Jews were allowed to administer their own law except for the death penalty, which required ratification by the Roman governor. The Jews claimed that according to their laws, Jesus deserved death because He had made Himself "God's Son" (see Jn 19:6-7). But Pontius Pilate (a Roman, familiar with many "gods") ruled that this offence did not deserve death, so the Jews changed the charge, claiming that He had called Himself a King and thus challenged Caesar (see Jn 19:12).

114 We "crucify Him still" when we "delight" in our "vices and sins" (CCC 598).

115 The prophet Isaiah (c 739-680 BC) "intuited" (CCC 1502) that one person could suffer for another.

116 CCC 615. This was how Jesus spoke of Himself after His Resurrection (see CCC 601).

117 Meaning "make just."

118 Is 53:11

119 Is 53:5

120 CCC 601

121 We say that Jesus *atoned* for our sins. "Atonement" means "the satisfaction of a legitimate demand." Since Jesus was atoning for our sins, we say that he made vicarious atonement. "Atone" comes from Middle English "at one," meaning "to set at one, to reconcile."

122 In Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, Satan uses this argument to tempt Jesus: "Do you really believe that one man can bear the full burden of sin?" he asks. "No one man can carry this burden, I tell you. It is far too heavy. Saving their souls is too costly. No one, ever. No. Never." And Jesus turns and stamps — on the head of a snake, recalling the Protoevangelium (see Gn 3:15).

123 See CCC 616.

124 See CCC 625.

125 See CCC 627.

126 Apostles' Creed

127 Eucharistic Prayer 4

128 Pope John Paul II: General Audience, January 11 1989

129 Like the Greek *hades*.

130 Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3. See the talk on "Death and the End of the World," Appendix, "Hell," 2.

131 Mk 15:34

132 Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3

133 That is why solitary confinement can drive people mad.

134 See Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3.

advance,"<sup>135</sup> for the damned freely choose that loneliness,<sup>136</sup> locking the doors *on the inside to keep God out*. Jesus respects their choice; He does not invade Hell.

However, He did invade hell: He "strode through the gate of our final loneliness"; He "went down into the abyss of our abandonment," where no other voice can reach us.<sup>137</sup> At that moment, when He accomplished "the supreme act of love by descending into the night of death," He brought "the journey of the Incarnation to its completion." Now He "clasps the hand of Adam" — of every man and woman who has died — "and brings them to the light."<sup>138</sup>

Accordingly, we say that "by dying, He has destroyed our death."<sup>139</sup> "Death is no longer the path into icy solitude;<sup>140</sup> the gates of *sheol* have been opened."<sup>141</sup>

### Re-creation: the Resurrection

After Jesus had died, His Body was taken down from the cross and laid in a nearby tomb.<sup>142</sup> There was no time for the usual cleansing and anointing, for the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) would begin at sundown, soon after Jesus died.<sup>143</sup>

"When the Sabbath was over," therefore, "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought perfumed oils with which they intended to go and anoint Jesus. Very early, just after sunrise, on the first day of the week [Sunday], they came to the tomb."<sup>144</sup> They found the stone which had sealed it rolled back and the tomb itself empty, except for an angel who told them that Jesus had "been raised up."<sup>145</sup>

Even when Jesus' Body and Soul had been separated, His Body, like His Soul, had remained united to the Person of God the Son<sup>146</sup> and so His Corpse had not decayed: divine power had preserved it from corruption.<sup>147</sup>

By eating with His disciples and by letting them touch Him, the risen Jesus convinced them that He was not a ghost and that His risen Body, on which they could see the marks of the nails and the spear,<sup>148</sup> was the same Body that had been tortured and crucified.<sup>149</sup>

135 Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3

136 See the talk on "Death and the End of the World."

137 See Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3.

138 Pope Benedict XVI: *Easter Vigil Homily*, April 7 2007

139 Preface I of Easter (21)

140 See Dante Alighieri: *Divine Comedy, Inferno*, where Hell's centre is ice. Seven times, Jesus speaks of the "wailing and gnashing of teeth"; twice, He also mentions the "fiery furnace" (Mt 13:42,50); and three times, the "dark" or "night" outside (Mt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30). "In a world separated from God and therefore from love you begin to freeze — your teeth begin to chatter" (Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part II). In fact, cold iron can burn like fire (see Hugh Gray: *Letters From Canada*, XIX).

141 Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, Part Two, II, 3.

"The liturgy [of the Easter Vigil] applies to Jesus' descent into the night of death the words of Psalm 24: 'Lift up your heads, O gates; be lifted up, O ancient doors!' The gates of death are closed; no one can return from there. There is no key for those iron doors. But Christ has the key. His Cross opens wide the gates of death, the stern doors. They are barred no longer. His Cross, His radical love, is the key that opens them. The love of the One Who, though God, became Man in order to die — this love has the power to open those doors. This love is stronger than death.

"The Easter icons of the Oriental Church show how Christ enters the world of the dead. He is clothed with light, for God is light. 'The night is bright as the day, the darkness is as light' (see Ps 139:12). Entering the world of the dead, Jesus bears the stigmata, the signs of His passion. [But] His wounds, His suffering, have become power: they are love that conquers death. He meets Adam and all the men and women waiting in the night of death (Pope Benedict XVI: *Easter Vigil Homily*, April 7 2007).

142 See Mt 27:60.

143 And that Sabbath was a "solemn feast day": the commemoration of the Passover (Jn 19:31).

144 Mk 16:1-2

145 Mk 16:6

146 See CCC 626.

147 See CCC 627; Ps 16:9-10; Acts 2:26-27, 13:35-37. The Resurrection "is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ" — "believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community, handed on as fundamental by Tradition, established by the documents of the New Testament, and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross" (CCC 638). "Paschal Mystery" encompasses Christ's Last Supper on Holy Thursday, His death and burial on Good Friday (the next day), and His Resurrection on Easter Sunday (two days later). The word comes from the Jewish *Pasch* or *Passover*, the feast the Jews were celebrating that weekend. See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

148 See Lk 24:39-40; Jn 19:34, 20:27.

149 See CCC 645.

Yet at the same time this authentic, real Body possessed the new characteristics of a glorious Body — not limited by space and time, for example, but able to be present how and when He willed.<sup>150</sup>

The risen Jesus did not return to earthly life like the people He Himself had raised from the dead.<sup>151</sup> His Resurrection is essentially different: His Body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and He shares God's life in all its glory.<sup>152</sup>

St. Paul calls Him "the man of Heaven,"<sup>153</sup> for His "humanity can no longer be confined to earth;" it "belongs henceforth only to [God] the Father's divine realm."<sup>154</sup>

#### Re-creation: the Ascension

Accordingly, forty days after His Resurrection, Christ returned to His Father in an event we call the *Ascension*. "He was lifted up before [the apostles'] eyes in a cloud that took Him from their sight."<sup>155</sup> By the Ascension, Christ, Who existed as God the Son before all ages, having the same nature as God the Father, entered God's glory "in His full humanity."<sup>156</sup>

The Ascension was not a *disincarnation*, as though God became Human, lived, died, rose again, and went back to being God. No; He Who is taken up into glory — He Who now sits "at the right hand of the Father"<sup>157</sup> — is a human Man, sharing our nature "in all things but sin."<sup>158</sup>

#### Re-creation: Pentecost

Finally, in order to bring "to perfection His work in the world" and "sanctify creation to the full," Jesus sent His Holy Spirit "as the first fruits for those who believe."<sup>159</sup>

The night before He died, He made His apostles a promise: "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Paraclete<sup>160</sup> to be with you always: the Spirit of truth."<sup>161</sup>

"The Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will instruct you in everything, and remind you of all that I told you,"<sup>162</sup> He said. "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. When He comes, however, being the Spirit of truth, He will guide you to all truth."<sup>163</sup>

Then, just before His Ascension, He said, "See, I send down upon you the promise of My Father. Remain here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."<sup>164</sup>

It happened seven weeks after His Resurrection.<sup>165</sup> They were all "gathered in one place. Suddenly, from up in the sky, there came a noise like a strong, driving wind, which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues of

150 See, for example, Jn 20:11-17, 19-21, 26-28.

151 Jairus' daughter (Mk 5:22, 35-43), the young man of Nain (Lk 7:11-17), and Lazarus (Jn 11:1-44).

152 CCC 646

153 1 Cor 15:47

154 See CCC 645.

155 Acts 1:9-11

156 CCC 663

157 In the language of both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

158 Eucharistic Prayer 4. See Dante Alighieri: *Divine Comedy, Paradiso*, in which Dante sees "a light that seemed to come from three concentric spheres, each of a different colour, but each forming one blinding bright light": God the Holy Trinity. "In the depth of those spheres" he sees One Who looked exactly like himself.

159 Eucharistic Prayer 4

160 From the Greek *parakletos* ("advocate").

161 Jn 14:16

162 Jn 14:26

163 Jn 16:12-13

164 Lk 24:49

165 On "the day of Pentecost," from the Greek *pentekoste* ("the fiftieth day"). That day was the Jewish Feast of Weeks, 50 days after the Passover, when the first fruits of the corn harvest were offered (Dt 16:9) and later the giving of the law to Moses was celebrated. The name is now used by Christians for the Sunday that falls fifty (forty-nine) days after Easter, when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles.

fire appeared, which parted and came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to express themselves in foreign tongues and make bold proclamations as the Spirit prompted them."<sup>166</sup>

Thus Christ's Church<sup>167</sup> was revealed to the world. The coming of the Holy Spirit ushered in "a new era," in which Christ "manifests, makes present, and communicates His work of salvation" to us "through the liturgy"<sup>168</sup> of His Church, until He comes again.<sup>169</sup>

"Already the final age of the world is with us, and the renewal of the world is irrevocably underway; it is even now anticipated in a certain real way, for the Church on earth is already endowed with a sanctity that is real but imperfect."<sup>170</sup>

### The final rewrite

When we compared covenants to rewrites, we left out the New Covenant. Jesus established this "new and eternal"<sup>171</sup> covenant the night before He died, when He took a cup of wine and said, "This cup is the new covenant in My Blood."<sup>172</sup>

Considered as a rewrite, this covenant is different, for the Teacher *has already written it for us*; all we have to do is let Him hold our hand while we copy the answers. Christ left us an example, St. Peter said; now we must "follow in His footsteps."<sup>173</sup>

Any student can pass *this* rewrite, for if he will only make the Teacher's answers his own, and thus "in his own flesh fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ"<sup>174</sup> — as St. Paul says — he will be "transformed by the renewal" of his mind.<sup>175</sup>

Can *any* student *ever* fail, then?

Yes: those who skip classes or do not work; those who do not try; those who reject rewrites; those who want to do it on their own. However, it is not the Teacher Who fails them; it is they, themselves, who fail.

For it is not us *versus* God; it is God-and-us *versus* the Law. "If anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I am not the One to condemn him, for I did not come to condemn the world but to save it," Jesus said. "Whoever rejects Me and does not accept My words already has his judge, namely the word I have spoken — it is that which will condemn him on the last day."<sup>176</sup>

If we fail to reach the perfection God plans for us, it will be not God's fault, but ours. He is on our side: He has done and is doing all He can. He has acted far beyond all expectation:<sup>177</sup> He "wonderfully created the dignity of human nature," but He has "still more wonderfully restored it."<sup>178</sup>

### What must we do?

Christ atoned for the sin of the world. By assuming its consequences, He made amends for it. But He did more. By dying, He destroyed death. By rising, He restored life. By ascending to Heaven, He took humanity to the heart of the Godhead.

Thus one Man became what God had called all humans to be from the beginning. However, as we said, that is not the end of the story. God made one Man new so that, through Him, He could re-create all humanity.

166 Acts 2:1-4

167 See the talk on "What is the Catholic Church?"

168 From the Latin *liturgia* ("public work"), from the Greek *leitourgia* ("public duty"), from *leitōs* ("of the people") plus *ergon* ("work"). See the talk on "Liturgy: Public Worship."

169 See CCC 1076. Also see Mt 25:31, 28:20.

170 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 48

171 Eucharistic Prayer 3

172 Lk 22:20. Compare Ex 24:8.

173 1 Pt 2:21

174 Col 1:24

175 See Rom 12:2.

176 Jn 12:47-48

177 CCC 422

178 Collect for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Mass during the day)

What, then, do we have to do now?

This is what the people asked Peter<sup>179</sup> at Pentecost. And he said, "You must reform and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven; then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."<sup>180</sup>

And that is what this course is all about.

### Conclusion

"We must harbour no delusions about the present state of the world, nor even of the earthly Church. Like a serpent with a broken back, the enemy still bites. But we have got the key to the plan of God":<sup>181</sup> re-creation, renewal, restoration.<sup>182</sup>

This re-creation will not be complete until what we call the end of the world, when "the heavens will be destroyed in flames and the elements will melt away in a blaze."<sup>183</sup> But, speaking about that time, God says, "Lo, I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the things of the past shall not be remembered or come to mind. Instead, there shall always be rejoicing and happiness in what I create."<sup>184</sup>

In C.S. Lewis' fictitious *Perelandra*, the first man and woman, though tempted, do not fall, as they did in our world. They "step up that step" at which our first parents fell "and sit in the throne of what they were meant to be."<sup>185</sup>

Then, speaking of what we call "the end" of our world, the newly crowned King of *Perelandra* says, "It is but the wiping out of a false start in order that the world may *then* begin. As when a man lies down to sleep, if he finds a twisted root under his shoulder he will change his place — and after that his real sleep begins. Or as a man, setting foot on an island, may make a false step. He steadies himself and after that his journey begins." We humans, the king says, "talk of evenings before the day has dawned."<sup>186</sup>

At the very end of the Bible, the Book of Revelation presents the new creation as the "new Jerusalem," the bride who at last has made herself ready for her husband.<sup>187</sup> Jesus has served for her as Jacob served for Rachel;<sup>188</sup> now at last His wooing is accomplished, and she comes to Him freely.

"At last, then, He can take her with Him to His Father's home,<sup>189</sup> where she belongs. That is the end. The Marriage of the Lamb<sup>190</sup> — Christ — "is come; but, after all, that is only the beginning."<sup>191</sup>

It is the proper ending to a story: "And they all lived happily ever after."

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179 The chief of the twelve apostles, Jesus' closest followers.

180 Acts 2:14-39

181 Sister Penelope Lawson CSMV: *God Persists*, VII

182 See, for example, Acts 3:21; 2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:10.

183 See 2 Pt 3:10-13.

184 Is 65:17-18. Also see Is 66:18-24; Rv 21:1-8.

185 See C.S. Lewis: *Perelandra*, 16.

186 See C.S. Lewis: *Perelandra*, 17.

187 Rv 21:1-2

188 See Gn 29:15-20.

189 Jewish marriage began with *betrothal*: an agreement to marry. That agreement "was definite and binding upon both groom and bride, who were considered as man and wife in all legal and religious aspects, except that of actual cohabitation." After the betrothal, "a period of twelve months was allowed to pass before the marriage was completed by the formal home-taking" (see the *Jewish Encyclopedia*).

190 John the Baptist called Jesus "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29).

191 Sister Penelope Lawson: *God Persists*, VII

## Appendix: Salvation is From the Jews

"The Church, following the apostles, teaches that Christ died for all men without exception: there is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer."<sup>1</sup>

However, when Jesus first commissioned His apostles, He said, "Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead after the lost sheep of the House of Israel."<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, when a Canaanite woman in "the district of Tyre and Sidon" asked Him to cure her daughter, He "gave her no word of response," but told His disciples that He had been "sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" and explained that it was not right "to take the food of sons and daughters and throw it to the dogs."<sup>3</sup>

The Jewish people were "the first to hear the word of God."<sup>4</sup> To them were given "the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the law-giving, the worship, and the promises; theirs were the patriarchs,<sup>5</sup> and from them came the Messiah."<sup>6</sup> And "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable."<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, "God's love is an elective love: among all the nations He chooses Israel and loves her."<sup>8</sup>

However, "He does so precisely with a view to healing the whole human race."<sup>9</sup> "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples,"<sup>10</sup> God promised through the prophet Isaiah, and Jesus quoted it.<sup>11</sup>

However, when Jesus met the Canaanite woman, *that time had not yet come*. Similarly, He told His mother when the couple in Cana ran out of wine, "My hour has not yet come."<sup>12</sup> Apparently, Jesus' "hour" was pre-determined.

(Nevertheless, the faith-filled prayer of His petitioners moved Him to "jump the gun," so to speak: He healed the Canaanite woman's daughter, saying, "Woman, you have great faith!" and He changed water into wine for His mother.)

When God became Man, He became a Jew. "Salvation is from the Jews,"<sup>13</sup> Jesus told the Samaritan woman.

At what "hour," then, did He extend it to the Gentiles?

The authorities had long sought to kill Jesus, but unsuccessfully, for "His hour had not yet come."<sup>14</sup> Not until He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday did He say, "The hour has come."<sup>15</sup> Then, at His last supper, He "realized that the hour had come."<sup>16</sup>

At His Incarnation, He had humbled Himself to become Man; at His Baptism, He had consented to be numbered among sinners;<sup>17</sup> but now He gave us His Body and Blood as food, grafting us on to Him like branches on a vine.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, "for our sakes, God made Him Who did not know sin to be sin."<sup>19</sup> The next day, "in His own Body," He brought our sins to the cross.<sup>20</sup> He made Himself "an offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole

1 CCC 605

2 Mt 10:6

3 Mt 15:21-28

4 CCC 839

5 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

6 According to "His human origins" (Rom 9:4-5).

7 Rom 11:29

8 Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 9

9 Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 9

10 Is 56:7

11 See Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17.

12 Jn 2:4

13 Jn 4:22

14 See Jn 7:6,8,30, 8:20

15 Jn 12:23.

16 Jn 31:1; see Mt 26:45; Mk 14:41; Lk 22:14.

17 See the talk on "Baptism and Confirmation."

18 See the talks on "The Communion of the Saints in the Body of Christ" and "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

19 2 Cor 5:21

20 1 Pt 2:24

world."<sup>2 1</sup>

Accordingly, Jesus' final command to His apostles was to "make disciples of all nations."<sup>2 2</sup>

St. Paul compares the Jews to an olive tree that God "cultivated" and the Gentiles to a "wild olive tree." By their unbelief, some Jews have been "cut off" from the cultivated tree, while we, by our belief, have been "grafted" on.<sup>2 3</sup>

Eventually, he says, "all Israel will be saved."<sup>2 4</sup> In the meantime, we receive mercy for our disobedience "because of" the disobedience of the Jews,<sup>2 5</sup> for their disobedience brought Christ to the cross, where He "died for all men without exception."

Indeed, "salvation is from the Jews."<sup>2 6</sup>

*God is not a democrat.*

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21 1 Jn 2:2

22 Mt 28:19

23 Rom 11:24

24 Rom 11:26

25 Rom 11:30

26 Jn 4:22