

fully trusting in him. This is because we realize that he always grants us what we need (see Lk 12:30).

821 At times it may seem that God does not fulfil our supplications, however, even then we must persevere in prayer. Prayer transfigures the one who prays, makes them steadfast in doing good, teaches them about what they truly need, and makes them open to God's will. In persistent prayer, the Lord teaches us to grow from asking that he do our will to accepting his will: "Your will be done" (Mt 6:10). Saint John Chrysostom encourages steadfast prayer: "If you are heard praying, continue to give thanks in the prayer; if you are not heard, remain praying so that you may be heard... God protects you with the pretext of need so that you may converse with him more closely and devote yourself to prayer."⁵¹²

F. Asceticism that Enlightens

1. Obedience to the Will of God

(God's Law as a Calling to True Freedom)

822 In the history of salvation, the Lord calls humankind to participation in his eternal life. To this end he makes a covenant with Israel, and subsequently, through the blood of his Only-Begotten Son, he enters into a new and eternal covenant with his People. In accepting this covenant, a person fulfils God's will and keeps his Law. The psalmist sings: "If your law had not been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts; for by them you have given me life" (Ps 118[119]:92-93).

823 Out of love for us, the Lord reveals to us his Law as the "path of life" (see Ps 15[16]:11). We are called to walk along this path which leads from the slavery of sin to the freedom of God's children. This paschal character of God's Law indicates the goal and substance of the Christian calling. Therefore, God's Law in no way contradicts human freedom; rather, it grants freedom through the grace of the Holy Spirit: "The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. With my open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments" (Ps 118[119]:130-131).

824 Saint John Chrysostom notes that God's will, which the Lord has revealed in the moral law, is humanity's supported and the measure of moral judgments:

⁵¹² JOHN CHRYSOSTOM *Homilies of Repentance* 3,4:PG 49, 297

Consider that the judging faculty of the soul is disordered. Just as a balance, if its beam be unsteady, moves round, and does not show accurately the weight of things placed in it; so the soul, if it has not the beam of its own thoughts fixed, and firmly riveted to the law of God, being carried round and drawn down, will not be able to judge aright of its actions.⁵¹³

825 Jesus Christ taught his disciples to pray to the Father: "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt 6:10). In explaining these words, Saint Cyprian notes: "We who desire to abide forever should do the will of God, who is everlasting. Now that is the will of God which Christ both did and taught ... [To do the will of God] is to desire to be fellow-heirs with Christ (see Rom 8:17); this is to do the commandment of God; this is to fulfil the will of the Father."⁵¹⁴

2. Spiritual Fatherhood / Motherhood

826 In his ministry, a spiritual father (or mother) is called to lead his spiritual children on the path of holiness. In addition to the proclamation of God's Word, and the sanctification of people by grace in the Holy Mysteries, spiritual direction is one of the important forms of the Church's ministry as regards our salvation. This fatherhood or motherhood consists of caring for people's spiritual growth. It provides direction during their entire journey of Christian living.

827 Spiritual fatherhood/motherhood in the Church flows from the life of the Most Holy Trinity. In the Most Holy Trinity, the Father is the source of the begetting of the Son and the proceeding of the Holy Spirit. The Father grants us eternal life through his Only-Begotten Son in the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Christian, born in the bosom of the Church "from above" (see Jn 3:7) "of water and the Spirit" (see Jn 3:5), is called to transmit divine life through preaching and witness. This is emphasized by the apostle to the Gentiles writing to the Corinthians: "For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15).

828 In spiritual direction, individuals with greater spiritual experience direct the less experienced along the path of their spiritual perfection. Spiritual direction is accomplished by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who inspires the guide and enlightens the disciple. Therefore, in spiritual direction one is led in the ways of God and is taught to listen to the Lord's voice

⁵¹³ JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Second Timothy*, 5, 19: PG 62, 627.

⁵¹⁴ CYFRJAN OF CARTHAGE, *On the Lord's Prayer*, 14-17: PL 4, 528-529.