

Session 32: Catholic Spiritualities

HYMN: Sing Ye Praises to the Father



Sing ye praises to the Father;
sing ye praises to the Son.
Sing ye praises to the Spirit,
living and eternal One.
God has made us, God has blessed us,
God has called us to be true.
He is Lord of all creation,
daily making all things new.

Join the praise of ev'ry creature;
sing with singing birds at dawn.
When the stars shine forth at
nightfall,
hear their heav'nly antiphon.
Praise Him for the light of summer,
autumn glories, winter snows,
for the coming of the springtime,
and the life of all that grows.

Praise God on our days of gladness,
for His summons to rejoice.
Praise Him in our time of sadness,
for the comfort of His voice.
God our Father, strong and loving;
Christ our Saviour, Leader, Lord;
living God, Creator Spirit —
be Thy holy name adored.

PRAYER:

Let us pray:
God, our Father,
look upon us with love.
You redeemed us
and made us Your children in Christ.
Give us true freedom
and bring us to the inheritance
You promised.
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:

The Andraibá vobhr spirit

Jn 14:1-6

A Reading from the holy Gospel
according to John— *Glory to You, O Lord*

Jesus said,

"Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Have faith in God and faith in Me.

In My Father's house
there are many dwelling places;
otherwise, how could I have told you
that I was going to prepare
a place for you?

"I am indeed going to prepare
a place for you,
and then I shall come back
to take you with Me,
that where I am, you also may be.
You know the way
that leads where I go."

"Lord," said Thomas,
"we do not know where You are going.
How can we know the way?"

Jesus told him:

"I am the Way, the Truth,
and the Life;

no one comes to the Father
but through Me."

The Gospel of the Lord

— *Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ*

IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

In the communion of the saints,
many and varied spiritualities
developed throughout the history
of the Church.

For example,
some holy persons have handed on
their personal charisms, or gifts,
like "the spirit" of Elijah
to Elisha and John the Baptist,
so that their followers
may have a share in this spirit.

A distinct spirituality
can also arise
in response to specific needs
at certain points in history,
such as the need
for effective preaching
perceived by St. Dominic.

These different schools
of Christian spirituality
share in the Church's
living tradition of prayer
and are essential guides
for the faithful. —

Session 32

In their rich diversity,
they are refractions —
or dispersions —
of the one pure light
of the Holy Spirit,
just as a prism breaks up,
or disperses,
the many colours
in one ray of white light.

BIBLE READING

Jn 11-21

You will find the Gospel passage
we heard at the beginning
in your Bible reading this week.

Jesus is referring
to Jewish wedding customs.
After formal betrothal,
the bridegroom
would leave his bride,
return to his father's house,
prepare a place for her,
and then come back for her.

In his 1947 encyclical
Mediator Dei,
Pope Pius XII said
that the Church on earth,
like the Church in Heaven,
has many dwelling places;
the Holy Spirit "enlightens
and guides souls to sanctity"
with various gifts.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux said,
"How different
are the variety of ways
through which the Lord leads souls!
Souls are more different
than faces."

Next week, we will hear about
one of these ways:
"Marriage and the Family."

Catholic Spiritualities

Introduction

In the Church, many different "schools of Christian spirituality" have developed over the centuries. "In their rich diversity," they all manifest "the one pure light of the Holy Spirit."¹ Some of the best known are:

- desert, after the early desert hermits like St. Anthony of Egypt (251-356);
- Augustinian, after St. Augustine (354-430);
- Benedictine, after St. Benedict (c 480 - c 550);
- Carmelite, after the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
- Dominican, after St. Dominic (1170-1221);
- Franciscan, after St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226);
- Ignatian, after St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556);
- Salesian, after St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622);
- lay, e.g. the various movements founded after Vatican II.

Desert

Jesus said, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in Heaven; and come, follow Me."² In response, St. Anthony of Egypt (251-356) gave away all his goods in about 269, and about 285 retired to the desert as a hermit, growing his own food. In about 305 he came out of solitude to organize his followers, but he retired again about 310.

Anthony and St. Paul the Hermit (d. c 340), about whom little is known, are seen as the founders of Christian monasticism. Anthony did not found a monastery, but monasteries grew up around him.³

St. Pachomius (c 292-346) established the first true monastery at Tabennisi, near Thebes, in Egypt. Historical texts mention it, but until 2005, there was no other evidence of its existence that early; then archaeologists found monks' rooms with private living areas and a central communal room, complete with cooking utensils.

Desert Spirituality is characterized by solitude, prayer, asceticism,⁴ and sacrifice.

Augustinian

St. Augustine (354-430) was born at Tagaste in Africa,⁵ the son of a Christian mother, St. Monica, and a pagan father, Patricius. After a wayward youth, he taught at Carthage, Rome, and Milan, and in 387 was baptized by St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan. He founded a lay monastery at Tagaste in 389, but became a priest in 391, auxiliary bishop of Hippo⁶ in Africa in 395, and Bishop of Hippo in about 396.

Augustine wrote extensively: about his own conversion,⁷ the Holy Trinity, God's grace, Christ, the Kingdom of God, the human person, and human freedom.⁸

Augustinian spirituality brings Catholic faith into daily life. Christians must not only hope for God's Kingdom, but also help build it on earth. The purpose of Augustinian monasteries is not to teach or preach, but to build up the Body of Christ through Christian love.

Augustine's *Rule* (396-400), the oldest surviving rule in the West for consecrated people, contains only a few regulations for the government of monasteries; its emphasis is on love (*agape*) as the goal of Christian life. The superior is servant to the community, and the others are urged to show him mercy. Monks and nuns are

1 See CCC 2684.

2 Mt 19:21

3 One of the oldest Christian monasteries in the world, the fortress-like Coptic Monastery of St. Anthony the Great (now Orthodox) stands to this day at an oasis in the Red Sea Mountains, 155 kilometres southeast of Cairo. It was founded about 356 on St. Anthony's burial site.

4 Spiritual effort or exercise in the pursuit of virtue, with the purpose of growing in Christian perfection. From the Greek *asketikos* ("given to exercise").

5 At the northeastern tip of what is now Algeria.

6 The modern city of Annaba in Algeria, about 100 km southwest of Tagaste.

7 Described biographically, psychologically, and theologically in his *Confessions*.

8 See www.newadvent.org/fathers/.

"intent upon God,"⁹ through obedience, Scripture reading, and meditation. They strive to imitate the first Christian communities, where there was "one heart and one mind" and "everything was held in common" and shared according to need.¹⁰

Various religious orders follow Augustine's *Rule*: with "first orders" for consecrated men, "second orders" for consecrated women, and "third orders" for lay people.

The foremost Augustinian saint is Monica, Augustine's mother, patroness of wives and mothers, whose decades of prayer helped convert her husband and her son.

Benedictine

St. Benedict (c 480 - 543), called the Father of Western Monasticism, was born at Nursia (now Norcia) in Italy and educated in Rome. About 500, he retired to a cave at Subiaco,¹¹ where he lived as a hermit. As others joined him, he organized them into monasteries. About 525, he and a few others moved to Monte Cassino,¹² where he composed his *Rule*. He is buried there with his sister, St. Scholastica.

Benedictine life is characterized by obedience, self-denial, moderation and good order, and life in common, with goods shared according to need.

In Benedict's *Rule*, God is a Judge Who protects the weak from tyranny. Abbots — elected for life by the monks — are warned that they will answer at the Last Judgement for any abuse of their office.

Benedict sees God in many places:

- *in the liturgy*: the Divine Office¹³ and the Mass.¹⁴ Benedictines try never to let carelessness, such as tardiness, disrupt the liturgy.
- *in the abbot*, through whom the monks perceive God's will. The abbot consults the whole community on important matters, but only he can call a meeting, set the agenda, hear the "testimony," and make the final decision.
- *in guests*, whom Benedictines treat as Christ. Hospitality is a peculiarly Benedictine virtue and the guestmaster has an important role.
- *in the sick*.
- *in the youngest monks*, for "God often reveals what is better to the younger."¹⁵

To Benedict, everything in our natural lives is important in our supernatural lives. For example, tools are handled carefully by the workers and inventoried by the superiors; waiters and readers at meals are blessed during the Liturgy of the Hours¹⁶ as they begin and end their week of service.

Benedictines often spend their lives with the same people, so they become familiar with their faults. The solution to problems is not change of place or companions, Benedict says, but patience, which he associates with Christ's passion.

Benedictine life includes *Lectio Divina*¹⁷ — praying God's word through *Lectio* (reading), *Meditatio* (reflection), *Oratio* (praying), and *Contemplatio* (silently listening).

Carmelite

The name comes from Mount Carmel, the high ridge near the modern port of Haifa in Israel. Here, between 1206 and 1214, Patriarch¹⁸ Albert of Jerusalem gave a group of lay hermits a formula of life based on silence, solitude, and continuous prayer — mostly the psalms.

They chose Mount Carmel because that was where the prophet Elijah — seen as a model for monks and hermits — had challenged the prophets of Baal.¹⁹

9 Augustine: *Rule*, 3

10 See Acts 4:32.

11 From the Latin for "below the lake"; now part of the Metropolitan City of Rome.

12 About 130 kilometres southeast of Rome.

13 See the talk on "Prayer."

14 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

15 Benedict: *Rule*, 3

16 See the talk on "Prayer."

17 Literally, "divine reading."

18 From the Greek *patriarches* ("father of a race"). The title dates from the sixth century for the bishop of one of the five chief dioceses: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem.

19 In the 9th century BC. See 1 Kgs 18.

However, their chapel was dedicated to Mary, and by the middle of the 13th century they were called "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel."

Carmelite hermits began migrating to Cyprus, Sicily, England, and France about 1238. Finding their lifestyle unsuited to Western Europe, they asked the Pope to approve a revision of their formula. The resulting changes allowed them to settle in towns, live together in dormitories (still with individual cells), eat together in refectories, and sing the Divine Office together. To prepare themselves to preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments, they began to study, and by the end of the 13th century were established at the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris.

In the 15th century, Carmelite devotion to Mary began to center on her alleged appearance to St. Simon Stock (c 1165-1265), during which she is said to have given him the brown scapular.²⁰

In 1452, a second Carmelite order was founded for women.

The Carmelite order has undergone many reforms, for there has always been tension between the vision of its founders and the requirements of modern life.

The most significant reform began with the mid-life conversion of Doña Teresa de Ahumada (1515-1582) at the Carmelite monastery of the Incarnation in Avila Spain. After that, she called herself "Teresa of Jesus."²¹ She was declared the first woman Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

As her collaborator, Teresa chose the newly ordained John of Saint Matthias (1500-1569), who was thinking of transferring to the Carthusians²² to live in greater solitude. Under Teresa's guidance, John decided to remain a Carmelite. Like Teresa, he marked this decision by changing his name — he became "John of the Cross."²³ He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926 by Pope Pius XI.

For Teresa and John, the goal of the contemplative life is the union of the soul with God in love. John's poetry, particularly, is a union of mysticism and theology.

The next most widely known Carmelite is Thérèse Martin (1873-1897) — Sister Thérèse of the Child Jesus and of the Holy Face — commonly known as the "Little Flower,"²⁴ from the sub-title of her autobiography.²⁵ She lived a "little way" of trust and love that went to the heart of Gospel simplicity.²⁶

Pope Pius XI named Thérèse²⁷ principal patroness of the foreign missions in 1927²⁸ and Pope Pius XII named her secondary patroness of France in 1944. (St. Joan of Arc is the principal patroness.)

The best known 20th-century Carmelites are St. Elizabeth of the Trinity²⁹ (1880-1906); St. Edith Stein³⁰ (1891-1942), a Jew who became Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross and died at Auschwitz; and Blessed Titus Brandsma³¹ (1881-1942), a journalist and a professor at the University of Nijmegen, who died at Dachau.

20 An outer garment formed of two lengths of cloth joined across the shoulders, like the white garment of Baptism. Originally the working garment of the Benedictines, it was adopted by other monastic communities and is now a distinctive part of the habit. An abbreviated scapular — two small pieces of cloth joined by tapes — is worn under the clothes by lay members of the "third" orders.

21 Beatified in 1614 by Pope Paul V, canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. See the talk on "Bearing Witness: Living as a Catholic," Appendix 1.

22 A strict contemplative order founded in 1084 by St. Bruno at *La Grande Chartreuse*, some 24 kilometres north of Grenoble in France. "Chartreuse" — the origin of "Carthusian" and also, in England, "charterhouse" — became the name of the famous liqueur made by the monks.

23 Beatified in 1675 by Pope Clement X, canonized in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII.

24 Beatified in 1923 and canonized in 1925 by Pope Pius XI.

25 Thérèse of Lisieux: *The Story of the Springtime of a Little White Flower*

26 All of Thérèse's four surviving sisters became nuns, three of them Carmelites. Pope Francis canonized her parents, Zélie and Louis, in 2015, making them the first married couple to be canonized together.

27 Along with St. Francis Xavier.

28 Thérèse's life "represents a singular way of dedication to the cause of evangelization, which is rooted in the journey toward holiness, an indispensable prerequisite in every missionary vocation" (Pope John Paul II: Address to the Pontifical Missionary Works May 15 1997). Under the umbrella of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the "Works" include the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood Association, the Pontifical Missionary Union, and the Society of St. Peter the Apostle.

29 Beatified in 1984 by Pope John Paul II, canonized in 2016 by Pope Francis.

30 Beatified in 1987 and canonized in 1988 by Pope John Paul II.

31 Beatified in 1985 by Pope John Paul II.

Dominican

The Order of Preachers, founded by St. Dominic Guzman³² (1170-1221), is usually called the Dominicans.³³

Dominic was born into an ancient family in Caleruega Spain. During the famine of 1191 he sold all his goods, including his books, to help the poor.

Dominic was ordained a priest in 1199. In 1206, on his way to Denmark through Languedoc France with his bishop, Diego d'Azevedo, he heard papal envoys in Montpellier³⁴ denouncing the Albigensian heresy, which held that the world was intrinsically evil. At Dominic and Diego's suggestion, the envoys dismissed their large retinues and began to exemplify poverty instead.

At this time, only bishops had the right to preach. However, in a letter dated November 17 1206, Pope Innocent III granted this right to Dominic, and from then on Dominic signed himself "Brother Dominic, Preacher."

After his bishop returned to Spain, Dominic remained in Languedoc as parish priest at Fanjeaux, near Prouille. In 1207 he founded a women's monastery there. He eventually settled with a few followers in Toulouse.

In 1215 he attended the Forth Lateran³⁵ Council in Rome, where he won approval for an order of preachers who would live under Augustine's *Rule*, but with supreme authority given to the vote of the monks instead of to the abbot. Dominic spent the rest of his life establishing friaries³⁶ in Italy, Spain, and France. In 1221 he set out to preach in Hungary, but fell ill and had to return to Bologna Italy, where he died and was buried.

The Dominican vocation is principally preaching. Accordingly, in their community life, liturgy, contemplation, study, and poverty are at the service of preaching, which entails travel. For example, they chant the Divine Office succinctly, and for the manual labour of Benedictines they substitute the study of Scripture and the art of preaching. Each monastery has a theological expert called a lector.³⁷

St. Albert the Great³⁸ (c 1200-1280), St. Thomas Aquinas³⁹ (c 1225-1274), and St. Catherine of Siena⁴⁰ (1347-1380), all Dominicans, are Doctors of the Church.

Thomas Aquinas, who twice held a chair in theology at the University of Paris, spent most of his career as a lector. Convinced that the intellect is primary, since love flows from knowledge, he wrote *Summa Theologiae*,⁴¹ which scales "heights unthinkable to human intelligence."⁴²

Catherine of Siena, a lay Dominican from the age of eighteen, lived as a recluse in her parents' home, except for Mass, until 1368, when she began to work among the sick and destitute. People began to seek her out. From hours of conversation, she learned theological argument and biblical interpretation and began to teach about God from her experience. In 1376, she induced Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon, in France, where he and six other Popes had lived since 1309.

As her fame spread, Catherine was asked to mediate in the highly complicated politics of 14th-century Italy. At the order of Pope Urban VI, who found himself embroiled in schism,⁴³ she set up house in Rome, where she counselled the Pope and the cardinals and directed her disciples.

32 Canonized in 1234 by Pope Gregory IX.

33 The pun on the Latin *Domini canes* ("dogs of the Lord") has led to a great many jokes.

34 On the south coast of France.

35 So called because it was held at the Lateran Basilica in Rome, built in the fourth century on land formerly the property of the Laterani family.

36 Monks who travel, often as beggars, instead of remaining in their monasteries, are called "friars." From the Old French *freire*, from the Latin *frater* ("brother").

37 From the Latin *lector* ("reader").

38 Beatified in 1622 by Pope, canonized in 1931 by Pope Pius XI.

39 Canonized in 1323 by Pope John XXII.

40 Canonized in 1461 by Pope Pius II.

41 "Summary of Theology"

42 Pope Leo XIII: *Aeterni Patris*, 109

43 The "Western" or "Papal" Schism, 1378-1417, during which two other men claimed to be Pope, was ended by the Council of Constance (1414-1418).

Franciscan

St. Francis^{4 4} (1182-1226) was born in Assisi Italy, the son of a successful cloth merchant who lived a comfortable life. In his *Testament*, dictated shortly before he died, Francis related how, as a young man, he encountered a leper. His own values were overturned, he said, from "bitterness" to "sweetness."^{4 5} From then on, he lived a life of penance "according to the form of the Holy Gospel."^{4 6}

Francis built the first nativity scene at Greccio, in Italy, from which our own custom derives. His *Canticle of Brother Sun* shows that he saw God's wisdom, power, and goodness in all creation — worms as well as flowers.

Francis was ordained a deacon, but never a priest. Nonetheless, he is said to be the man most like Christ, not only in his lifestyle, but also because he was given the *stigmata*; that is, the wounds of Christ.

Moved by his example, St. Clare of Assisi^{4 7} (1194-1253) began a life of penance on Palm Sunday in 1212. She was received by the Franciscan brothers at the little church of Saint Mary of the Angels, becoming the first "Franciscan" woman.

Like Francis, Clare prized poverty. However, at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Church refused to recognize any new rules of consecrated life, so she was forced to accept the *Rule* of Benedict. However, at her request, Pope Innocent III confirmed her "proposal of most high poverty," assuring her "that no one can compel you to receive possessions."^{4 8}

In Clare's own *Testament*, probably written soon after her *Rule* was approved by Pope Innocent IV in 1247, she stated that "the Son of God never wished to abandon this holy poverty while He lived in the world" and that she wanted to imitate "the God Who was placed poor in the crib, lived poor in the world, and remained naked on the cross."^{4 9}

Accordingly, Clare's sisters live on charity.^{5 0} In her letters to St. Agnes of Bohemia^{5 1} (1205-1282), who founded a monastery of the Poor Sisters in 1234, Clare explained that by joining Christ in poverty, she embraced Him as her Spouse.

Franciscan friars focus on Christ in the created world; the sisters focus on Christ crucified. The sisters often live in *enclosure* which, far from locking out the world, concentrates their attention on Christ in the frail humanity of each sister and each person who comes to their door.

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Ignatian

St. Ignatius^{5 2} (1491-1556), born into a noble family at Loyola Spain,^{5 3} began his adult life as courtier, gentleman, and soldier. However, in 1521, as he recovered from a severe leg wound at Pamplona Spain, he read the lives of Christ and the saints and became a soldier of Christ instead.

In 1534 he founded the army-like Society of Jesus — the "Jesuits" — approved by Pope Paul III in 1540. For the rest of his life, besides his direct pastoral work, he organized a vast missionary network, undertook sensitive diplomatic tasks, and established colleges, universities, and charitable institutions. His writings include the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, and thousands of letters.

The *Exercises* are written as a manual for a spiritual director. Nevertheless, they instruct him to "permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord."^{5 4}

44 Canonized in 1228 by Pope Gregory IX.

45 Francis of Assisi: *Testament*

46 Francis of Assisi: *Testament*

47 Canonized in 1253 by Pope Alexander IV.

48 Pope Innocent III: *Letter to Clare*, written some time between November 30 1215 and July 16 1216.

49 Clare of Assisi: *Testament*

50 Hence the name "Poor Clares."

51 Beatified in 1874 by Pope Pius IX, canonized in 1989 by Pope John Paul II.

52 Beatified in 1609 by Pope Paul V, canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

53 Just south of the Pyrenees.

54 Ignatius of Loyola: *Spiritual Exercises*, "Introductory Observations," 15

Organized into "weeks," they comprise meditations and contemplations to rid the soul of unhealthy attachment to created things and discover the will of God, but first they purify the memory and the imagination so that decisions will be "uninfluenced by the flesh or any inordinate attachment."⁵⁵

They also give detailed instructions on how to pray the *purgative* way, the *illuminative* way, and the *unitive* way, including how to use time, weather, light, darkness, fasting, penance, posture, and recollection. (Ignatius knew the importance of religious emotion, as his *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Diary* show.)

Ignatian spirituality unites the soul's interior life with the Church's liturgical, sacramental life, especially through Confession and frequent Mass and Communion.

Salesian

The spirituality of St. Francis de Sales⁵⁶ (1567-1622) and St. Jane Frances de Chantal⁵⁷ (1572-1641) is embodied in Francis's *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1609) and *Treatise on the Love of God* (1616).

Born at the castle of Sales in Savoy Italy, Francis was a brilliant student of law, theology, and philosophy, but gave up his prospects to become a priest. He was ordained in 1593 and in 1602 made Bishop of Geneva in Calvinist⁵⁸ Switzerland, where he worked as spiritual director, writer, preacher, correspondent, reformer, and advocate of lay devotion. He was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1877 and made patron of the Catholic press by Pope Pius XI in 1923.

Jane, born into a noble family in Dijon France, married the Baron Christophe de Chantal in 1592. When her husband died in 1601, she made a vow of continence.⁵⁹

In 1610, Francis and Jane co-founded the religious community of the Visitation of Holy Mary for women unable to endure the severe asceticism of other religious orders. Their original plan was that it be an unenclosed community of women devoted to visiting the poor.

The motto of this community — "Live Jesus!" — is found at the head of all Jane's letters and throughout Francis' writings. We can "live Jesus" in any circumstances. For example, Francis said that the purpose of his *Introduction to the Devout Life* was to instruct those who live ordinary lives in towns, within families, or at court.⁶⁰

Francis says that we live not only by *God's signified will*, "the counsels He desires us to follow,"⁶¹ but also by *the will of God's good pleasure*, "which is known to us by events."⁶² In other words, God directs us not only by the Commandments, but also by the circumstances and opportunities of our daily life.

We should serve Him with "devotion"; that is, a "spiritual activity and liveliness" which "causes us to work briskly and lovingly" in "performing as many good works as possible," whether commanded or merely inspired.⁶³

Francis notes that Jesus lived out His union with His Father among people: as an advocate for the marginalized, an agent of reconciliation, and a compassionate presence. When Jesus died, Francis says, He "knew all of us by name and by surname."⁶⁴ We should "live Jesus," then, in human relationships, remaining detached from our own expectations and respecting each person's liberty.

Jane and Francis manifested the gentle Jesus: Jane in her governance and

55 Ignatius of Loyola: *Spiritual Exercises*, 172

56 Beatified in 1661, canonized in 1665 by Pope Alexander VII.

57 Beatified in 1751 by Pope Benedict XIV, canonized in 1767 by Pope Clement XIII.

58 See the talk on "Divisions Among Christians."

59 Complete abstinence from all sexual activity.

60 Francis de Sales: *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Author's Preface

61 Francis de Sales: *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book VIII, III

62 Francis de Sales: *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book IX, I

63 "Even as a man just recovering from illness walks only so far as he is obliged to go, with a slow and weary step, so the converted sinner journeys along as far as God commands him, but slowly and wearily, until he attains a true spirit of devotion, and then, like a sound man, he not only gets along, but he runs and leaps in the way of God's commands, and hastens gladly along the paths of heavenly counsels and inspirations" (Francis de Sales: *Introduction to the Devout Life*, Part I, I).

64 Francis de Sales: *Treatise on the Love of God*, Book I, II

spiritual direction of her sisters, and Francis in a number of episodes which earned him the title "the gentleman saint."⁶⁵

The Visitation Order was the only order Francis and Jane founded.⁶⁶ However, their spirituality inspired a number of others: the Salesians of St. John Bosco, the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales, and the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales, all founded in the 19th century.

Lay⁶⁷ movements

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) stressed lay spirituality.

Calling the Church the whole People of God,⁶⁸ it said that through their Baptism, lay people share in "the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ"⁶⁹ and are "called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity."⁷⁰

Lay people are not entitled to "shirk" their "earthly responsibilities" on the grounds that their eternal destiny is in Heaven, it said. Nor must they "immerse" themselves in "earthly activities" as if "religion were nothing more than the fulfilment of acts of worship and the observance of a few moral obligations."⁷¹

Rather, they must imitate Christ, "Who worked as a Craftsman," and carry out "their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific, and technological enterprises with religious values."⁷²

In fact, it said, "the effort to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community" is "so much the duty and responsibility of the laity that it can never be properly performed by others."⁷³

As a result, the Council sparked a number of spiritual movements among lay Catholics. The Vatican has formally approved about 120 of them.

a) Catholic Christian Outreach

CCO helps university students live the Catholic faith fully. Founded in 1988 by André and Angèle Regnier in Saskatoon, it became an incorporated non-profit organization in 1992. Its headquarters moved to Ottawa in 2006.

Beginning with four missionaries at the University of Saskatchewan, CCO now comprises over 100 missionaries at universities across Canada from Victoria to Newfoundland. In BC, it is present at UBC,⁷⁴ SFU,⁷⁵ and UVic.⁷⁶

CCO organizes an annual Christmas conference called "Rise Up" and an annual mission called "Impact," which gathers students from across Canada for a summer of missionary work in one city. They live in community and work as teams in parishes, leading faith studies, organizing retreats, etc. "Impact" also features a weekly event called "Cornerstone," a "Courageous Catholic" program, and a monthly "Summit" that includes worship, Eucharistic adoration, and Reconciliation.

b) Charismatic Movement

Just as on the first Pentecost there was an extraordinary descent of the Holy Spirit,⁷⁷ so today there is a similar effusion of spiritual gifts, or "charisms."⁷⁸

They are clearly perceptible in personally felt experiences of the Holy Spirit's presence; in preternatural⁷⁹ gifts like those described in the Bible (e.g. prophecy,

65 Leigh Hunt: *London Journal*, Wednesday February 4 1835

66 Francis wanted to found a community of priests, but died before he could do so.

67 "Lay people" are those who are not ordained or specially consecrated.

68 See Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 9.

69 Vatican II: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2

70 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 40

71 Vatican II: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 13

72 Vatican II: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 13

73 Vatican II: *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 13

74 Since 2008.

75 Since 1998.

76 Since 2014.

77 Acts 2:1-12

78 From the Greek *charismata* ("gifts of grace"): extraordinary, transitory, gratuitous blessings conferred directly for others' good and indirectly for the possessor's (John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Charisms").

speaking in tongues,⁸⁰ and healing); and in strong impulses to communicate these blessings to others.

The only obstacle to this charismatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit is our own timidity: a fear that He cannot do today what He did in the time of the apostles.

Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis have all spoken in favour of this movement.

c) Couples for Christ

CFC was founded by 16 couples in 1981 in the Philippines. Through informal weekly discussions, it helps couples and their families form interpersonal relationships with Jesus Christ.

Starting in 1993, it extended its ministry to "Kids for Christ," "Youth for Christ," "Singles for Christ," "Handmaids of the Lord," and "Servants of the Lord."

Now present in almost 200 countries, CFC was approved by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 1996 and by the Vatican in 2000. Pope Francis invited its leaders to the Extraordinary Synod on the Family in 2014.

d) Community of San Egidio

This community began in Rome in 1968 when Andrea Riccardi and other students and young professionals accepted a local priest's challenge to live like the early disciples: gathering for prayer and meals and practising the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.⁸¹ (Its name comes from the Church of San Egidio, which housed it starting in 1973.)

The community now includes tens of thousands of members in almost 100 countries. The Vatican recognized it in 1986.

Its activities include:

- top-level peacemaking efforts.⁸²
- an annual follow-up to the summit of world religious leaders in Assisi Italy, called by Pope John Paul II in 1986;
- running soup kitchens in Rome;
- social services for Rome's homeless, elderly, and immigrant populations.⁸³

The organization was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1994, 1995, and 2002; formally recognized by the New York City Council in 2000; and awarded the World Methodist Peace Award in 1997, the Niwano Peace Prize and UNESCO's Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize in 1999, the Balzan Prize and the International Peacemaking Award from Common Ground in 2004, the International Charlemagne Prize in 2009, the Chirac Foundation Award for conflict prevention in 2010, the Golden Doves for Peace Award in 2016, the Interfaith Centre of New York's founder's award in 2017, and the Zayed Prize for Human Fraternity in 2023.

e) Focolare Movement

In 1943, Chiara Lubich (1920-2008) and a few friends in Trent Italy founded the Focolare⁸⁴ Movement in order to focus their lives on the Gospel.

The movement now has hundreds of thousands of committed members and over two million associates in almost 200 countries. It stresses obedience to the Church and adherence to Focolare's statutes, approved by the Vatican in 1990.

79 Not strictly supernatural, but beyond the natural, either because God uses natural forces to produce effects beyond their native capacity, or because angelic or demonic forces are active in the world of space and time (see John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Preternatural").

80 See Acts 2:1-12; 1 Cor 14.

81 The Corporal Works of Mercy are to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbour the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. The Spiritual Works of Mercy are to convert the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, and pray for the living and the dead.

82 The community is credited with success in Sudan, Burundi, the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Mozambique (where they helped end a 16-year civil war), Algeria, and Guatemala (where they helped end the civil war in 1996).

83 They include a free annual guidebook entitled *Where to Eat, Sleep, and Wash* and a free Christmas dinner in a large Rome church.

84 Italian for "hearth" or "fireplace."

Many thousands of Focolarini⁸⁵ have made promises of celibacy and live together in single-sex houses. Over two thousand married members actively share their community and prayer life and contribute to their support.

Other branches of the movement are the tens of thousands of volunteers who share the Focolare ideals; the "Gen," or Focolare youth; the thousands of diocesan priests who serve Focolare communities; New Families, which meet for prayer and support; and New Humanity, which promotes peace, dialogue, and social change.

f) Neocatechumenal Way

The Neocatechumenal Way was formed in Madrid in 1964 by Kiko Arguello and Carmen Hernandez and its statutes received papal approval in 2008.

Based on the catechumenate⁸⁶ of the early Church, it offers post-baptismal education to Catholic adults in small, parish-based communities with about one million members worldwide. It also runs some 100 seminaries, including one in Toronto, one in Québec City, and one at Blessed Sacrament Parish in Vancouver.

g) Opus Dei⁸⁷

St. Jose Maria Escriva de Balaguer⁸⁸ (1902-1975), who founded Opus Dei⁸⁹ in 1928, was born in Barbastro Spain and ordained a priest in 1925. In 1946 he moved to Rome, where he lived the rest of his life.

Opus Dei, which received Vatican approval in 1943, has centres in about 300 dioceses worldwide. Its 75,000 lay members are guided by 1,350 priest-members. Pope John Paul II made it a personal prelature⁹⁰ in 1982, but in 2022 Pope Francis moved it to the Vatican Congregation (now "Dicastery") for the Clergy.

Members stress "unity of life" — living one's faith throughout the day — through the "sanctification of work" — doing one's best and offering all work to God, thus making it a never-ending prayer. Opus Dei claims that its members walk into a church building and walk out of it for the same reason — to get closer to God.

Discernment

Throughout Christian history, holy people have handed on their personal charisms to their followers.⁹¹ "There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God Who accomplishes all of them in everyone."⁹²

However, in 1992, Archbishop Adam Exner OMI of Vancouver warned that spiritual gifts must be carefully "discerned," with the help of wise and prudent spiritual directors, pastors, bishops, and the Christian community.⁹³

"The fact that someone has a strong subjective inspiration and conviction does not automatically mean that it comes from the Holy Spirit," he said. "All of us are subject to the influence of both the good Spirit and the bad spirit. That is why St. John says, 'Put the spirits to a test to see if they belong to God, because many false prophets have appeared in the world.'"⁹⁴

85 Members of Focolare.

86 Pre-baptismal instruction.

87 The fictional thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, which features *Opus Dei*, incorporates many anti-Catholic ideas, such as 1) Jesus was not God, 2) Jesus and Mary Magdalene had a daughter whose descendants the Church has often assassinated, and 3) the Bible was put together by a pagan Roman emperor.

88 Beatified in 1992, canonized in 2001 by Pope John Paul II.

89 Latin for "God's work."

90 An ecclesiastical entity established by the Pope, like a diocese or a religious order. Opus Dei is the only one to date.

91 CCC 2684

92 1 Cor 12:4-6. "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives faith; by the same Spirit another is given the gift of healing, and still another miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them to each as He wills" (1 Cor 12:7-11).

93 "With the conclusion of the apostolic Revelation, manifestations of prophetic gifts must be judged with reference to Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium" (*Our Sunday Visitor Catholic Encyclopedia*).

94 1 Jn 4:1

"Transformation by the Holy Spirit" shows itself in three ways, he said: a deeper "appropriation" of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, a deeper appreciation of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist, and a new zeal for evangelization.⁹⁵

Pope John Paul II said that "the Spirit's gifts are to be accepted with thanksgiving,"⁹⁶ but "judgement about their genuineness and their ordered use belongs to those who preside over the Church."⁹⁷ In fact, he said, the ability to make such judgements *is itself a gift of the Holy Spirit*, given in various degrees to those who are ordained: bishops, priests, and deacons.⁹⁸

An example of such a judgement⁹⁹ is the 52-page document published February 3 2003 by a "Working Group on New Religious Movements" from the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, entitled *Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life: a Christian Reflection on the "New Age."*¹⁰⁰ It shows clearly that "New Age" is *NOT* Catholic.

"New Age" leads people astray

Today there is great interest in "the importance of man's spiritual dimension and its integration with the whole of life, the search for life's meaning, the link between human beings and the rest of creation, the desire for personal and social transformation, and the rejection of a rationalistic and materialistic view of humanity."¹⁰¹

However, instead of turning to the Catholic Church for the truth, people are turning to "ancient gnostic ideas under the guise of the New Age. We cannot delude ourselves that this will lead toward a renewal of religion."¹⁰²

Gnosticism¹⁰³ is "the theory of salvation by knowledge."¹⁰⁴ As early as the first century, Gnostics — disciples of pre-Christian pantheistic¹⁰⁵ sects¹⁰⁶ — "claimed to know the mysteries of the universe."

Gnosticism has sometimes taken "the form of a philosophical movement," but, more often, "the characteristics of a religion or para-religion" in conflict with "all that is essentially Christian."¹⁰⁷ For example, it rejects divine Revelation¹⁰⁸ and

95 That is, the spreading of the Gospel.

96 "Referring to the variety of gifts which have their origin in the one Spirit, St. Paul makes it clear that all are given 'for the common good' (see 1 Cor 12:4-7). Among these spiritual gifts, Paul himself gives preference to the charisms which contribute to the building up of the Church (see 1 Cor 14:12), of which the greatest is love. Among the charisms which foster the fullness of the spiritual life, those which are expressed in the various forms of consecrated life are especially important, because they reveal the infinite power of the Holy Spirit at work in bringing the members of the Church to the perfection of charity. Indeed, the Spirit's gifts can be recognized in all who strive to live the Gospel according to their own state of life" (Pope John Paul II: General Audience, February 27 1991).

97 Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium*, 12

98 "Because the Church's hierarchical structure is itself the work of the Holy Spirit, and all who are ordained have received 'the gift of God ... through the laying on of hands' (2 Tim 1:6), it is incorrect to contrast charisms and hierarchical ministries in the Church. All who exercise official ministry and offices in the Church are endowed with the necessary spiritual gifts... Just as there is a charism of Peter, we can also speak of charisms proper to bishops, priests, and deacons. In the end, the Church's faith itself is the gift of the Spirit, for, as St. Paul points out (1 Cor 12:3), 'no one can say "Jesus is the Lord" except by the Holy Spirit'" (Pope John Paul II: General Audience, February 27 1991).

99 Actually, a "provisional report" (Foreword).

100 See the talk on "The First Three Commandments," Appendix 4.

101 Vatican Working Group on New Religious Movements: *Jesus Christ, the Bearer of the Water of Life: a Christian Reflection on the "New Age,"* Foreword. See the talk on "The First Three Commandments," Appendix 4.

102 Pope John Paul II: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, "Buddha?"

103 From the Greek *gnosis* ("knowledge"). The word is used especially for spiritual knowledge.

104 John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Gnosticism."

105 From the Greek *pan* ("all") plus *theos* ("God"): the belief that all things are divine, or that God and the universe are identical, or that there is no real distinction between God and the world (see John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Pantheism.")

106 They "borrowed what suited their purpose from the Gospels, wrote new gospels of their own, and in general proposed a dualistic system of belief. Matter was said to be hostile to spirit, and the universe was held to be a deprivation of the Deity" (John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Gnosticism".)

107 Pope John Paul II: *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, "Buddha?"

108 See the talk on "Divine Revelation."

denies that the Church has the authority to interpret it.¹⁰⁹

The desire for God is written in our hearts.¹¹⁰ God has made us for Himself, and our heart is restless until it rests in Him.¹¹¹ In the West, for a few centuries, Satan has tried to calm this restlessness with material goods and the power of technology. But, for many people, he has failed. That is why, today, we see a resurgence of spiritual restlessness and hunger.

And Satan is ready with a new untruth,¹¹² better suited to today; it even borrows language from Christianity, but its meaning is profoundly untrue.¹¹³

Christ warned us. "False messiahs and false prophets will appear, performing signs and wonders so great as to mislead even the chosen, if that were possible," He said. "Remember, I have told you all about it beforehand."¹¹⁴

Conclusion

"When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continuously sanctify the Church."¹¹⁵

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit endowed the Church with various "hierarchic and charismatic gifts" so that she might make disciples of all nations.¹¹⁶ To this day, it is through these gifts that the Holy Spirit directs the Church.

Accordingly, there are "many dwelling places"¹¹⁷ in the Father's house. However, there is only one Way there, namely Jesus: "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."¹¹⁸ No one comes to the Father except through Him.¹¹⁹

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109 See John Hardon: *Modern Catholic Dictionary*, "Gnosticism."

110 If we forget, overlook, or even reject God, it is through fear, ignorance, or indifference; in revolt against the evil in the world; because we are distracted by cares and riches or irreligious currents of thought; or because we are repelled by the bad example of believers (see CCC 29).

111 See CCC 30.

112 Satan "has never based himself on truth; the truth is not in him. Lying speech is his native tongue; he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44).

113 "A thing might be a spirit and not good for you," Ransom warns, and Weston says, "I thought you religious people were all out for spirituality.... Don't you worship [God] because He is pure spirit?" "Good heavens, no!" Ransom replies. "There's nothing specially fine about simply being a spirit. The devil is a spirit" (C.S. Lewis: *Peregrandra*, 7).

114 Mt 24:24-25

115 CCC 767

116 See CCC 768; Mt 28:19.

117 Jn 14:2

118 Jn 14:2-5

119 See Jn 14:2-5.

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