

Part Three
THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- 704 Part three of the Catechism presents the life and action of the Christian as a new person in Christ in light of Divine Revelation and on the basis of the Eastern Christian tradition. God the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit grants a person new life. That person is called to mature to the fullness of this new life. A Christian discovers, develops, and expresses this divine gift through good works.
- 705 The gift of divine life, which a person receives in the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments), grants one the ability required to lead a Christian life according to the grace that has been received. To live in Christ means to act in him and with him. This gift of divine life acts in the Christian as the Gospel's "leaven of the kingdom of heaven," capable of transfiguring contemporary culture and society (see Mt 13:33). This transfiguring reality of Christian life is examined in this part of the Catechism in four dimensions: person, family, society, and creation.
- 706 The first dimension of being and acting in Christ (Chapters I—II) relates to the personal, interior life of a Christian. This interior life of a person who is born of water and the spirit is built on fundamental principles of the spiritual and ascetic life. The foundation of Christian morality and of the rules and principles of Christian conduct is the activity that transfigures a person from within. It is the foundation of the "unseen warfare" with one's own sins and of growth in the virtues.
- 707 The second dimension of a Christian life (Chapter III) transfigured by the Holy Spirit is the Christian family. The Christian family is the environment that safeguards the dignity of the beginning of a person's earthly life, and the dignity of the end of that life. The gift of Divine Love, granted to a man and a woman in the Mysteries of Christian Initiation and Marriage, makes them capable of realizing God's plan regarding the purpose of human sexuality and respect for the dignity of the human person. This respect encompasses all stages of human life, beginning with conception and ending with natural death.
- 708 Human society (Chapter IV) is the third dimension of the new life and action of one who believes in Christ. Society and the state are seen as the dough, which Christians—the evangelical leaven—are called to elevate and transfigure (see Lk 13:20-21). Christ's Church is the embryonic beginning of the kingdom of God and that transfiguring power for humanity. Through the Church's unity, holiness, universality, and apostolic service, that power is present and active in the life of human society. It illumines with the light of Christ every person who comes into this world.