

*Remember, O Lord, those who have brought these gifts,  
and those for whom, through whom,  
and on behalf of whom they have brought them...  
those who love us, those who hate us...  
And remember all your people, O Lord our God.  
Be all things to all people  
O you who know each one and their request, each household, and its needs.  
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

#### **IV. SOCIETY TRANSFIGURED IN THE CHURCH (THE FIFTH, SEVENTH, EIGHTH, AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD)**

##### **A. The Christian View of the World and the Preaching of the Gospel**

911 The Church of Christ as the people of God, united in the Holy Spirit, exercises its ministry at all times and in every nation. "[A]mid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God," she walks through history, in order to "reveal to the world" the mystery of the risen Christ.<sup>555</sup>

912 The world and society are the place of interaction between the human person and God. The mission of the Church and the matters of the world intersect, but do not blend in confusion. The Church recognizes the value of temporal things and their meaning in human life, therefore in her service she assists people in their earthly matters.

913 At the centre of the Church's attention is the human person and his or her activities that possess social, political, and spiritual dimensions. Human action is seen in the light of the transfiguration of the world and Christ's salvific mission. For "Christ is now at work in human hearts through the energy of his Holy Spirit, arousing not only a desire for the age to come, but by that very fact animating, purifying, and strengthening those noble longings too by which the human family makes its life more human."<sup>556</sup>

914 The Christian perception of the world derives from gratitude to God for the gift of the world. This gratitude generates an openness to the world and to earthly matters, and brings to light their spiritual dimen-

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<sup>555</sup> See VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Lumen gentium* [Light of the Nations], 8.

<sup>556</sup> VATICAN COUNCIL II, Constitution *Gaudium et spes* [The Church in the Modern World], 38.

sion. Through our activity and love for work, we are linked to God's own artistry and wisdom, making creation and the cosmos—already wisely arranged by the Father—even more beautiful.<sup>557</sup>

- 915 Christian life in the world is the Christian's response in faith to a call from God. This call also embraces the Christian's attitude towards the world and to participation in society. Christians discover their place in the world and their life's vocation in the light of faith, which spurs them toward concrete action.
- 916 The Christian is a leaven in the world, as suggested by the Gospel (see Mt 13:33). Herein lies the Christian's true vocation: to be active in the world, witnessing to Christ everywhere. By his or her activity in the world, the Christian, as a new person in Christ, participates in the realization of God's plan, whose culmination will be a new heaven and a new earth (see Rev 21:1).
- 917 The Church, in proclaiming the Gospel and fulfilling her salvific mission, facilitates the ordering of human life in society. She strengthens the foundation of social life through her teaching and pastoral work.

## **B. The Church as the Model for the Human Community—'The Moral Principles Guiding the Social Order**

### **1. Unity in Diversity (and the Principle of the Common Good)**

- 918 The Church—the icon of the Most Holy Trinity—leads humanity into the experience of communion with God, and grows as a community of persons in the Holy Spirit. The unique experience of the Church is that a person can be himself or herself (that is, a person) only in communion with other persons. Just as the unity of Christ's Church always exists in diversity, so the communion of persons in the Church does not diminish the uniqueness of the individual; on the contrary, it is a guarantee of one's development and of the preservation of one's identity. Therefore, this kind of communion of persons is actually their common good.
- 919 In a (secularized) society segregated from the Church, the human person is viewed either as a self-sufficient individual closed off from others, or as a member of a collective deprived of freedom—a "means" required for the existence of social institutions. In the first case, the individual places his or her own interests ahead of those of society, and in the

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<sup>557</sup> See IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Against Heresies*, V, 32, 2: PG 7,1210-1211.