

# *My Father's House*

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## **Introduction**

### **The Holy Father's Pastoral Plan**

Pope John Paul II, on the very day that he closed the Holy Year Door, January 6, 2001, issued a brand new document entitled *Tertio Millennio Ineunte* (As We Enter the Third Millennium). In this magnificent apostolic letter, the Holy Father gave his pastoral plan for the whole Church in the new millennium and emphasized seven pastoral priorities for each and every Catholic. It was the first time in recorded history that any Holy Father has done such.

His seven pastoral priorities are:

1. Holiness
2. Prayer as a reciprocal conversation with God
3. The centrality of the Eucharist in Catholic belief and practice
4. Frequent confession
5. To live by grace and by the Spirit
6. Frequent meditation on the Scriptures and the New Catechism
7. The new evangelization

Then on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, 2002, he issued another apostolic letter on the rosary. In this, he added an eighth pastoral priority, namely the frequent recitation of the rosary. Then, on Holy Thursday, April 7, 2003, he issued his 14<sup>th</sup> encyclical on the Eucharist summing up everything he encouraged in the Eucharist. He began by saying, "The Church draws her very life from the Eucharist", the very first sentence of the encyclical from which it draws its name (*Ecclesia De Eucharista*). He went on to say, "The Eucharist recapitulates the heart of the Church and is the deepest fulfillment of Our Lord's promise, 'Behold, I am with you always'." He further states, "The Holy Eucharist contains the Church's entire spiritual wealth. It is the summit of Catholic devotion."

### **The Incarnate Presence of Christ in the Church**

He encourages all of us to engage constantly toward the Lord present in the sacrament of the altar to discover the full manifestation of his boundless wisdom, love and power. He sums up the essence of his new vision in Section 6 where he states,

"I would like to rekindle this Eucharistic "amazement" by the present Encyclical Letter, in continuity with the Jubilee heritage which I have left to the Church in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* and its Marian crowning, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*. To contemplate the face of Christ, and to contemplate it with Mary, is the "program" which I have set before the Church at the dawn of the third millennium, summoning her to put out into the deep on the sea of history with the enthusiasm of the new evangelization. To contemplate Christ involves being able to recognize Him where He manifests Himself, in His many forms of presence, but above all in the living sacrament of His body and His blood. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by Him she is fed and by Him she is enlightened. The Eucharist is both a mystery of faith and a "mystery of light". Whenever the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the faithful can in some way relive the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: "Their eyes were opened and they recognized him" (*Lk 24:31*).

### **To See Thee More Clearly**

The Holy Father has stated that he wants to open up all our eyes to that amazement to those things that eyes have not seen nor have ears heard nor has it entered into the minds of men the glories and happiness that God has revealed in the Eucharist and in the Church. And that which we behold with our eyes we will learn to love.

### **To Love Thee More Dearly**

The Holy Father is asking the whole Church to renew the liturgy of the Mass to make it more present, operative, personal, and powerful in the lives of the faithful so that they will be filled with the very love of Christ for the Father

and for each other. He reminds us that as Christ is a man for others, that we receive, imitate, embrace and become. We as other Christs exist for God, for the Church and for others.

### **To Follow Thee More Nearly**

Thus filled with the Eucharistic presence of God's wisdom, love and power, we become lights to a dark and broken world. We become other Jesus' capable of continuing across our time and space the redemptive, healing, evangelizing work of Jesus. We become His hands, His eyes, His lips, His feet, His very body. We become apostles of truth, love and of action. We become participants accordingly in the Pope's new evangelization to bring Christ to every person and every strata of human endeavor, to bring Him into our courts, our offices, our working environments, our art, our sport, our homes, and our world. We become proclaimers in word and in deed that Christ, indeed, is risen and lives and reigns through us.

### **The Church's Greatest Doctor**

This present pope will go down in history as the Church's greatest doctor. From September 5<sup>th</sup> 1979 to November 28, 1984, he gave an extended catechesis on marriage, the family, celibacy, the theology of the body and human love in the divine plan. He also wrote an apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris Consortio* (November 22, 1981) on marriage and the family and wrote a Letter to Families on February 2, 1994.

### **God the Father**

Pope John Paul wrote an encyclical on God the Father, *Dives in Misericordia*, (Nov. 30, 1980). From January 16, 1985 to June 25, 1986, he gave an extended catechesis on God the Father including four on the fullness of the Father's revelation, 13 on revelation and faith, 12 on the existence and nature of God, 11 on the Trinity, nine on God as Creator, and nine on the Father's divine providence. And then during the Year of the Father, 1999, he gave another 28? teachings in his catechesis on God the Father. The greatest official doctor of God the Father that the Catholic Church has thus far produced is John Paul II.

### **The Angels**

He followed this catechesis with a short catechesis on angels from July 9, 1986 to August 20, 1986.

### **God the Son**

John Paul's first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, (Redeemer of Man, 1979) was on God the Son. From August 27, 1986 to April 19, 1989, he gave an extended catechesis on sin and our Redeemer, Christ. He added another 28 discourses during the Year of Christ, 1997, in preparation for the Jubilee Year. In every encyclical, allocution, letter, and homily, he centers us on Christ. The greatest Christological doctor that the Catholic Church has thus far produced, is, of course, John Paul II.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

John Paul II wrote an entire encyclical on the Holy Spirit, *The Lord and Giver of Life* issued on Pentecost, May 18, 1986 – the Pope's birthday. Shortly after that, he gave seven reflections on the gifts of the Spirit in 1989. He also gave an extended 80-part catechesis on the Holy Spirit from April 26, 1989 to July 3, 1991. Then, he gave continuous teachings during the Year of the Spirit, 1998, in preparation for the new millennium; and gave another discourse on the Holy Spirit on each Pentecost culminating on Pentecost 1998 with a magnificent talk to a half million charismatics in St. Peter's Square in which he stated,

“Whenever the Spirit intervenes, He leaves people astonished. He brings about events of amazing newness; He radically changes persons and history. This was the unforgettable experience of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council during which, under the guidance of the same Spirit, the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements: “it is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the people, leads them and enriches them with His virtues. Allotting His gifts as He wills (cf. *I Cor* 12:11), He also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank ... He makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, n 12).

### **The Church**

The Holy Father also gave an extended catechesis on the Church. It contains the series of his catecheses on the article: “I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” The series contains 137 catecheses given between

July 10, 1991, and August 30, 1995. Included in these talks were 37 homilies on the nature and mystery of the Church in the plan of God, including one on April 8, 1992 on the Eucharist as the source of the Church's life. He gave eight talks on the theology of bishops, eleven on the theology of the papacy, 18 on the theology of priests, three on the theology of deacons, 27 on the theology of the lay apostolate, 19 on the theology of consecrated life, 16 on the missionary activity of the Church and ecumenism. He is the greatest modern doctor on ecclesiology.

### **Mary**

Pope John Paul II is the greatest modern Marian pope. His entire pontificate is devoted to Mary and his coat of arms is *Totus Tuus* (Totally Yours). He wrote an encyclical on March 25, 1987, the Feast of the Annunciation, entitled Mother of the Redeemer (*Redemptoris Mater*). He then gave a 70-part catechesis on Mary from September 6, 1995 to November 12, 1997 emphasizing that Mary, in addition to being our mother, mediatrix, and messenger is also a perfect realization of the Church's holiness and its model. He stressed her unique role in salvation history as mother of us all. He ends every apostolic letter, homily, constitution or encyclical by reflecting on Mary.

### **The Trinity**

During the Jubilee Year 2000, he gave a whole series of talks on the Trinity. This was after completing three years of preparation by giving an entire series of talk in 1997 on the Son, in 1998 on the Spirit and in 1999 on the Father. He sees the Trinity as the familiar model for the Church. Since God is above all family, what God is above all doing on earth is creating family His way. Since God is holy and one, he is creating one, holy family. And since God loves everyone, he is creating one, holy, catholic, apostolic family for all nations. He stresses that all life, all holiness comes from the Father through the Son by the working of the Holy Spirit.

### **The Eucharist**

He followed these talks with nine talks on the Eucharist that are reprinted in their entirety in this book, stressing the centrality of the Eucharist in salvation history and God's work in transforming us into other Christs so that we with unveiled faces can reflect like mirrors the brightness of the Son of God who is our glory. The more we receive Him, the more we will become like Him. The more we worship Him, the more He fills us with His Spirit. He stresses that the greatest way to worship the Father in spirit and in truth is in and through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

### **Prayers of the Liturgy**

He is now giving an extensive catechesis on the prayers, psalms and canticles of the Liturgy of the Office stressing the importance of prayer in his life and in our lives and in the life of the Church.

### **To Priests**

In addition to his 18 talks in his catechesis to priests contained within the catechesis on the Church, he writes a special letter to his priests on Holy Thursday and has issued an apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, I Will Give You Shepherds on March 25, 1992.

### **Encyclicals**

This encyclical on the Eucharist is his 14<sup>th</sup>. He wrote one on the Father (1980); one on the Son (1979); one on the Spirit (1986); three on social issues--on work (1981), on solicitude for social concerns in 1987 and one on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the first social encyclical of Leo XIII in 1991; one on Mary (1987); two on moral issues—the Gospel of Life (1995) and the Splendor of the Truth (1993), one on the mission of the Redeemer (1990), one on ecumenism (1995), one on faith and reason (1998), and one on the apostles of the Slavic people in 1985.

### **To Set Out Into the Deep**

Now the Holy Father is issuing a new call to set out into the deep, which is his rallying cry taken from the words of Jesus to His own apostles: "to cast out into the deep" (*Duc in Altum*). Father Frank Anderson from Australia has written a song that captures the feeling of this great pope:

*"So I leave my boats behind, leave them on familiar shores, set my heart upon the deep, follow you again, my Lord."*  
This is the battle cry for the new millennium – to be more deeply involved with the Father's plan, to be more deeply immersed in Eucharistic awareness, to be more deeply committed to the missionary activity of the Church, to be more deeply imbued with the Spirit of Christ.

Towards that end, the Holy Father has given his seven powerful but practical priorities centering them all upon the Eucharist. He is asking for Eucharistic adoration in every church throughout the world for he has apprehended a tremendous spiritual principle, namely that the more you sow unto the heavens, the more God will sow unto the earth. That is, the more you worship and praise God, the more you will come into His glory, His divine presence. The more you enter His presence, the stronger will be the anointing of the Spirit upon you. And the stronger the anointing, the more wisdom, love and power you will have to transform the world in the image and likeness of Christ, until that eschatological day when every knee will bend before Jesus and proclaim to the Father that Jesus Christ is Lord.