

and live according to his commands. With the help of the spiritual father/mother's counsel, a spiritual child makes a choice enlightened by a calling from God. This calling determines the kind of service that one will render with his or her life. It also discloses and enfleshes God's plan for daily living.

829 The primary goal of spiritual fatherhood/motherhood is to facilitate the perfecting of a person, so that they may achieve the holiness to which God is calling them. This, in fact, is the shared goal of both disciple and teacher. Therefore, spiritual direction takes place in the context of sincere friendship between spiritual father/mother and son/daughter. In the spiritual tradition of the Fathers of the Church, the point is to have a divine friendship in an atmosphere where both teacher and disciple ascend to the heights of divinization and mature to a divine fullness of life in the Holy Spirit.<sup>515</sup>

830 The spiritual father/mother performs his or her service with the blessing of the Church. This blessing is given to people called by God to lead others to holiness. They have personal experience in the spiritual life, A Christian freely chooses a spiritual director as a guide on the common road of salvation, travelling together in a spirit of friendship and trust. The experience of the spiritual father/mother allows him or her to recognize the gifts of God's grace and to propose concrete ways for the person to grow spiritually. In parish life, spiritual direction is exercised primarily, though not exclusively, in holy Confession.

*Pour out on them your rich mercy.*

*(Anaphora of the Liturgy of saint Basil the Great)*

### **3. Virtues as Indications of Divinization**

831 The apostle Paul teaches that the Gospel is the power of God granted one who believes; the power by which the righteous one lives (see Rom 1:16-17). The apostle Paul calls this power of God a "virtue," pointing to the interior possibilities of a person renewed in Christ and his or her capacity for good (see Phil 4:8-9). Through virtue, a person becomes capable of living and acting in Christ.

832 The Holy Fathers believed that virtue is a capacity placed in the human soul. It is a source of one's natural strengths, which develop and are perfected in cooperation with God's grace. Virtue is the power and capacity of a person, created in God's image, to become like God and attain deification.<sup>516</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> See ORIGEN, *Against Celsus*, 111,28: PG 11, 955-956.

<sup>516</sup> See GREGORY OF NYSSA, *On the Beatitudes, Homily 1*: PG 44, 1193.

#### **4. Life in Faith, Hope and Love** **(The First, Second, and third Commandments)**

##### *a. Faith—the Foundation of Christian Life*

- 833 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky teaches: "As heaven is far from the earth, so far is the unbeliever from the believer ... who has a living and strong faith. Only this kind of faith gives eternal life, only this kind of faith saves (see Jas 2:14-16), such faith alone leads from death to life, only such faith alone grants the 'power to become children of God' (Jn 1:12)."<sup>517</sup>
- 834 Faith is an openness of the entire person to the action of the Holy Spirit and a personal union with the risen Christ. Unlike non-Christian attempts to achieve perfection which relies on human power alone, Christianity proclaims a new, genuine foundation for human holiness and righteousness, which is faith in Jesus Christ.
- 835 Faith gives birth to a new creation in the Holy Mystery of Baptism (see 2 Cor 5:17). Whoever believes in Christ puts off the old self and puts on the new (see Eph 4:22-24). The apostle Paul describes life in faith as the life of Christ in us and our life in Christ (see Gal 2:20-21; Phil 1:21).
- 836 Faith lies at the foundation of Christian morality. It is the beginning of a virtuous life and virtuous action. Faith is, first of all, a divine gift received in Baptism; it is a great spiritual force given to us. It is also our vocation. Faith grants us knowledge of God and of things unseen (see Heb 11:1). It precedes hope and love since they are tied to the Truth, which can be perceived only through faith. One could say that it places Truth into the core of the human person.<sup>518</sup>
- 837 Through the virtue of faith, one becomes capable of keeping the first three of the Ten Commandments. Faith opens us to God and joins us inwardly with the Creator and Saviour. It is precisely by faith that we become capable of worshipping the One God in Spirit and Truth. True faith excludes the worship of any other gods, as well as fortune-telling, superstition, and magic. These violate the first Commandment: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7).
- 838 Biblical tradition teaches that the righteous person lives by faith (see Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Phil 3:9; Heb 10:38). Living by faith

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<sup>517</sup> METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *Божья мудрость [The Wisdom of God]* (1932- 1933).

<sup>518</sup> See MAXIMAS THE CONFESSOR, *Letters: PG 91, 364ff.*