PILGRIMS OF FAITH AND WITNESSES TO THE RISEN CHRIST

THE ARCHBISHOP OF SANTIAGO’S PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE COMPOSTELLAN HOLY YEAR 2010

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“And rising up that very hour, they returned to Jerusalem, where they found the Eleven gathered together and those who were with them, saying “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon”. And they themselves began to relate what had happened on the journey, and how they recognised him in the breaking of the bread”. (Luke 24, 33-35)
Introduction

1. The Second Compostellan Holy Year of the Third Millennium

Each year pilgrims in ever-greater numbers are making their way to the tomb of the Apostle St. James the Great. The pilgrimage is, among other realities, an allegory of the Church as people of God, travelling towards the “citizenship of the saints”. In the Holy Year 1999 I sought to accompany pilgrims in their spiritual reflections with the pastoral letter Pilgrims in Spirit and in Truth and in 2004 with another entitled Pilgrims through Grace. In this second Compostellan Holy Year of the Third Christian Millenium that we will celebrate in 2010, I would like to call to mind the story of the disciples of Emmaus that tells us of their encounter with the risen Christ. From his tomb the Apostle St. James, the “friend of the Lord”, also transmits to us the message that Christ lives, and that therefore the pilgrim should bear witness to this, in the knowledge that the...
Lord’s friendship guarantees the fruitfulness of the mission of Christian life: Jesus said to his apostles “I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you... and have appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” (John 15, 15-16). I am with you on pilgrimage, I offer this reflection from a position of faith with the awareness that the Lord also comes to meet us, enlightening us with his presence and his word, and freeing us from all fear.

2. The Good News of the Holy Year

With this hope, giving thanks for the privilege conceded to the archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela by the Church that is “the greatest and oldest known, founded and established in Rome by the glorious apostles Peter and Paul”, I announce the celebration of the second Jacobean Holy Year of the Third Millennium to the members of my archdiocese and its sister dioceses of Spain, of Europe and other continents, inviting them to come as pilgrims to the tomb of the Apostle to bear witness to faith in the Risen Christ, and to receive in abundance the divine mercy that is the manifestation of God’s love for humankind. It is an occasion of grace which we wish to celebrate and share with all other dioceses, taking care, first of all, that the meaning of the Camino de Santiago as a way of forgiveness is not devalued for reasons that have nothing to do with its spiritual content and energy; secondly, that the pilgrimage to Santiago that is undertaken “for penitential reasons” (taking a hard look at the ways we have fallen short, at how we have forgiven the offences of others, at our life of prayer, almsgiving and humility) is lived with a spirit of conversion; and thirdly, that the Holy Year may help us to revitalize our Christian life as a vocation to sanctity and hence to eternity, asking the Lord - through the intercession of the Apostle St. James, “...the Baron for whose sake Galicia’s shrine on earth is visited...” - that in pilgrims’ encounter with apostolic tradition, a joyful purpose, hope may fill their hearts.

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1 Cf. ST. JOHN CHRYSTOSTOM, Homily 2 on the devil of temptation, 6: PG 49,263-264.
2 To us then moved a light, leaving that sphere Whence, answering my Lady’s prayer, had sped The very first of Christ’s own vicars here... And Beatrice, with joyous rapture, said: ‘Behold! See now the Baron for whose sake Galicia’s shrine on earth is visited!... Then Beatrice said, smiling in happiness, ‘Illustrious life, who in the world didst write Of our High Court and of its bounteousness, Make sound the name of hope throughout this height, For oft thou wert her symbol when of yore Upon His throne Our Lord shed greater light. Lift up thy head and thyself reassure;...’”. “Hope”, I began, “is certainty of bliss To come, which God by grace to us concedes And for our previous merit promises. From many stars this light to me proceeds, But he who first instilled it in my heart In praising God all songs of praise exceeds...” THE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI THE FLORENTINE, Cantica III, II Paradiso. Tr. Dorothy L. Sayers and Barbara Reynolds. Canto XXV, lines 13-18, 28-34, 67-72. London 1962, 274-276.
3. The Road to Emmaus and the Way of St. James

To live with the awareness of being pilgrims is not to be confined by the narrow margin of our own limited aspirations. “To follow the Camino is to open channels to mystery, to the infinite, to God, in the proximity of one’s own interior being. The pilgrim’s great discovery is to come to understand that in the essence of one’s own being, in the daily round of contact with the cosmos and with those one meets on the Camino, there is God’s dwelling-place, and that this presence draws one into harmony with the whole symphony of humanity.” The pilgrim knows the secrets of the spiritual life of the Camino, discovering with St. John of the Cross that “in order to go to what you do not know, you must go by a way you do not know.”

It will undoubtedly be helpful for the pilgrim to Santiago to recall the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The pilgrimage is a spiritual event that can bring the non-believer to accept the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, or revitalise the faith of the believer, in the knowledge that the stones of difficulty are not converted into the bread of easy success in the desert of life. “To be a pilgrim is to discover that the human person is being made co-citizen of a city superior to any earthly one: the reality hoped for, of which it is possible to have a foretaste on earth.”

Thus, the Camino de Santiago is an auspicious situation for the person on pilgrimage in spirit and in truth to enter into dialogue with God; it is a symbol that helps the pilgrim to sense that he or she is created by God and liberated by Christ; and it is an experience in which a person learns to give and to receive, putting off “having” for “being”. This experience is badly needed by those who, having abandoned their faith, have become estranged from the Church and protect themselves with a false sense of security; they are the prisoners of disappointment, scepticism and weariness, without being aware of the spiritual sickness that is affecting them. It may be that their longings have not been realised, and it is difficult for them to understand, much less accept, God’s plan in their lives.

4. The Lord on the road and at the journey’s end

The Lord, as with the disciples to Emmaus, comes to meet pilgrims in their doubts and uncertainties, although recognizing him may only come about through coming to understand his Word and participating in the Eucharist. The pilgrimage is a good time for the pilgrim to beg him to stay: metaphorically speaking, to shelter him inwardly, in the form of the gift of faith. This longing to shelter Him only finds an explanation in

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5 E. ROMERO POSE, Raíces..., 198.
love. Conversion, which illuminates our blindness so that we can exercise discernment in relation to ourselves, is a result of the reception of the Good News, the object of which is interior freedom. This is shown in the change of attitude in the person imitating Christ, to whom God the Father in the Transfiguration (to which Peter, James and John were witnesses) ordered us to listen: “This is my beloved Son; hear him” (Luke 9, 35). It is an itinerary that leads us to enter into our own lives from the perspective of personal ministry.

5. The Return to Jerusalem

After having recognised the Risen One, the disciples arose and left Emmaus, and returned to Jerusalem. This demonstrates to us that mankind needs to encounter Christ in order to become self-aware, having as a reference point the Church that proclaims Him, and faith in Him. To the community in Jerusalem those who had returned from Emmaus offered the testimony of their experience. To bear witness does not consist of setting oneself up as an example to be imitated, given that this is an honour we should give only to Christ, but rather, in making clear to others how divine goodness and mercy have taken effect in our lives, in proclaiming the Lord’s greatness, and rejoicing in God our Saviour. To live in this way is to feel impelled never to put distance between ourselves and God, who “does not oppress our life, but elevates it and makes it great: it is made great precisely, then, by the splendour of God…. Mankind is great only if God is great. With Mary we must begin to understand that this is so. We must not set ourselves apart from God, but make God present, make God great in our lives; thus we too shall be divine; we shall have all the splendour of human dignity”⁶. Every experience of God, being for his glory, is valid and assists spiritual edification, since “man cannot be reduced merely to his own life, nor is he limited to his own destiny”⁷. The pilgrim must therefore proclaim together with Mary: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour” (Luke 1, 47).

⁶BENEDICT XVI, Homily on the Assumption of Mary in the parish of St. Thomas of Villanueva, Castelgandolfo, 2005.
...When the pilgrim returns home, to family, house, parish and job, it is beneficial if those around him perceive the active presence of the love of God the Father, which will undoubtedly have been experienced in the course of pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle...

6. The Christian pilgrim and the pilgrims to Emmaus

This pastoral reflection takes as its starting point the Gospel narrative about the “pilgrims to Emmaus”, accompanied by the “pilgrim par excellence, Jesus Christ” (Luke 24, 13-35). Like them, Christians - whom Christ accompanies until the end of time - are called to be witnesses to his resurrection. In that story it is clear that faith in the resurrection did not emanate from religious enthusiasm, but rather, was based on events, from the persuasive power of which the disciples could not break free, despite their initial scepticism. In the context of the events surrounding Easter one can see that doubt is not a reason for the weakness of a realistic faith in the resurrection, but a positive argument for an aware and tested faith. “Neither the disciples nor the apostles were prepared to accept the resurrection. Proof of it had to gain ground from doubt, and from the
most obstinate resistance of human nature. They were the ones who most resisted giving credit to what they were told. One might say that they had resolved to go on being wretched, refusing to investigate the possibility of the truth the matter might have held. With the aim of contrasting credulity in human affairs with the lack of it in relation to God, and the willingness to believe in speculations with the unwillingness to believe in practical realities that is characteristic of lazy thinkers, we are offered this story (Luke 24, 13-35), the importance of which is relevant to the message of the resurrection. In this passage the actual event takes on the significance that the Risen One appears to the disciples in his entire physical reality.

7. The attitude of watchful hope

The disciples to Emmaus on their pilgrimage road did not recognise him, which leads us to presuppose that the physicality of the Risen One is a "mystery", that it cannot be made more comprehensible solely through the senses or the eyes. In order to grasp the apparition of the Risen One, and thus to perceive the Easter message, one's eyes must be opened - that is to say, one must have the illumination of faith. "It is not they who see him, in as much as he is invisible, since he belongs to another sphere of reality, but rather God who permits him to be seen. The Risen One seen by those to whom he appeared is a gift of God in a double sense: in as much as he is a reality exceeding theirs, and in as much as he is seen. God creates the object (the resurrected Jesus) and the organ (the newly opened eyes of those who see him). In this sense, and only in this sense, can it be said that the resurrection is the conversion of the apostles, who turned to Jesus, recognising the truth of him, the legitimacy of his claim, and the universal applicability of his plan. Acceptance of the apparition, as the reality of the resurrection, was preceded by singular conditions and activities: on one hand, by the hearing and understanding of the Word of God; by the grasp of the meaning of salvation and the significance of the historical event that was Christ; and on the other, and by no means less importantly, by the ecclesial community implied by the breaking of bread. Whoever understands these actions can recognise the Risen Lord in the apparition, and through the apparitions believe in the resurrection. For this reason, faith in the Risen One presupposes the previous acceptance of the importance and greatness of Christ. These aspects are shown in the faith, specifically in the resurrection, of the "pilgrims to Emmaus", who experience the encounter with the Risen Lord in his appearance to them. Jesus fosters in them an openness to watchful hope and in this they are capable of understanding the encounter with him for what it is, and of arriving at faith in the resurrection. On the quality of the personal encounter with him depended the quality of each pilgrim's return to his fellow-disciples and role within the community.

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8. “And you yourselves are witnesses of these things”

In the story referred to, much emphasis is placed on the “veracity” of the resurrection of Jesus. This is the reason why the words “It is true” are added to the confessional formula: “the Lord is risen and has appeared to Simon” (Luke 24, 34). It is opportune to recall the last instructions which the Master gave the disciples, telling them: These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me.” Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it is written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again from the dead on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24, 44-47). With these teachings he explained his resurrection to them from the Scriptures and made them witnesses to it: “And you yourselves are witnesses of these things” (Luke 24, 48).

9. Faith in God alone

The believer is called to build upon God alone and to follow Christ on his way to the cross: “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9, 23). Jesus himself had also said: “And if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself” (John 9, 32), showing us the aim of gathering together in a new community those who were isolated and divided. The internal nexus of this movement of unity is the indivisible union between the love of God and love of neighbour, as Jesus emphasised in the reply given to one of the Pharisees who asked him which was the chief commandment of the Law: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22, 37-39). Adhesion to Jesus was not based, then, on a spontaneous instinct of a people or group, but rather demanded a personal decision in favour of him, which he expressed as: “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters” (Matt. 12, 30).

10. The Easter community and the Risen One

The movement of union, as a defining reality promoted by Jesus provoked at the same time the coming together of those who did not accept his message. “He came unto his own, and his own received him not” (John 1, 11). Those who were opposed to the One sent by God made common cause in rejection: The conspiracy against him brought him to the cross and dispersed his followers. The union of enemies was shown to be apparently stronger than the reconciling message

Acts 4, 24-27: “Lord, it is thou... who didst say by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of our father David, thy servant, “Why did the Gentiles rage and the peoples plan vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers assembled together against the Lord and his Christ”.
of God revealed in Christ; none the less, the Easter experience aroused in those who had scattered a new movement of unity with a different spirit to that of the pre-Paschal community. The Risen One was no longer a simple external reference on which all were agreed, but rather, was through faith experienced as present by each of those who followed him. The reason for the unity is found in the intimate convictions of the apostles, since the communion among them did not derive from an external factor that brought them together, but from their participation in Christ, whose death "seen since the resurrection in its true sense, is the gift that the Father gives to humankind so that we may share in his life." Unity is now not an additional "extra", but an intimate reality, to which there is a corresponding external link. Faith in the resurrection is not directed towards a past event or a reality lying sometime in the future. Christian faith is only authentic if it springs from a participation in the presence of the Risen One himself. In this sense, such presence cannot be transmitted by anything said externally, and it occurs in such depth that no person can acquire it though simple reflection. A postolic witness, then, is necessary. Only with its help and with its light is it possible to distinguish in one's interior being the difference between subjective appraisal and the presence of the Risen One. Conscious encounter with him is only possible through the witness of others in relation to the grace given according to the measure of Christ's gift, who "gave some men as apostles, and some as prophets, others again as evangelists, and others as pastors and teachers, in order to perfect the saints for a work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph.4, 7-13). Faith springs wholly from apostolic communion and promotes a new experience of communion.

11. Apostolic spirit and witness

The communion of faith takes its life from the internal unity of the Spirit and from the outward bond created by apostolic witness. This double structure is suited to the human condition, which none the less can give rise to new misunderstandings. True communion of faith has its rationale in the internal unity in the Spirit, from which, through apostolic witness (doctrine and ministry) it receives its force. In a practical and non-theoretical way this process is recognised if the believers have a degree of freedom to grow slowly in the knowledge of apostolic witness, starting from their own inward experience. If, on the contrary, the ecclesial community were to try only to create a simple external unity by means of doctrine and discipline, it would rob true communion of its value. On the other hand, the desire or presumption of wanting to live solely in the unity of the Spirit would land us in a pious illusion, and faith would become the ideology of a group and the instrument of its self-preservation.

12. The identity of the Christian faith

For the Christian it is a responsibility to maintain the identity of his or her faith. The conviction of possessing the truth emanating from
God must not lead either to the sense of being part of an elite or to collective presumption. This temptation can produce difficulties in relationship and dialogue with non-Christians. Today the tendency to blur the distinctions between religions is also a risk. In the face of this, Christianity as a revealed religion can maintain an authentic relationship with other religions and with those professing differing concepts of the world not by superficial show or by shamefully hiding its own identity, but rather, through a true understanding of its sublime mission, based not on some human knowledge acquired exclusively by the believer, but on the Risen One's own participation in it. The expression of personal faith is the point of departure and first step in establishing a frank and vital dialogue.

13. The apostles, witnesses to the resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus, more than the signs and miracles carried out to authenticate his word, took place to proclaim that his word was truly within the designs of God and that through it, the will of the Father who had sent his Son into the world, not to condemn it, but to save it (cf. John 3, 16), might be fulfilled. This is the reason why the first Christian communities, in the freshness of their faith illuminated wholly by the Easter experience, centred their prayer and way of life on the events of death and resurrection. In their preaching, the apostles presented themselves first and foremost as witnesses of the resurrection. In this way, their own witness and through it, that of the Church, was based on that of Jesus himself and that of the Father. Their aim was to lead their listeners to the finality posed by the events of Easter, so that they could see in them the only perfect witness - that which the Son rendered to the Father by giving up his life, and that which the Father rendered to the Son by giving it back to him - through the mediation of the Holy Spirit, which became part of the life of every believer.

14. The basis for hope lies in the power of God

In the same way, since the resurrection, light has been projected towards the consummation of the world and of humankind, as St. Paul made clear when he wrote: “For this corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality. But when this mortal clothes shall put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’” (I Cor.15, 53-57). Some modern thinkers have tried hard to transmit to people a hope in the future based on science and progress, but “...man needs God, otherwise he remains without hope” and “man can never be redeemed simply from outside.”² Without the

²BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter on Christian hope. Spes Salvi, 23.25
resurrection of Jesus such hope is vague and without content. The affirmation that “Christian hope knows that it hopes, but it does not know what it hopes for” is apposite here. It is hardly necessary to say that a hope without content is a contradiction. Only faith in the bodily resurrection of Christ eliminates the contradiction. Such a faith sees prefigured in the Risen One what will happen to all the faithful in the full and definitive accomplishment of salvation: the overcoming of death, the transfiguration of the body, the entry into the glory that surrounds the Father. In the resurrection of Jesus our hope finds its definitive basis, solidly anchored, because that hope is not a dream, a mythical story or an archaic desire; it is an act given credit by witnesses worthy of faith: “...who ate and drank with him after he had risen from the dead” (Acts 10, 41). Our hope, then, is founded on things that happened: “...the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known - it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life”.

15. The jacobean pilgrim’s commitment

The commitment of the pilgrim to the tomb of him who was the first among the apostles to spill his blood to fertilise the Church has to be understood - like that of the pilgrims to Emmaus - in the context of witness to the events of Easter, and has to be enacted in the totality of his or her life. If the entire life of the pilgrim is explained wholly “within the paschal sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus”, how will he or she not keep in mind this mysterious reality, and take it deeply to heart? “Through the communication of his Spirit to his brothers, gathered from all the peoples, Christ makes them into his mystical body. For that reason we are integrated into the mysteries of his life... we unite ourselves to his sufferings as the body is united to the head. We suffer with him in order to be glorified with him”. Thus, we must model ourselves upon him, Head of the Body that is the Church, until his glorious coming, living in the hope of being one day with him eternally and of attaining the fullness of his glorification.

Through all this, with Jesus and “in Jesus”, the pilgrim is first of all a witness through his condition as a pilgrim. His own life proclaims aloud to the world the power of the love of God for him, feeling himself redeemed if he assumes the commitment of giving to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ the reply expected of him, and of living it with fidelity to the Gospel and to the seed of the resurrection deposited in him though Baptism. From this point of view, what is important is less his words than his witness.

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B. BULTMANN, Die christliche Hoffnung und das Problem der Entmythologisierung, Stuttgart 1954, 58.
BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical letter on Christian hope: Spes Salvi, 2.
16. The active presence of the love of God the Father, in its two dimensions

When the pilgrim returns home, to family, house, parish and job, it is beneficial if those around him perceive the active presence of the love of God the Father, which will undoubtedly have been experienced in the course of pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle. The reflection of this attitude can be compared with a description of the way of life of the first Christians when it was asserted that: “They love all, and are persecuted by all…. They are poor and make many others rich; they suffer scarcity of everything and, notwithstanding, also have everything in abundance”.

This love has a double dimension. In its descending dimension, the pilgrim in his or her ordinary surroundings has to live as one saved, or put another way, as a person filled with the mercy and faithfulness of God. Participation in the resurrection of the Lord, acquired through Baptism and thought about during the rite of pilgrimage, reawakens the sense of being the adoptive child of the Father. This filial experience should shine out in daily life. In its ascending dimension, the pilgrim should bear witness not only to being immersed in the love of God, but also to the dynamic power of this love. Jesus said: “As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love….”

Greater love than this no-one has, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do the things I command you” (John 15, 9-10, 13-14). The presence of the love of God the Father in his children is shown in their giving of their lives for others, given that “love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God.” From this awareness the pilgrim proclaims the truth of the Gospel if he or she lives in conformity with the teachings of Jesus, serving thus as a channel and instrument of the love of God, given that the Gospel is easily understood by the way Christians behave. On seeing how they act, “how they love one another”, others see them giving testimony to their faith in the risen Christ. The believer, by the mere fact of being one, is a witness to personal faith. If this faith is not demonstrated publicly, the believer has not yet attained maturity. A private faith is a weak faith, or perhaps a hidden lack of belief. Today we often hear: “I'm a believer but I don't practice”. There is no faith without witness: “I believed, and so I spoke; we also believed, wherefore we also speak” (2 Cor. 4, 13); “for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4, 20).

Letter to Diognetus, 5.

...Silence is where the Word can be heard, and the pilgrim should meditate on this along the road of pilgrimage just as the disciples did on the road to Emmaus. In the Word of God we find the way to reveal the meanings of different human experiences in the desire for goodness and truth, so as to bring these together in a coherent way...

17. Stages on the way of faith

In describing the way of faith we refer to three stages: the life of Jesus before the events of Easter, his suffering and death, and his living presence as the Risen One. We know that Jesus did not present us with a list of abstract truths, but enacted a path and assumed his destiny according to the design of God the Father, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, faith is not some timeless act through which timeless abstract truths are accepted. “Faith makes us taste in advance the light of the beatific vision, the goal of our journey here below”\(^V\). It is something that comes about, and the believer, like the pilgrim who takes to the road, enacts stages of his pilgrimage until he reaches the goal. One does not attain faith, the gift of God, once and for

\(^V\) CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH (CCC), London 1994, 163.
all. “To live, grow and persevere in the faith until the end we must nourish it with the Word of God; we must beg the Lord to increase our faith (cf. Mark 9, 24; Luke 17,5; 22,32); it must be ‘working through charity’ (Gal. 5,6; John 2,14-26, abounding in hope, and rooted in the faith of the Church” in its theological structure, faith is a way, a road. God did not act only once, but was operating within a history: “God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world” (Heb. 1, 1-2). Notwithstanding the actions of the Lord, the stages on the way of faith to which we are referring are only three landmarks within a more extensive history that is the history of salvation.

18. Patiently attending to the workings of the Holy Spirit

The believer feels personally motivated to undertake a similar path, in which God does not operate in him only at one specific moment. Keeping this in mind is especially important when - as in this case - one is trying to elucidate a fascinating dimension of the Christian faith. Nothing would be more distressing than the idea that the believer had to adopt a special state of self-consciousness. In such an attitude the products of creativity would be converted into idols and presented as Christian truths. On the contrary, faith can only grow in the course of long and patient attention to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Impatient striving only causes the person’s own will to prevail, in such a way that the believer remains a prisoner of his or her own mode of behaviour and loses the capacity to attend to the mysterious action of God. The strength of faith is shown in the serene confidence that tomorrow also, and the next day, and ever after, the novelty of the mystery of Christ our Saviour can continue to be experienced.

19. Believing in community

Although faith is a personal action “as a free response to the initiative of a God who reveals himself”, and no-one can believe through another, there is a sense in which it is an “isolated” act. Faith supposes the conversion of the human person, as Jesus requested it at the beginning of his preaching: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1, 15), but it is never merely a personal matter. “No-one can believe alone, just as no-one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith, as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others” (CCC, 166). The Creed formulated by the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. says “We believe”, which is the same as saying that the Christian is not alone in living his or her faith.

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\[\text{CCC, 162.}\]
No-one comes to faith in solitary, but in the midst of the community of believers. It is likely that each person receives the witness of faith from those he or she lives with. The Fathers of the Church also called the Creed Symbol. The Greek term symbolon is related to the verb symbállein, the various meanings of which always refer to “putting together” or “meeting together”. Originally, the term indicated the act of persons who met or came together to make or stipulate agreements. In the course of such meetings, distinctive terms characteristic of their contracts were also agreed. The symbol or creed of faith is the gathering together around a single faith and the agreement that the Christian community makes about the identity proper to itself, the identity that characterises it. It is the formulation of the faith held in common. Faith is, then, a way to follow, a way to live that others transmit to us through the generations, ensuring that we feel ourselves pilgrims here on earth and desire the heavenly realm. It opens us to an understanding of the world, of others and ourselves. In it our existence takes on sense and purpose, and we accept the Christian message as meaning for our lives at the same time as we affirm that Christianity is our pathway, as we decide in favour of this mode of looking at the world and human reality.  

20. The origin of faith in the power of God

The assent to faith is the spiritual act in which the human person experiences the most elevated reality, in which illumination is received in order to “know the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4, 6). In addition to being an act that is personal and made in full awareness, by its nature it is something different to knowledge of things. This peculiarity appears in the simple scene at Caesarea Philippi, in which Jesus, in the face of Peter's declaration concerning him as the Messiah and his divine sonship, says: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven” (Matt. 16, 17). Peter's confession of faith did not proceed from the logic of human reason, but from what was revealed to him by the Father. The nucleus of our faith is the divinity of Jesus Christ, the defining proclamation that the barque of the Church has to carry to the farthest corners of the earth. Faith has its origin, not in human knowledge, but in the power of God - that is, in his grace. In faith, the capacity for knowledge is taken to its utmost and raised to the same degree that God as the “object” of knowledge transcends all other such objects. This supernatural knowledge makes reference to him. For this reason, faith is the response to the invitation that God, moved by his love, makes to us in order to communicate with us and receive us into his company. Fundamentally, this does
not mean the acknowledgment of an objective truth, but an encounter with a living “you”, an encounter that takes place in the self-giving, in the obedience and in the loving elevation of the human “I” to communion with God. It is thus first and foremost a personal correspondence, in which the human person recognises God the Father through the mediation of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, submits to him with all his capacities, and makes an act of total self-giving. This brings us to consider faith as a word that has effects, in which the God of revelation communicates himself to the human being, created in his image and likeness, and this in turn responds fittingly and humanly with total self-giving.

21. Faith as an act involving the whole person

In the history of theological reflection, much has been spoken and written as to whether faith is an act of understanding or of the will. Some, in accordance with St. Thomas Aquinas, have considered that faith was primarily an act of understanding, so that faith is determined above all by belief in the truth of something. Others, taking the line of Protestant thought, have seen faith more as a sentiment or feeling, an opinion that also found its way into some Catholic circles, and become more noticeable in today’s climate of emphasis on personal experience. In the face of these one-sided views, we can say that faith is a human act, an act involving the whole person according to doctrine, based on sacred Scripture and on the Church’s magisterium. “It is not just a single act of understanding that considers certain truths of faith, nor a sole decision of the will, still less a sentiment empty of content. In the act of faith, all the potentialities of the soul converge: understanding, will and emotion. The act of faith is an existential attitude that takes in everything, that embraces all the capacities of the human person: understanding, will and feeling. Faith means to find one’s affirmation in God, to merge one’s whole existence in God.” In this context, the words of the then professor Joseph Ratzinger, commenting on the passage in the Confessions of St. Augustine that discusses the conversion of the Platonist Marius Victorinus, are most illuminating: “He had understood that Christianity is not a system of knowledge, but a way. The believers’ “We” is not a secondary addition for small minds; in a certain sense it is the matter itself - the community with one’s fellowmen is a reality that lies on a different plane from that of the mere “idea”. If Platonism provides an idea of the truth, Christian belief offers truth as a way, and only by becoming a way has it become man’s truth. Truth as mere perception, as mere idea, remains bereft of force; it only becomes man’s truth as a way that makes a claim upon him, that he can and must tread.” This day by day experience of pilgrimage is lived and made manifest by pilgrims.

\[\text{W. KASPER}, \text{La fe que excede todo conocimiento, Santander 1988, 59.}\]
\[\text{J. RATZINGER}, \text{Introduction to Christianity, 99-100.}\]
22. God’s encounter with humankind in the course of history

Faith is not a servile offering to an unknown God, but rather, attends eagerly to his Word, given to us through history and above all, through Jesus Christ, in whom we encounter the truth about God and humankind. It is not, therefore, to trust in something undefined and unknown, but to acknowledge and admit the truth; this is an attitude that leads to knowledge and does not marginalise science, since the authentic believer does not renounce thought, and has to be ever-prepared to give a full account of the faith he holds and how it has been put into effect. The ideal is not an uninformed faith, but a faith that is informed and instructed. To explain it means to ask oneself what the content proper to it is and what the features characteristic of it are. The believer, within the bounds of powers and possibilities, has to show, in the forum of human reason, that this faith is reasonable and believable. Today, some Christians do not even know the fundamental truths of the Christian faith; in many cases the content of faith has been reduced to a surprising and worrying level, since a faith lacking or empty of content would be a faith without consistency or object, in the double meaning of the word; it would quickly evaporate and would be in danger of blending, to the point of becoming unrecognizable, with other positions, movements, ideologies and utopian modes of thought.

23. Act of faith and content of faith

“Believing’ is a human act, conscious and free, corresponding to the dignity of the human person” adhering with the intelligence and the will to the Revelation that God has made of himself through his works and words. “The believer’s act [of faith] does not terminate in the propositions, but in the realities [which they express]. Nonetheless we approach these realities with the help of formulations of faith. These permit us to express and transmit the faith, to celebrate...
it in community, to assimilate it and draw upon it ever more ardently. It must be kept in mind, however, that making the content of faith absolute transforms the way the faith is handed down and presented into indoctrination. “Faith” is always and at the same time an act of faith and the content of faith, or doctrine. This is only expressed in the vital and practical realisation that, having “faith” as the point of reference, is at the same time sustained and animated by it. The act of faith and the content of faith constitute an indivisible whole inasmuch as the believer's self-giving to God is total: to a God who reveals himself in word and deed, and as the compendium of the one and the other, in Jesus Christ, the content of faith and faithful witness to it.

24. The attitude of supplication and faith in abundance

The encounter in faith warms the heart, as the “pilgrims to Emmaus” experienced, and demonstrated this when they said: “Was not our heart burning within us while he was speaking on the road and explaining to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24, 32). Following this experience they understood their own lives and history itself in a new manner. After the conversation on the road, on reaching their destination and with “recognition” of the Risen One about to take place, their words and actions became an invitation to Jesus that were really an urgent plea: “Stay with us, for it is getting towards evening, and the day is now far spent” (Luke 24, 29). This is a prayer, fruit of a journey of faith that finds its culmination in the definitive and eternal encounter with God, seeing him face to face. Faith in God is in itself a certain foretaste of this culmination: in faith mankind now takes to the road towards God, to cling to him with love as did Abraham. A sure way to this experience of faith is prayer. Regrettably, one of the deficiencies most often found in the life of faith is the lack of religious experience originating in prayer. This is the way pilgrims to Santiago express it.

25. The Messiah in the light of Scripture

The lack of understanding of the death of Jesus on the part of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is a clear manifestation of a weak faith in which hope was insufficiently present. The words directed to them by the risen Jesus not only sought to demonstrate that he was the Messiah, but also what the Messiah was like. To do this, he had recourse to sacred Scripture. The reference to Moses and the prophets indicated that God's promises were fulfilled in the destiny of Jesus. The logical consequence and realisation of these promises revealed the will of God, his intentions in history and the ways of salvation. What to men seemed absurd and what these disciples did not grasp had its hidden meaning in the designs of God: “Did not the Christ have to suffer these
things before entering into his glory?” (Luke 24, 26). It is the reading, in faith, of history - which is never neutral.

Silence is where the Word can be heard, and the pilgrim should meditate on this along the road of pilgrimage just as the disciples did on the road to Emmaus. In the Word of God we find the way to reveal the meanings of different human experiences in the desire for goodness and truth, so as to bring these together in a coherent way, the news of the resurrection appearing as God’s seal upon a design of salvation and not as a strange and unexpected event. We feel ourselves interpreted by, and understood through, the divine Word, which is the mirror into which the person who seeks God, truth and the meaning of life must look; the mirror for those trying to escape the desperation and fear that beset them when they find themselves without ideals, and that lead them into momentarily exciting situations that later result only in emptiness.

26. The “recognition” of Jesus in the Eucharist

Jesus accepts the invitation of the pilgrims to Emmaus to dine with them, and succeeds in renewing their communitarian life. The expressions used in the course of the meal hark back to the institution of the Eucharist: “...he took the bread and blessed and broke and began handing it to them” (Luke 24, 30). The occasion of the Last Supper understandably comes to mind. The “recognition” of Jesus on the part of these disciples is extremely closely connected with the celebration of the Eucharist, the gift of Jesus. What they had been missing up to now, and what had not taken place during the conversation along the road, was any personal encounter with the Risen One. Now their eyes were opened and they “recognised” him. There is then a real knowledge that demands of the human person a total participation. However important and decisive knowledge of the scriptures may be, this alone did not bring about the “recognition” of the Risen Christ, although it was the final and best preparation for doing so. In a word, only the acceptance of the witness of scripture and the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist make it possible, always emphasising that this transmits, in a special manner, the experience of the real and true presence of the Lord. “The understanding of Scripture and the eucharistic Community engender, then, not only the knowledge that this unknown stranger is the Jesus sought for and who had been give up for lost, but rather also transmit a new manner in which he is present: the completely different presence of the Lord who, raised up to heaven, continues to exist in the midst of those who love him”. It is not we who go to the Lord, it is he who comes to us in the sacrament of the altar, accompanying us on our way. “In this sacrament, the Lord truly becomes food for us, to satisfy our hunger for truth and freedom. Since only the truth can make us free (cf. John 8, 32) Christ becomes for us the food of truth”. This sacrament is the greatest proof of

BENEDICT XVI, Post Synodal Exhortation on the Eucharist: Sacramentum Caritatis, 2.
love and “is the closest thing to eternal life that can be transmitted to us. Eternal life is going to be a continuation of this sacrament, insofar as God penetrates with his sweetness those who are to enjoy it”.

27. Pilgrims and the “breaking of bread”

The “eucharistic meal” celebrated around “he who is and who was, and who is to come” (Apoc.1, 8) is the eloquent sign that the community of life, interrupted, has been recommenced with an exceptional quality. The scene on the road to Emmaus is particularly transparent in this respect. It constitutes in some way the interface between the historical presence of Jesus in visible form, perceptible by all when he shared food with his disciples (including among such occasions the Last Supper), and his liturgical “sacramental” presence in the action of the “breaking of bread”, which rapidly became habitual among the Christian communities after the privileged period when he appeared to his followers. The transformation of the disciples and the recognition of Jesus took place through two signs: the Word of Scripture (on the road) and the breaking of bread (at table).

The story of Emmaus is a message of incalculable transcendence for modern doubts and perplexity in the face of the Easter mystery. It shows why and above all how one can believe, today too, in the Risen One. The Church itself cannot do more than create and nourish an appropriate ambience in which faith can develop by means of evangelisation through the Word contained in Scripture and by means of the celebration of the Eucharist, the memorial of Jesus Christ. This story justifies the reason why the Church, through the reconciling power of the Holy Spirit, is founded upon the Word of God and the Eucharist.

28. The reality of sin

The Christian concept of man as homo viator or pilgrim differs radically from that which presents the human person as forming part of a species that has gone as far as it can. The Christian faith conceives the person as someone open to Mystery. He or she is “above all a subject and a destiny; a complexity that has to be accepted in every aspect, past, present and future” and this future, although in a certain degree broadly sketched out, is not really foreseeable. Mankind’s condition is an unending question, an absolute astonishment in the face of reality, an indestructible hope. Question, astonishment and hope go to make up this moving figure that advances undaunted towards its destiny. In this way of looking at things, sin (which is “an offence against reason, truth and right conscience; a failure in genuine love for God and neighbour caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods”... that

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“wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity” and the ambiguities of existence can be understood not as failures without remedy in relation to the human project, but as ruptures and detours in the process towards maturity, which set mankind apart from God, its ultimate end and state of blessedness. All this means that the itinerary of faith cannot be far removed from the human pilgrimage that is marked by the reality of the experience of fault and guilt, and united to this, by the experience of sin.

29. Forgiveness as the loving acceptance of the person who has sinned

Among the claims made by Jesus, the one that most scandalised the Pharisees is that related by the evangelist St. John: “Which of you can convict me of sin?” (John 8, 46). Focussing on the essential point, the justice of Jesus consists essentially in the fact that in his life there was only ever a “yes”: “yes” to the love of God the Father, “yes” to the love of mankind, his brothers and sisters. This attitude of Jesus radically clarifies, on the contrary, the state of sin as one of being closed in or blocked, one of rupture in the relationship with God and others. Forgiveness, in the way Jesus presented it to us, is not the payment of a debt; but a genuine acceptance of the sinner with all that he or she is, and is shown in this light in the parable of the prodigal son (cf. Luke 15, 11-32). God loves us and every time we ignore or reject this reality, we deny our own condition as creatures, we become strangers to ourselves when we reject our place in the divine family and seek to become like God himself (cf. Gen. 3, 8). To escape this state of alienation there is no other way than to recognise that we are loved, to recognise God’s loving gaze upon us.

30. The sinner’s reconciliation

Christianity, which “is not primarily a religion of illustration, revelation or gnosis, but of salvation, sanctification and resurrection of the body” cannot be reduced to philanthropy, however generous that may be, since it implies as a special feature the realisation of a communion of humankind with the living God, manifested for all time in Jesus Christ. Conversion or pardon is therefore a radical change of heart on the part of the person who recognises the love that God has for him or her. In this conviction we stress highly the need and importance of the sacrament of Penance. We know very well that today explicit confession of one’s sins is not viewed positively and is not accepted by some members of the Christian community. It is here, precisely, where the most radical difficulties are encountered, which ensure that not a few Christians leave off receiving this sacrament. The most frequently repeated expression, that “I make my confession directly to God and that is enough for me”, highlights the possibility that there exists an increasing awareness

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33 CCC, 1849.

of sin, without feeling, for all that, the need to express it explicitly. Nonetheless, in the light of Catholic doctrine, this attitude is not sufficient. Sin as an offence against God breaks communion with him and acts against communion with the Church. What is at stake in the forgiveness of sins and in conversion is not just a growing awareness and the believer’s intimate relationship with God, but a reconciliation that must be carried out in the concrete historical circumstances of the believer, linked to other members of the people brought together by God that is the Church. This is not just a reality with two participants - God and oneself - but with three: God, others, and oneself. What is meant here is a process of reconciliation; it is not enough to feel sorry in order to be reconciled; it is still necessary that the person I have injured makes his forgiveness patent; neither is it enough to forgive: the person who has injured me has to show me that he has accepted my forgiveness. God’s forgiveness is personalised in me through the sacrament offered by the Church.

31. The ecclesial dimension of the sacrament of Penance

The reconciliation that God’s forgiveness implies, and reconciliation with the Church, are effected in the convergence of these two aspects and made visible through external signs. It is here that the explicit confession of sins comes in. This need not mean self-accusation before the mirror of one’s own conscience, but recognising in the presence of another that which one is. It is true that since the earliest witnesses of the Christian faith the remission of sins has not been the task of the person of the sinner but only of God, who bestows his grace through the act of conversion. But matters do not end here. The ecclesial dimension of penance is lacking, shown in the ancient forms of excommunication and reconciliation. Here it is clearly apparent that the person who sins does so not only in opposition to the reality of a transcendent God, but against the reality of Jesus Christ who continues to live in the Church. This ecclesiality of penance has been expressed even in the writings of Protestant authors. There is a singular meaning to this ecclesial aspect of the sacrament of Penance, since it takes its relevance from the rite of penance and not vice versa.

We can say definitely, then, that reading the Word of God and participation in Penitence and the Eucharist, as acknowledgment of the love of the risen Christ, are necessary aids during the pilgrimage to attain its end, since “the eucharist is the food of a pilgrim people.” The Word of God is a light for their footsteps and the sacrament of Penance is to accept the goodness and mercy of God in the midst of our fragility and the harsh climate of the world.

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36 “In the person of the brother to whom I confess my sin, and who pardons me, the whole community comes to meet me.” D. BONHOEFFER, Gemeinsames Leben. Munich, 1970, 13.

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...the jacobean pilgrim should bear witness to the human and spiritual experience lived on the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle St. James, the “burning bush” before which he has bared his soul to accept the forgiveness and grace of his encounter with God. On the pilgrimage road and at its end he will also have been able to perceive the witness of pilgrims of past ages...

32. The interior way of faith

“Time as the period of grace is first of all a possibility of eternal life for the human being on the pilgrimage of life. And so time may be always finite, with a beginning and an end, while being for the biblical mentality a time of salvation. The model is found in the limitation of the history of salvation by the creation and the Lord’s coming again: it is therefore a good idea to walk while there is light, so as not to be surprised when evening falls; he who walks in darkness knows not where he goes (cf. John 12, 35). A time of salvation with, in addition, a specific content: faith. Jesus own preaching was directed to it. It was the objective that Jesus sought in his listeners: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel’ (Mark 1, 15)”.

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the truth is an internal possibility of faith. This search belongs, then, to the condition of the person on pilgrimage towards God as a member of a community, since we are like drops of water in the great river running into his immense peace. In this sense faith is not an immovable and static position, but a way. There is not just a way leading to faith, but also a way of faith itself, that is, a growth or progress in faith, as St. Paul put it when he wrote: “We do not boast beyond our limits, in the labours of other men; but we hope, as your faith increases, greatly to enlarge through you the province allotted to us, so as even to preach the gospel in places that lie beyond you” (2 Cor. 10, 15). We carry on growing in the knowledge of God and in faith.

33. “To believe and confess the faith”

We are living through a time of intense secularisation within the Church, that manifests itself in “the weak transmission of the faith to younger generations; the disorientation affecting a good number of priests, religious and lay people; the decline in vocations to the priesthood and the institutes of consecrated life; the poverty of liturgical and sacramental life being experienced by not a few Christian communities; the appearance of new forms of theological and ecclesial dissent, and the scarcity of Catholics in public life”\(^\text{\scriptsize 38}\). We are in need not only of teachers but of witnesses to the faith. It is not enough to believe in Christ’s divinity, one must bear witness to it. A witness is someone “who has seen something and assures [others] of what has been seen; who makes a personal commitment through what has been seen and understood”. The witness which believers in Christ must give refers to his person, his power, his life, his ability to build a new humanity in which relationships must be ones of service, gratitude, friendship, generosity and availability. In advance of any project or idea, then, we are witnesses to a person: Christ our Saviour. And we give this witness with the power of the Holy Spirit: “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all who obey him” (Acts 5, 32). With certainty we announce the message of salvation, building upon the foundations laid by apostolic witness but also upon reference to the works of the Holy Spirit in the Church, which constitute its whole activity of faith, hope and charity prompted by the Holy Spirit.

In this way, the pilgrim of faith who has arrived ad limina beati Jacobi, who has listened to the Word of God, who has been reconciled with God through the sacrament of Penance, and who through participation in the Eucharist is conscious of looking forward in hope to eternal communion with the risen Jesus and the members of his Body, will not be able to contain the impulse or the joy of passing on this experience. Witness and confession form an essential part of faith, since “to the measure in which I bear witness, I also participate in the gospel; to the measure in which..."
lead others to God, I also lead myself. One only knows God to the measure in which one makes him known. Bearing witness to it is the best way of increasing faith itself. To believe is to confess the faith. Nonetheless, in today's world in which the attempt is being made to reduce faith to the private sphere, the witness of faith is insufficiently appreciated, in contrast to other periods of the Church's history when the word “confession” had a positive value. It is enough to remind ourselves of the “witnessing Church”, or the term confessor, which came to mean almost the same thing as martyr. We should look to the witnesses of faith when “the world we live in often seems very far from the one promised us by faith. Our experience of evil and suffering, injustice and death, seems to contradict the Good News; they can shake our faith and become a temptation against it.”

The confession of faith supposes strength of decision and responsibility. Carried and impelled by a committed will, it rests on knowledge and first-hand acquaintance, on a conviction that can be formulated in content. Bearing witness presupposes a broad knowledge and orientation, and the ability to answer everything our hope, founded on our faith, may question (cf. 1 Peter 3, 15).

34. Today's negative attitude to the confession of faith

If the word “confession” has become devalued in our time, this is not a mere aspect or change of nomenclature, the substitution of another word that is possibly more accurate, but rather is a sign of a notable objective deficiency that can be perceived today in people's conduct, as apparent as it is worrying for the Christian faith. Today's tendency to see the confessor's attitude in a negative light emanates from the widely held conception that there are no permanent or absolute guidelines that are valid, because everything falls into the free-flowing current of the historic, the relative, the optional. There is apparently nothing unchanging within the mutability of the universe; everything is restated and accommodated depending on the way it is interpreted. We must recall that today's rejection of the confession of faith derives from the rejection of obligation, from the flight from affirmation and the concrete decision, from the uneasy evasion of responsibility, avoiding any effort and taking no risks. Theological propositions as important as that of “Christians who are unaware of being Christians”, ideas of such importance for the consideration of the believer and for the consequent enlightenment of non-Christians, cannot be wrongly interpreted or converted into some universal theological

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41 CCC, 164.
principle that recommends leaving everything as it is, relativising what is preached, especially with reference to mission, until the situation is beyond saving since every and any road will then claim to lead to God and to salvation.

If there is no content that can be formulated in the confession of faith, then neither is there any purpose capable of moving anyone to a possible decision and of justifying sacrifice and risk. Notwithstanding, it is useful to keep in mind these adverse possibilities in order to be able to capture, through the negative image of this reality, what exists within this current rejection of a confessional attitude.

35. The essential link between faith and witness

Despite everything, the authentic believer is a witness to the faith. The believer may not be able to swear that Pythagoras's theorem is correct, that the Roman emperor Augustus Caesar is dead, or that Napoleon existed. What he or she can confess is that Christ died “for me”. That is to say, the only thing that can be confessed is that which is not inescapable, that which does not possess a universal proof, that which is the foundation of an existence, a life and a death. Confession and witness are closely and intrinsically bound to faith. The relationship between life and the confession of faith is a reality with profound anthropological importance.

To confess the faith, as activity and manifestation, and the confession of faith as everything implied by this attitude, is the voice, the response, the witness. Such confession is the sign that faith has been listened to, that its word has been made felt and has been accepted. But “confession” is not simply the voice of religious faith, as is the case in religions based on nature or the cosmos, which do not coincide with history and which have no resolution, since everything, including opposites, is assimilated within their syncretism. These religions characteristically do not see themselves as tied to a specific time, nor to an event or historical person, but rather are caught up in an unceasing and unending cycle of return, so that their content may be summarised as “never having come into being, but always having existed”. In them there is no confession or witness, because there is no clear affirmation. From all this one can gather that “confession” only exists where it is not lost in nebulous syncretism, and where faith has clear formulations, where it has some historical basis, where historical personages have been its bearers and mediators, and where faith is not the product of self-reflection, but a response to an utterance that is not a human word: that is to say, a response to a historical happening that mankind has not designed, nor manipulated, nor originated.

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36. The confession of faith as a response

According to all that has been said, the confession of faith is possible and in fact has happened within the biblical religion, that culminated in God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. The fundamental formula of this kind of faith, insofar as it is a response to God's ample historical and personal communication of himself, is "I believe in you". "Confession", in its authentic sense, is therefore only possible when true faith exists, and, if we wish to give a response from a basis of faith, that is only possible where a faith exists as a response to God. As a consequence, the confession of faith has a clear mode of expression, objectively determined and articulated. It is not exhaustive nor does it describe all that is possible, but refers to the nucleus, the key point to which faith is oriented and to which this responds: "Listen, Israel, Jehovah is our God. Jehovah is the One God" or "Jesus is the Lord, the Christ". From this nucleus of biblical confession, have emerged the broader confessions of faith: the so-called Apostles' Creed, expressing faith in God the Father, in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and in the Holy Spirit and his action, as well as all the later creeds. 44

37. The confession of faith as the expression of the historicity of the Church

From all this it follows that the confession of faith is the expression and voice of a faith related to God's historical, personal and oral communication; of a faith the content of which is expressed in its articles. This dynamism assists our discernment in the face of possible false interpretations or simplifications of the faith and in the face of incredulity and lack of faith. All this assumes that faith is neither a private matter nor one that can be privatized, but one which tends to manifest itself in the communitarian sphere. Faith's confessional attitude as the expression, witness and voice of faith in the community of believers has to be a permanent attitude, and - given that the Church lives and operates within history with the confidence that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16, 18) - one that is demonstrated in specific situations of provocation, scepticism, dispute, difficulties, aggression and so on. The confession of faith has to be made and brought up to date in the face of circumstances such as these. The believer, in an attitude of proposition and never of imposition, should speak up and take responsibility before the undecided and the contrary, before public, scientific, social or political opinion.

38. The experience of witness, past and present

In this context, the jacobean pilgrim should bear witness to the human and spiritual experience lived on the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle St. James, the "burning bush", before which he has bared his soul to accept the forgiveness and grace of his encounter with God. On the pilgrimage road and at its end he will also have been able to perceive the witness of pilgrims of past ages.

For all this, the witness of today’s pilgrim is not an isolated one, but one that presupposes a gift that has been transmitted to humanity so that he can make it his own; neither does this mean the simple repetition of what happened in the past, but rather, a bringing of the past into the here and now. It is necessary that the human person, by origin and vocation, is situated in the realm of the concrete; that he or she is motivated by a concrete objective in life, work, dealings with others, and in the search for God and salvation.

39. Witness and unity

The Christian is aware that God loves all his creatures and does not abhor anything that he has created; if it were so, he would not have created it (cf. Wis. 11, 25). It does not surprise him, therefore, that Jesus took his grace with him wherever he went and that he can say to us, as to Zacchaeus: “Today salvation has come to this house, since he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19, 9-10). He entered the house of Zacchaeus because there was something to be saved there. The result was the conversion of this man, physically small but spiritually of great stature, who in response to the Lord gave half his belongings to the poor, and to anyone he might have defrauded, returned the amount fourfold. The pilgrim, according to the teaching of Jesus in this passage of the Gospel, should transcend human logical calculations and hold fast to the possibilities offered by listening to the word of God - cooperation, service to others, the strengthening of hope in the face of anxiety and negativity - offering what is his to give of his Christian identity. His behavior must not be dictated by the aim of giving the minimum, but by one that seeks to offer the best of his faith and love, because Christians, in whatever relates to witness, should act not out of the desire for human prestige or power, but out of the greatest fidelity and love for Christ, the “Incorruptible crown” that we should be striving to attain.

As in the case of the pilgrims to Emmaus, to “recognise Jesus Christ in the breaking of bread” means [...] that we Christians too should recognise him in the breaking of bread, that is, in the act of sharing and giving thanks. Not in vain was it said of the first Christians “And all who believed were together and held all things in common” (Acts 2, 44). We can only share the bread of the Eucharist if we also share our daily bread. Our form of being with and sharing with our brothers and sisters is a witness of the encounter with God for today’s men and women. In consequence, we have to live all human activities as acts of thanksgiving to God, as “eucharist”, and let ourselves be inspired and motivated by Jesus’s gesture on breaking the bread. We must learn anew to share, to give, to give without expectation of recompense. We need a new culture of tenderness, solidarity, sharing and compassion. For our society it is a question of the survival of human values; equally, it is a matter of how credible we are as Christians.

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Ibid., 38.
Sacred Scripture views man as a being on pilgrimage, who on occasion distances himself from God but who is overtaken by divine justice and mercy. The human race finds its proper identity insofar as it lives and develops in the sight of God...

40. Mount Tabor: a foretaste of things to come.

Reaching the goal of the pilgrimage becomes for the pilgrim an experience of Mount Tabor, as the place where the Lord makes himself manifest and present, whom the Father reveals as beloved Son and to whom we must listen (Mark 9, 7). Here, very near the City of the Apostle, we find the “Monte del Gozo”, so called because in some way the view from it anticipates the pilgrim’s attainment of the aim of joyful encounter with the Lord in the House of the Apostle St. James. The man or woman of today needs this experience as did Peter, James and John, to confront the Christian commitment in daily life, where frequently one has to move in a non-Christian atmosphere and where, just as happened to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, one may feel tempted to withdraw and hide oneself away in the privacy of one’s religion. It is easy to forget
41. Faith in the Risen One, the identity of the Christian

The event of the Lord’s Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, in the context of the Jewish festival of Tents, intimately related to the pilgrimage history of Exodus, confirms the confession of Caesarea and consecrates the revelation of Jesus, Son of Man, patient and glorious, whose death and resurrection will fulfill the scriptures. It shows Jesus and his word as a new law. It anticipates and prefigures the events of Easter that, by way of the cross, will introduce Christ into the full extent of his glory and filial dignity. This anticipated experience of the glory of Christ is destined to sustain the disciples in their participation in the mystery of the cross. Easter is God’s victory over death and over the sting of death that is sin (cf. 1 Cor. 15, 56). It is the way of the new creation, fruit of love crucified. The Resurrection consists in the victory of the love of God over death and sin, and in the new participation in grace “to which end, just as Christ was restored to life from among the dead, so we too will live a new life” (Rom. 6:4). The Easter faith is, therefore, a continual confession of the salvific action of God that precedes any action on our part. Faith in the Risen Lord is the centre of the entire Christian life: “...if Christ has not risen, vain is your faith, for you are still in your sins... But as it is, Christ has risen from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 17-20). We cannot be Christians if we do not believe in the risen Christ who makes possible our filial relationship with God and our fraternal relationships with others. It is essential, then, that we live convinced of our vocation to resurrection and immortality. Through the effect of rampant materialism we may become heedless of the resurrection and fall easily into the temptation of “let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die” (1 Cor. 15, 32), seeking the things of the world and not those of heaven “where Christ is seated at the right hand of God”, and living earthly realities without taking into account that the “old man” died at our Baptism and that our life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3, 1). This is why St. Paul exhorts us to: “Put on, therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience. Bear with one another and forgive one another; if anyone has a grievance against any other, even as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you forgive. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection. And may the peace of Christ reign over you” (Col. 3, 12-13, 14).
in your hearts; unto that peace, indeed, you were called in one body. Show yourselves thankful” (Col. 3, 12-15). As members of the specific community that is the Church, we must be witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord, making known to all the salvific action of God.

42. The fundamental victory over death

Those who did not accept the message of Jesus interpreted the cross as the failure of his undertaking. On the contrary, the disciples experienced in the events of Easter the confirmation of their Master on the part of God. The resurrection is the response of the Father to the unconditional obedience of the Son. “This Jesus God has raised up, and we are all witnesses of it…. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know most assuredly that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified…. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and he went about doing good and healing all who were in the power of the devil, and God was with him” (Acts 2, 32-36; 10, 38). It also confirmed the style of life and message of Jesus Christ and was God’s seal upon his divine authenticity and the truth of his cause, since he was “a Man whom he has appointed, and whom he has guaranteed to all by raising him from the dead” (Acts 17, 31). This was not simply the confirmation of a unique truth, since the death of Jesus had called into question the challenging novelty of the Kingdom of God that began with his public life. If at Easter Jesus had returned only to a life on earth, this not only would not have been capable of confirming his mission, but would rather have remained an isolated and incomprehensible event. Neither would his silent passage from the kingdom of death to that of heaven have corresponded to his preaching. This could only be confirmed by a fundamental overcoming of the power of death. This was exactly what his disciples preached on the basis of the events of Easter. The comments scattered through all four gospels are the only record of what happened. In his letters St. Paul reflects retrospectively over the meaning of the fate of Jesus and shows how through his death and resurrection the power of death was destroyed (Rom.5, 12-21), breaking into a shout of joy: “Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor.15, 54-57).

43. Faith as participation in the resurrection

This overcoming of death is not for St. Paul an event that awaits us at the end of time. That Holy Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead is alive even now in the hearts of believers (Rom. 8, 15; Gal. 4, 6). Jesus had described his singular relationship with God by means of the personal expression “Abba” or “Father”. The Holy Spirit leads believers to live this filial relationship
with God, seeing themselves and the world from the new perspective offered by the Risen Christ and already announced in his Easter preaching.

The Letter to the Colossians discusses the overcoming of death, extending the fact of the resurrection to all the disciples: “For you were buried together with him in Baptism, and in him also rose again through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead” (Col. 2, 12). Believers know that faith in the power of the God who raises up not only contains the intentional affirmation of an event that has already happened, but that they are here and now raised up with Christ. That is to say, faith is not just an intellectual act, but that through faith the disciples are included in a real way in that event described by the word “resurrection”. The sign and proof of it lies in Baptism, as a new birth and a way leading to the encounter with life in all its fullness.

44. The resurrection is already accomplished

The fundamental dimension of Jesus’s resurrection appears even more explicitly in the writings of St. John. They are the ones that speak most clearly of the overcoming of death through faith as already accomplished. Jesus himself stated it to us clearly: “Amen, amen, I say to you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has life everlasting, and does not come to judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5, 24), and “Amen, amen, I say to you, if anyone keep my word, he will never see death” (John 8, 51). St. John the Evangelist wrote: “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren” (1 John 3, 14). These statements correspond to Jesus’s message when he announced that in his way of life the kingdom of God had already begun. St. John’s gospel leads us to understand faith expressly as faith in Jesus and not as a vague attitude of confidence. In a conversation with Jesus, Martha, the sister of Lazarus, said: “I know that he will rise at the resurrection, on the last day”. Jesus restated this conviction on a new plane, saying: “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he die, shall live; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die” (John 11, 24-26). The resurrection is wholly identified with the person of Jesus and his destiny, and all believers are already included in it. “The word of the resurrection does not just reconfigure a negative past (the cross) and complete a positive past still to come (the message of the kingdom), but also, and above all, opens an innovative future, divinely foreseen by God, and carried out now through the action of his Holy Spirit: the newness of the Christian way of life, the Church, the mission to all nations, the promise of forgiveness, the transformation of life by Baptism, the community of believers. The resurrection is a power that affected Jesus and affects those who open themselves to him. It was a new kind of reality”.

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45. “Everything is possible to him who believes”

The reality of Easter can be described still more precisely. Jesus referred himself entirely to the Father, and the Father worked in him, giving himself to him totally. Through the resurrection of the Crucified One he showed himself as he “who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were” (Rom. 4, 17), revealing through it his omnipotence, and indicating that faith, for the man or woman, means not expecting anything though human efforts, but assuming a place among those dead that God calls to life in virtue of his power. The human person, on experiencing that his mortal condition is overcome through the encounter with the Risen One, knows full well the omnipotence of God; that is to say, “faith is the participation in the omnipotence of God”\(^{50}\). In this sense we grasp the extent of Jesus’s words about the faith that moves mountains (Matt. 17, 20) or of his declaration that “all things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9, 23).

For today’s sensibility, as for the Christian conscience, to say that faith participates in the omnipotence of God is considered somewhat confusing and surprising. Nonetheless, no service is done to the true concept of faith if attempts are made to weaken it from one side or the other. It is precisely through its strange and paradoxical aspect that its impact on personal experience and that of the world is perceived.

\(^{50}\) G. EBELING, *Wort und Glaube*, Tübingen 1967, 249.

46. Faith as trust in the will of God

Such experience is only possible in the context of the message of the cross, which shows that the power of God acts precisely within human incapacity (1 Cor. 1, 18-24), and that its strength is fulfilled in weakness (2 Cor. 12, 9). Such affirmations are not arbitrary or paradoxical formulations that can be used to support any argument, but rather, indicate that the human person can experience fully that he or she is immersed in an extraordinary circumstance, in which personal limitations in the face of certain realities are unveiled. Faith, therefore, is not shown in spectacular occurrences such as those by which the tempter subjected Jesus in the desert (Matt. 4, 1-11), but rather, saves people from the resignation that results from finding themselves in some impossible human reality. It is no part of faith to make possible the impossible as if by magic to fit in with human plans, but to confront the impossible, knowing that for God all things are possible (cf. Matt. 19, 26), and precisely for this reason change can come about. Faith as the participation in the power of God does not mean that one can magically dispose events, but that these are all directed by that will of God that is communicated as the Holy Spirit, the giver of life.

47. The power of God over death

Sacred Scripture views man as a being on pilgrimage, who on occasion distances himself from
God but who is overtaken by divine justice and mercy. The human race finds its proper identity insofar as it lives and develops in the sight of God, conforming itself to this end. The historical life of the human person - that life characterised by the waywardness of sin, by conversion and mercy - ends in death. “Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ” and before God the reality of each human life is made known. “Each man receives eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven - through purification or immediately - or immediate and everlasting damnation.” The movement by which all creatures return to God will not have an automatic or an indiscriminate outcome. There will be a judgment, a discernment. The love with which God ministers to his flock cannot be set apart from justice, although this be exercised by him with love and mercy. While the human person is entering into the “day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6, 2) and the decision is in his or her hands, it should not be forgotten that God wishes that each person be saved, and arrive at the knowledge of his or her own truth, calling this truth into communion with him who regards each life and accepts it in its temporal freedom with reference to all that is known and loved, its fraternal relationships with the needy, poor and simple (Matt. 25, 31-46). In this pilgrimage of life, it encourages a person’s hope to know that the power of God, stronger than death, extends beyond the grave, and that he or she will be resurrected from among the dead and will enter a new state of existence before God. “Belief in the resurrection of the dead has been an essential element of the Christian faith from its beginnings.”

48. The fullness of eternal life

In consequence, life eternal is being close to God, it is to enjoy that communion with him that he concedes. The human person’s way and pilgrimage, during which sin and distance from God are always a possibility and sometimes a reality, reach their end. In eternal life, the liberty of whoever has entered into it is henceforth such that nothing will separate it from communion with God, because the will has attained what had been so longingly sought for. To share in eternal life is neither to disappear into an anonymous mass nor to pass beyond God’s gaze, since it is precisely the righteous person who is called and enters the company of God’s chosen, a communion that is the fullness of life in which each shares in different ways. With the eternal life that had been the basis for hope during life on earth, God crowns the gift of salvation.

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51 CCC, 1021.
52 CCC, 1022.
53 CCC, 991. Tertulian wrote: “the resurrection of the dead is the hope of Christians; we are Christians through believing in it”: De resurrectione carnis, 1, 1.
The individual cannot reach his or her destiny as a human person alone, for alone there are only dreams, imaginings and opinions that do not last and do not save. In order to assume the Christian commitment, people “have to be freely Christian, but cannot be Christian in a free and easy or individualistic way, since this leads to sectarianism, and there is nothing more contrary to the Christian vocation to solidarity than sectarianism”...

49. The life of faith, unity and love: hallmark of the Church

Once the goal of their pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostle St. James has been achieved, Jacobean pilgrims, like those on the road to Emmaus, have to return to their communities and families, to their work and their parishes, as witnesses of what they have seen, heard and experienced, and with the conviction that the definitive history of the human person does not simply end at a finite point. “And they themselves began to relate what had happened on the journey, and how they recognised him in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24, 35). Today, the Christian witness of a life of faith, unity and love is perceived as another ecclesial sign of credibility. The terms “testimony”, “testify” and “witness” appear numerous times in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and other teaching documents that followed it. It is Christians themselves through their holy lives,
and the Christian communities with a life of faith, unity and love, that represent the hallmark of the Church, to which the First Vatican Council made reference and the Second made yet more explicit in its conciliar doctrine.

50. The sign of faith in the disciple of Christ

The presentation of faith as a process of becoming part of the self-awareness of Jesus, as a victory over violence and as attaining a share in the power of God may prompt the idea that here what is being championed is a triumphalist concept of Christianity. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We are part of the pilgrim Church in trusting hope of being triumphant in heaven. In this sense we refer to some gospel texts that will help us to understand the demands of following Jesus that involve the breaking of certain human ties and not seeking one's own glory. Jesus put it this way: “Do not think that I have come to send peace upon the earth; I have come to bring a sword, not peace. For I have come to set a man at variance with his father, and a daughter with her mother, and a daughter-in-law with her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household” (Matt. 10,34-36). He also denounced the religious behaviour of those who prayed at the street-corners “in order that they may be seen by men” (Matt. 6, 5), and of those who gave alms “in order that they may be honoured by men” (Matt. 6, 2). The gospel according to St. John shows the underlying reason for disbelief by way of a question put by Jesus to the Jews: “How can you believe who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?” (John 5, 44). On the contrary, all those who seek the honour of God should count on being hated and persecuted. “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love what is its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (John 15, 18-19). In a similar way St. Paul taught his communities that authentic believers would have to behave like fools in the world’s eyes (1 Cor. 1, 10ss; 3, 18ss). According to him, “...God has sent forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death, seeing that we have been made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honoured, but we are without honour! To this very hour we hunger and thirst and we are naked and buffeted, and have no fixed abode. And we toil,
working with our own hands. We are reviled and we bless, we are persecuted and we bear with it, we are maligned and we entreat, we have become as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now! (1 Cor. 4, 9-13). On the contrary, the false disciple is recognised by his arrogance (1 Cor. 4, 18).

51. The vocation of the Christian: solidarity in the face of sectarianism

All these exhortations indicate that the believer should base himself on God alone. But at the same time, it should not be forgotten that the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the power of God for the witness and mission of salvation, settled upon the group of apostles, not upon various isolated and scattered individuals. This was the first Christian community, established and later re-established by Jesus himself: “And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2, 1). What happens to individuals and social, political or religious destinies go together. The nature of faith means that it is related to the community, in which it develops all its richness. The individual cannot reach his or her destiny as a human person alone, for alone there are only dreams, imaginings and opinions that do not last and do not save. In order to assume the Christian commitment, people “have to be freely Christian, but cannot be Christian in a free and easy or individualistic way, since this leads to sectarianism, and there is nothing more contrary to the Christian vocation to solidarity than sectarianism. The attempt to exist separately, at a distance or in conflict with the Church, has always ended in heresy. This takes place when someone denies a truth essential to faith, or misinterprets it, having separated it from its context in the Creed […]. Each such truth only survives as a branch capable of flowering and giving fruit when it is united to the trunk, and from it we receive the vivifying strength that rises from the roots. What is uprooted dries out, and in what is cut off the blood ceases to circulate”

52. “Yes” to God and “yes” to the Church

God began by creating the ecclesial Body of Christ so that from it life could extend and reach everyone. It did not begin by saving a few individuals and grouping them together in a kind of “society of the saved”, but rather, from the first moment, called them to form part of the Church, which has “its Head in Jesus, its reason for being”. Later, people found salvation by forming part of the ecclesial community in an active way through faith and the sacraments. The “yes” that a person gave to God, and which marked the beginning of a committed life, was equally a “yes” to the Church. If God reveals himself to humankind in Jesus, the latter communicates himself through his ecclesial body, and his gospel fully reaches the human race through the witness of believers, the teaching magisterium and the sacred Scriptures. Baptism, the sign of faith, does not so much link

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the recipient directly with Christ and through him with the Father, as incorporate him or her into the whole body of the Church. “Your baptism” - wrote St. Ignatius of Antioch - has to be to you like armour, your faith like a helmet, charity like a lance, patience like an arsenal of all kinds of weapons; let your strong-boxes be your good works, from which you will later receive magnificent largesse. Therefore, be magnanimous towards others, with the gentleness that God has towards you.... The Christian has no power over himself, but all his power is dedicated to God”.

53. The Church’s witness as the dwelling-place of fraternal love

In this way, from Baptism onwards Christian life develops in an intimate relationship within the mysterious identity between Christ and the Church, an idea beautifully expressed by St. Paul, who reminds us: “For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body” (1 Cor. 12, 13). “The baptised who constitute the Church are, therefore, members of this one body of Christ, whose living cohesion is maintained by the bread of the eucharist (1 Cor. 10, 17). This unity, which derives from faith and baptism, forbids that Christians declare themselves followers of Cephas, or Apollo, or Paul, as if Christ could be divided up (cf. 1 Cor.1, 12; 3, 4)”. Each person is at the same time a member at the service of all the rest, and served by all the rest, with regard to the common good of the whole Church, and therefore of the designs of the Father. The Christian can do no less than love his brother, if he claims to love Christ, and the Church has to present itself to the world as the dwelling-place of fraternal love: this is its best testimony and more meaningful than the most baffling miracles of a physical nature. Fraternal communion maintains the Church in a constant state of spiritual miracle and makes of her a permanent sign of the Good News.

54. The mission of the Church: to proclaim the Good News

“For by its very nature the Christian vocation is also a vocation to the apostolate” which “the Church carries on in various ways through all her members”.... “For this the Church was founded: that by spreading the kingdom of Christ everywhere for the glory of God the Father, she might bring all men to share in Christ’s saving redemption”.

The jacobean pilgrim, on making a commitment to apostolate in his or her community of faith, should keep in mind that the mission to proclaim the Good News and bear witness has not been entrusted to this or that individual. Christ has entrusted it
to the Church as such. But just as in the human organism the vital functions are shared out among the different organs - each of them having its own function, inseparable from that of the whole, without which each could not exist - so in the same way in the body of the Church, this vital function of apostolic mission and witness are marked out according to the functions proper to each baptised person.

Just as the whole body sees through the eye and listens through the ear, the pilgrim who has reached the tomb of the Apostle St. James should keep in mind on the pilgrimage of the return journey that through the medium of him or her, the Church in her entirety, as “...a kind of sacrament or sign of infinite union with God, and of the unity of all mankind”\(^6\), announces the Christian message in the community and in the different environments in which the pilgrim moves. New life, offered by Christ through Baptism and the sending of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, and through taking part in the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist during the long pilgrimage journey, needs to continue to be cultivated on returning home and resuming daily activities.

55. Putting into effect one’s own vocation

To cultivate this new life, and at the same time, bear witness to it in truth and with deeds, implies continuing to receive the sacraments, the visible and effective, public and permanent signs of God’s grace for all human history, that “...give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian’s life of faith”\(^6\). The returned pilgrim will also want to take particular care in the following areas. First of all, to appreciate the true value of Sunday in Christian life, the day when “...Christian believers should come together, in order to commemorate the suffering, Resurrection and death of the Lord Jesus, by hearing God’s Word and sharing the Eucharist, and to give thanks to God who has given them new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”\(^6\). Secondly, always to engage in prayer in various ways, knowing that it is always possible to pray, that it is a vital necessity, and that prayer and Christian life are inseparable, “for they concern the same love and the same renunciation proceeding from love”\(^6\). And finally, to bear witness to the style of the love of God that the servant of God John Paul II taught us, extending ourselves towards the practice of an active and concrete love of each human being in love and service to neighbour, in the midst of old and new modes of poverty, not forgetting that no-one can be excluded from our love, from the moment that “through the Incarnation the Son of God has united himself with each and every person” and remembering that “the charity of works ensures an unmistakable efficacy to the charity of words”\(^6\). These among others are points to keep in mind in considering one’s vocation as a response to God’s call to collaborate in the task of redemption, building the city of God in the midst of the earthly city.

\(^{1}\) Vatican Council II. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen gentium, 1. In Documents...


\(^{3}\) CCC, 1210.

\(^{4}\) CCC, 2745.

\(^{5}\) John Paul II, Apostolic Letter “Nouo millennio ineunte”, 49-50.
...The road understood as movement from one place to another, or as passage from one situation to another, is written into the genetic code of every human being. The road reveals itself as a necessity of life...

56. New men and women

In the third Christian millennium, for these new times of grace that are not without difficulties, new people are needed: men and women with the awareness of being called to transform society with their Christian attitudes and Catholic vision. The pilgrim, transformed into a new man or woman, has to feel this urgency. There are no excuses, despite the pilgrim’s circumstances and cultural, social or religious situation.

The universal mission entrusted to the disciples on the part of the Risen One is the mediation of the salvation given in Christ, and which has to be carried to fulfilment through him, with him and in him. To bear witness is, therefore, rather more than merely instructing, and implies that the person lives in the constant spirit of conversion in the midst of ordinary life, responding to the Lord’s mandate, expressed in the following words: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all...
nations” (Matt. 28, 19). Jesus looked on the Twelve as his apostles, but also as his exemplary disciples who were making an effort to carry out God’s will, which Jesus was making known, explaining and proclaiming, and they were learning to be his followers. They were the students of a Master who, speaking with authority as no-one had ever done, had come to fulfil the Law and the prophets (cf. Matt. 5, 17).

57. The Christian and the path of Christ

In the scholarly world of the Jewish masters and that of the Greek philosophers there came a moment when the student had learned all he could, and from then on his ideal would be to set himself up independently. In contrast to any other type of student body, the disciples of Jesus never cease to be such, and their apprenticeship is permanent, from Baptism to eternity. To be a disciple is equivalent to being a Christian, and this means never having finished, having to live constantly as a follower of Jesus. “Make disciples” embraces everything: becoming Christians and staying Christians. But in what manner do the human beings drawn from “all the nations” become Christians? Those who confess and bear witness to Christ are not brought together only by their own decision, or by their common origin and nature. The Church is neither an ethical system nor a mere social, historical or religious institution to which someone can belong or cease to belong on a whim; it is a continuous prolongation of the Easter presence of the Son of God made man and mediator, to raise up the human race to the fertile heights of God’s salvific Love. Since the beginning, incorporation into the Church has been brought about by a mysterious occurrence through which the individual is attracted, by pure grace, to the sphere of action of the only Saviour, Jesus Christ, and makes to him a binding commitment. The Christian has to keep in mind always that the human being can only become or remain a Christian thanks to the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ. To be a Christian means to really live the new life received as a gift at Baptism with a living faith that is made effective through love: “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is of any avail, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works through charity” (Gal. 5, 6). This faith must put into effect “everything” that Jesus commanded. An inalienable part of one’s free incorporation into the salvific plan is the putting into practice of the will of God, which implies demands, and which configures the human person.

58. The responsibility of the follower of Christ

We know that Christ was the teacher par excellence: “for one only is your Master, the Christ” (Matt. 23, 10). As in the days immediately following the resurrection of the Lord, the teaching of his disciples could only be such as he had passed on to them, and from this derived the responsibility to teach what he had taught without oversimplifications and without subtracting...
anything taught by him: “Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall be lost from the Law till all things have been accomplished. Therefore whoever does away with one of these least commandments, and so teaches men, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever carries them out and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5, 17-19). This teaching goes beyond the mere transmission of doctrinal content and the information about it. The words of the doctrine transmitted had to be sustained and accompanied by the testimony of faith and obedience, of renunciation and service. The purely verbal confession of Jesus as the heavenly Lord was insufficient, either for the person making it or the person listening, since “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Matt. 7, 21).

59. Always aware of our limitations

Possibly influenced by the currents of pragmatism and rationalism so prevalent in our time, we try to analyse everything intellectually, plan everything down to the last detail and carry it out relying on our own abilities. It is undoubtedly necessary to apply our reason and our efforts on behalf of a better world, to make our society more human, to ensure that our everyday work contributes to the elimination of disease, hunger, injustice, accidents, environmental pollution, and the want and misery that afflicts the human condition. But we must not be blind to our limitations that, when all is said and done, are a part of us. The individual advances inexorably towards death; human society is beset by uncontrolled evil, power, and the destructive energies that we can never wholly dominate. Only when we keep this in mind will we have attained the maturity to hear the Easter message and bear witness to it: God has raised Jesus, who died on the cross, from the dead. In this message it is proclaimed that someone who wanted the best for humanity was eliminated through human evil, yet notwithstanding, he was not annihilated. He is not dead, but lives, and fills with his vital energy all those who join themselves to him. Within the very failure and extinction of the human person there is still present a hope that rests in God, “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17, 28) - the goal and aim of human life that never reaches total plenitude on earth.

60. Outward weakness and inward strength

The half-heartedness with which not a few Christians today live their faith can only be overcome by the certainty that Christ, who was crucified, lives. It is a certainty that we reach not through critical reflection but through opening our hearts. Whoever takes the message of Easter into his or her life will experience, despite all manner
of problems and apparent lack of solutions, that from outward weakness grows an inner strength, and that in spite of all, kinds of bitterness, new horizons open. The Christian experiences this as a share in the cross, death and resurrection of Christ. For him or her, the Easter greeting is not just a reference to a past event, but an evocation that springs from the soul's very centre: Christ is risen “in order that they who are alive may live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again” (2 Cor. 5, 15).

61. Jesus Christ, Risen for all and for us

From the resurrection onwards, Jesus Christ has been a permanent reality, verifiable thanks to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life and of love, of liberty and the new creation that arose with this event. He was returned to life by God not only in order to demonstrate that he was innocent and righteous, but, above all, to lead us to life everlasting. The “firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1, 18) “is the principle of our own resurrection, even now by the justification of our souls (cf. Rom. 6,4) and one day by the new life he will impart to our bodies (cf. Rom. 8, 11)”. For all those who share in faith in Christ, this does not mean a far-off hope for the future, but even now an incipient reality, given that since his resurrection Christ has been converted into “a life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15, 45), and this Spirit of Christ and of God lives even now in us.

62. The life of the Holy Spirit

The life of the Holy Spirit unites us in a singular encounter with the risen Christ, who maintains his own personality, continues to be the person who walked the earth, and now remains close to the Father, drawing near to us and attracting us towards communion with him by means of the Holy Spirit. But we too also remain beings with a historical existence and do not lose our individuality; we therefore, through the medium of Christ and thanks to his Spirit, attain a new life and a new profundity in our earthly dimension, that remake us in the likeness of the Risen One. It is an internal process that, even if it does not remove us from earthly reality (cf. 2 Cor. 5, 7), makes us new people, capable of a new way of being. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not make war according to the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but powerful before God to the demolishing of strongholds, the destroying of reasoning - yes, of every lofty thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10, 3-5).

63. Jesus in our way of pilgrimage

The pilgrimage and the road to the tomb of the Apostle are not simply a movement from one place to another. It is rather a shift from one way of looking at life to another. This is possible because of the mysterious presence of Jesus who, in the same way as to the pilgrims on their way
to Emmaus, accompanies us too along the road of life and aids us in making the transition from the old man or woman to the new, although we have to travel the road of suffering and take up the cross that every day brings. The road understood as movement from one place to another, or as passage from one situation to another, is written into the genetic code of every human being. The road reveals itself as a necessity of life. Religious teaching also recognizes and frequently speaks in terms of a road, so that our life takes the form of a pilgrimage. It is the language of metaphor linked to the stuff of phenomenology and the experience of every human being.

The influence that Jesus exercised on those pilgrims appealed to their feelings and to their intellects at the same time: to their feelings, in that it made their hearts burn within them with the flames of love, and to their minds, in that it made them understand in a simple way the hundreds of years of biblical teaching referring to him. The risen Master freed their memory, which is the root of hope, reminding them of scriptural traditions; it freed their understanding so that they could comprehend them; and it freed their will so that they could manifest their unconditional love to the Risen One. In general, it tends to be thought that anything religious has to be sufficiently astonishing and powerful to banish the most extravagant fantasy. None the less, this story tells us that the most basic truths in the world make their appearance in life’s most common and ordinary incidents, such as that of encountering a companion on the road. The pilgrims to Emmaus gained knowledge of him as they walked beside him; and their knowledge was of the glory that was attained through the seeming failure of the cross. In the glorified life of Jesus, as in his public life, the cross and glory always went together. What stands out in the conversation with the disciples were not the teachings given by Jesus, but rather his insistence on his sufferings and in the way these were in accordance with his glorification: “O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into his glory?” (Luke 24, 25-26).

64. Communicating the Easter experience

The two pilgrims to Emmaus, transformed by the vision of the Risen One, immediately left the house and returned to Jerusalem, the Holy City, symbol of the continuity between the time of the historical Jesus and the time of the nascent Church, and the place where the Lord had died and risen again. In the same way that the Samaritan woman abandoned her pitcher at the well and ran excitedly to tell her neighbours: “Come and see a man who has told me all that I have ever done. Could he be the Christ?” (John 4, 29), so too the pilgrims forgot the reason for making their way to Emmaus and hastily returned to Jerusalem to communicate their Easter experience to others. There they found the eleven apostles gathered together with other disciples and followers of Jesus. Although they returned in the middle of the
night, the light of the Risen One illuminated their way so that they could tell what had happened to them on the road and so be united to those who had remained in Jerusalem, making their joy complete.

65. “It was true: the Lord is risen!”

Curiously, it was not the two walkers who spoke first; it was more likely those who had stayed in Jerusalem who announced to them: “It was true: the Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!” (Luke 24, 34). Only later could the pilgrims recount their experience. The joyful Easter cry belongs to one of the oldest formulae of the profession of faith and is one of the most reasonable of comments about the resurrection. A profession of faith such as this was not juxtaposed with the Easter experience of the pilgrims to Emmaus simply by chance, and neither was the paschal event made patent in them lessened in any way by the profession of faith of the others. More than likely, the truth of the experience of these two disciples was underlined and took on greater certainty through the Easter exclamation and shout they heard - which means that the faith of these pilgrims is not a “private” matter, but is identified with the profession of faith of the Church. In this way, this story becomes a constituent part of the paschal experience of the apostolic Church. The post-apostolic Church can thus also refer to this Easter testimony.

66. The pilgrims to Emmaus and the Paschal mystery

The Easter faith of the pilgrims to Emmaus, as we have just indicated, was confirmed by the profession of apostolic faith and through it, gathered and directed so that it became authentic for succeeding generations. At the same time, the testimony of the apostles was fundamentally enriched, since this story offers the way by which the disciples who were not part of the official circle of Easter witnesses could attain post-paschal faith in the risen Jesus Christ.

This passage contains a message of incalculable value with which to answer the doubts and problematical modern view of the paschal mystery, and helps us to clarify the objectives of the jacobean pilgrimage. It shows why and how one may believe, today too, in the Risen Christ. The Church has to nourish and create a suitable atmosphere so that this faith may be developed through evangelisation, through conversion, and through eucharistic celebration, the memorial of Jesus’ Christ. All these elements form an integral part of the pilgrimage to the tomb of St. James.

67. The presence of the Risen Christ in the Eucharist

Beyond the reductionist psychological reasons that are sometimes held to be responsible for the process of conversion or for the act of walking the Camino de Santiago, jacobean pilgrims
- like those to Emmaus - return to their familiar surroundings to take up the everyday tasks of their lives. This is where they have to be witnesses.

The story of Emmaus illuminates in an exemplary way the history of the Church and of Christians through the ages. These too, in their very different situations to that of Cleophas and his companion, have relied on the possibility of certain access to the event of Easter. Personal encounter with the Risen Lord takes place above all in the celebration “of the memorial of Christ’s Passover - that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.” In the community gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist, the light of Easter appears in a special way. We articulate it in the following way, after the consecration of the eucharistic species (the bread and wine) when we respond to the phrase “Let us proclaim the mystery of faith”, with: “When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, Lord Jesus, until you come in glory.” The Church teaches us that the manner in which Christ is present under the appearances of the eucharistic species is singular. “This presence is called ‘real’ - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense; that is to say, it is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and Man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.”

68. Pilgrimage towards “the city of God”

The pilgrim to Santiago who, seeking encounter with God, with others and with him or her own self by way of a process of conversion, has taken to the road and listened attentively to the Word of God, will have been able to experience in the Eucharist the testimony of the Christian community gathered around the altar of the Lord, the source of joy, to celebrate his resurrection. It is precisely thanks to the pilgrims to Emmaus, whose “private” Easter experience was confirmed by the profession of faith of the nascent Church, that the pilgrim to Santiago has to return home conscious that his or her Easter experience has also been corroborated by apostolic testimony at the Apostle’s tomb, and has to “give a name to Cleophas’s companion” by casting off anonymity and living the consequences of spiritual experience. To be a witness today means above all to live our faith in the resurrected Christ that gives rise to our Christian hope, and which is reflected in the love of God and neighbour, given that “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4, 16). Only God can give us what we ourselves cannot attain in the Emmaus of our aspirations, desires, concerns and anxieties, acknowledging that today’s society is not the one we long for and that we belong to a new society, the citizenship of the saints, towards which we are travelling and which is anticipated in our pilgrimage.

66 CCC, 1409.
67 CCC, 1374.
69. The Virgin, pilgrim of faith, prototype of the pilgrim

We find the prototype of witness in Mary, pilgrim of faith, definitive eschatological figure of the Church, present in the cenacle of Jerusalem, to which the pilgrims of Emmaus made their way. Mary, as a mother, reveals a radical aspect of existence, in a pilgrimage along the way of growth and the achievement of inner maturity that begins with the birth of her Son and concludes with his glorious ascension into heaven.

In this sense, Mary is “a pre-eminent and altogether singular member of the Church and the Church's model and excellent example in faith and charity”\textsuperscript{69}. In Mary, fully glorified, the Church admires as accomplished the salvation of Christ in the fullness of her transforming efficacy, and she is for it the image and beginning of what the Church itself will one day be. The People of God, which looks continually to the Virgin as its model, discovers in her its finished and perfected image, because “in the mystery of the Church... the most Holy Virgin led the way”\textsuperscript{70}. That is why she who was predestined, pre-summoned and pre-justified was also pre-glorified.\textsuperscript{71}

The resurrection, considered in its ecclesiological dimension and based on the resurrection of Christ as the first of a community of the resurrected, cannot be thought of as the sum total of many resurrections. As a social and ecclesiological occurrence, the Assumption of Mary should be considered the first effect for the Church of Christ's resurrection. Mary, assumed body and soul into heaven, is the best proof of the efficacy of the glory of the risen Christ. The glorification of Mary is, then, a sign of hope for the entire Church, which is on pilgrimage towards the house of the Father, amidst difficulties and defections, struggling against sin and death. She shines before the people of God on the move, as a signal of certain hope and consolation, intensifying in the faithful the desire for the goods of the Kingdom, which they will have in abundance through the resurrection, and being also the point of reference for the realisation of their own historical destiny. The figure of the Virgin becomes the key to interpreting the present and future dignity of the human race, created in the image of God and redeemed by his Son Jesus Christ, and of the glory of God, which does not repose upon the ruin of his creatures, but which is enhanced because human kind acquires the fullness of the image.

\textsuperscript{69} Vatican Council II, Lumen Gentium, ch. 53. In Documents...
\textsuperscript{70} Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium, 103. In Documents...
\textsuperscript{71} Cf. J. AUER, Jesucristo, Salvador del mundo. María en el plan salvífico de Dios, Barcelona 1988, 538 s.

\textsuperscript{102} Cf. J. AUER, Jesucristo, Salvador del mundo. María en el plan salvífico de Dios, Barcelona 1988, 538 s.
...To be converted means to undergo a change of mentality: from that of “the world” to that of God, which Christ has revealed and communicated to us. To enter by the Holy Door has to be specifically a sign of our faith in Christ and of our will to follow him who, with his death and resurrection, has made it possible for us to pass from sin to grace.

70. Numbers and statistics

We are celebrating the Jacobean Holy Year 2010, the second of the third millennium, in the period of so-called postmodernism. It is the 119th in the series of Compostellan Holy Years. In an age like the present one, marked by the human unrest and dramatic uncertainty that generates division, violence and terrorism, and also by the malaise of a culture seeking to dilute the religious dimension proper to humankind - a process accompanied by the reality of depersonalisation from which we are suffering - it is fitting to ask whether there may still be a place for the age-old and genuine doctrinal and spiritual content of this celebration, one of the chief manifestations of which is the pilgrimage. If we analyze the available statistical data of the jacobean pilgrimage, we can confirm

that in the last 25 years the number of pilgrims has steadily increased. Foreseeing what was likely to occur in the last decade of the past century, the bishops of the Camino de Santiago in their Pastoral Letter in 1988 alluded to this growth when they wrote that: “The Way that leads to the tomb of St. James, in the city that bears his name, Santiago de Compostela, in the Galician region of Finisterre, has recently experienced an unusual resurgence, from every corner of Spain and the farthest reaches of Europe. The number of pilgrims travelling it in the traditional manner of the medieval pilgrimage, together with those who make the journey by modern means, is constantly increasing”.

Taking into account the bald statistical data, the words of Father Michel de Roton, rector of the sanctuary at Lourdes, published in the New York Times on 12 October 1993, provide an accurate assessment: “Some may think that in our time pilgrimage is on the point of extinction. What is certain is that pilgrimages are actually enjoying a boom. It is said that they fulfil a deep spiritual need... Perhaps people are finding religious life too monotonous and are missing something more intense, more festive, more emotional. Perhaps the form our mode of religious expression takes no longer answers peoples’ needs”. This is not something that is occurring only in the Christian and Catholic world, but in other religions also.

71. The dissatisfaction of a postmodern world

In the midst of a growing secularism and relativism, technological and electronic advances, mobility and rapid travel, exploration of space and information super-highways - all seem to indicate that people are turning to the sacred for stability. The faster humanity moves, the more it needs firm foundations. It seems that places of pilgrimage, and especially Santiago de Compostela, arouse a response to this profound anthropological need. Again, the greater our scientific knowledge and the more information we have, the greater is the longing for ultimate meaning; the more we subject ourselves to analysis and psychological therapy, the more need there is for penance and purification; the greater the advances in medicine, the greater the necessity for miracles.

People set out on the pilgrimage to Santiago in search of something, and because they hope to find what their modern world has not been able to offer them. The rite and mystery of the jacobean pilgrimage appear to be unchanging through the centuries, independently of successive changes and cultural advances.

72. The pilgrimage, in its ecclesiastical and anthropological aspects

Compostela continues to attract the tourist and the pilgrim, the youngster and the old person, the healthy and the sick, families and people on their own, the devout and the curious....
The very nature of the pilgrimage is a motive for breaking down ordinary social barriers through the fact that a vastly diverse collection of pilgrims finds a common link emerging from their living experience of the pilgrimage. This reflects not only the most fundamental reality of the Church in its state of earthly pilgrimage, hopeful of attaining its perfection in the glory of heaven, but also the essential reality of humanity - that is to say, the reality of human beings united on the way towards the mysterious hereafter. This eschatological reality of humanity is something that in a certain way can be sensed in the pilgrimage to Santiago. Given the peaceful and harmonious presence of people of all economic levels, nationalities, races and languages that come together in Compostela, to which the Codex Calixtinus referred back in the 12th century, we are offered a certain image, sign and anticipation of the ideal humanity of the future that is coming into being alongside the tensions, conflicts and resistance of the disintegrating power of evil, and which is on pilgrimage in the midst of the consolations of God and the persecutions of the world.

The pilgrimage to Santiago broadens and enriches our habitual view of the world. Pilgrims are distinguished by a great variety of cultures, backgrounds, ages and personal situations, but all of them are united in the aim of surpassing the limits of ordinary experience in order to enter into states of being farther removed. The meaning of the pilgrimage seems to offer an answer to this deep anthropological need to experience in some way an existence that is definitive and without limits. “To go on pilgrimage is much more than a sport, much more than an adventure, much more than tourist travel, much more than a cultural route around a lot of monuments worth admiring, silent witnesses of secular history. Without denying the specific sense of the motives mentioned, the pilgrimage possesses a human and Christian soul, which if deadened loses its intimate eloquence, its call to the spirit to shake off inertia, its ability to spread fraternal feeling among individuals and peoples. Without soul the Camino would be an inert reality.”

The sanctuary of the Apostle in Santiago de Compostela, like all other places of pilgrimage, is not an end in itself, but acts as a threshold giving access to new stages of life through the encounter with the Lord at the behest of the Apostle St. James. The jacobean pilgrimage is undertaken not to obtain some privileged experience, but to allow oneself to be changed in a way impossible to predict, and so return to ordinary life with completely new attitudes.

73. Compostela - between continuity and the lack of it

The pilgrimage to Santiago is part of an ancient tradition to which today’s pilgrim...
is connected. With this, the question of the historicity of Christianity, or more specifically, the relationship between past and present, tradition and modernity, seems to become clearer. In this perspective we find, on one hand, elements of tradition and continuity, and on the other, of discontinuity. The past is invoked and displayed, thus becoming a kind of reference point that can illuminate the reality of today’s pilgrim. The past, or tradition, a basic element represented by age-old ritual within the Jacobean pilgrimage, offers the possibility of overcoming a postmodern existence that is subject to maximum regulation, almost incapable of surprise, insensitive to mystery, impoverished where identity and interpersonal relations are concerned, full of tensions and sunk in confusion. One tries to find stability in the past so as to orient oneself towards the future, in the midst of the present that is our time, God’s time, and for that reason a time of grace. This process of searching generally has a clear religious component.

74. Pilgrimage, expression of the Way of conversion

The meaning of the pilgrimage in the Compostellan Holy Year expresses and favours the Way of conversion, its authentic objective: “...conversion is a particularly profound inward act in which the individual cannot be replaced by others and the community cannot act as a substitute for him... it is necessary that in this act there should be a pronouncement by the individual himself with the whole depth of his conscience and with the whole of his sense of guilt and of trust in God...”

To be converted means to undergo a change of mentality: from that of “the world” to that of God, which Christ has revealed and communicated to us. To enter by the Holy Door has to be specifically a sign of our faith in Christ and of our will to follow him who, with his death and resurrection, has made it possible for us to pass from sin to grace, from a way of life dominated by selfish interests to another inspired by love of God and neighbour. “And they who are carnal cannot please God. You, however, are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.... But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you” (Rom. 8, 8-9, 11).

75. The spirit of the Jacobean Holy Year

To live the spirit of the Jubilee means to give due attention to those fundamental values of the gospel, which in no way detract from human activity, but situate it in the proper dimension, endowing it with its most authentic significance. The Christian faith affirms the autonomy of

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temporal reality. As a result, on one hand, the Christian cannot entertain as an objective the sacralisation of the world and must oppose any attempt to render absolute, or to divinise, created reality.

On the other hand, he or she must not forget that the profane world is, precisely because of its profane nature, supremely valuable, not only because God brought it into being, but because this very being of the created reality has been integrated for all time into the being of originating divinity through the incarnation. Worldly reality is thus profane, not sacred; but in virtue of the incarnation, it is a sign of the presence of the creator within it.

76. The religious and the profane: two aspects of the same reality

In the Camino de Santiago and in the jacobean pilgrimage there clearly exists a whole in which the religious and the profane are integrated, which has its most diaphanous expression in the collective set of realities created “for” pilgrims (hospitals, places of devotion and worship) and those created “by” pilgrims, such as the construction of bridges or secondary routes. Pilgrims brought with them to the Spanish kingdoms new forms of artistic expression, symbols, beliefs and ways of life that left their traces in the places they passed through and included, in the last stage of the journey, the carrying of calcified stones as a penitential rite, to assist in the building of the construction of the cathedral at Compostela.

77. Way of faith and Way of culture

The Camino de Santiago has been since its beginnings a way of faith, and at the same time, a way of culture. This Jacobean Holy Year is also a call to recover the essential content - from the perspective of evangelisation - of Catholic anthropology. It should not be forgotten that one of the harshest criticisms of Luther, the Protestant reformer, was directed at the pilgrimage to Compostela; his anti-jacobean rant carried an implicit criticism of Catholic anthropology. At a time when the process begun in the 16th century has not yet finished, it is necessary to restate the basic anthropological beliefs inherent in the Catholic message: the goodness of creation and of creatures; the menace and consequences of sin; the human race’s possibilities of being healed, converted, forgiven; the presence of grace in the created world, which is on its way to achieving this in fullness. The person on pilgrimage is faithful to his or her true nature, although the grace of the journey does not consist in earthly happiness, but in living in Christ. The pilgrim travels the Camino with the security given only by the things that come from God. Charting the growing breadth of appeal of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela from its beginnings in the ninth century, through the middle ages and in long periods of the modern age, is an arduous task but not an impossible one. Its decline from the French Revolution onwards
can also be understood, as one war and revolution followed another, resulting in unstable conditions that generally dissuaded people from undertaking the pilgrimage during the whole of the 19th century. To this should be added other causes, no less important, that discouraged the pilgrimage, such as periods of political tumult in Spain and the confiscation of property belonging to the Church, with all that this implied for the care of pilgrims. Despite everything, the pilgrimage never completely died out. We have accounts that testify to the permanence of the pilgrimage to Santiago, because it is a response to something deep in the anthropology of the human person.

78. Christian Europe, fruit of the jacobean pilgrimage

On this Camino, the result of the pilgrimage, Europe came into being, to the support of, and in the shadow of, pilgrims to Santiago. Today we know that in the ninth century not only did Gotescalc, bishop of Le Puy, journey to what by the eleventh century would be called Compostela, but we also know that pilgrims from the south of Germany took the road to Finisterre in Galicia even earlier. The routes that had been Roman roads began to be routes of Christian pilgrimage.

The jacobean pilgrim, from the very beginnings of the pilgrimage, assumes a place in history by enacting what is perhaps the most Catholic of all expressions of Christian anthropology. Sustained by the summons of the Almighty, the pilgrim leaves everything, and before departing makes a will, receives the blessing of the Church, and with no material security, takes to the road to experience divine providence - so often reflected in the “human providence” of the generosity and hospitality of so many people along the way; Divine Providence, that at daybreak or in the evening gives an understanding of sacred Scripture, and blesses the bread on the altar of the New Covenant. Thus the pilgrim comes to encounter the intangible traces of the apostolic mission in the place where the mortal remains of the first apostle to be martyred have been laid.

The pilgrim to Santiago, with eyes fixed on the goal of the journey - the tomb of the Apostle - is capable of bearing the many risks involved, including hunger and thirst, cold and lack of adequate clothing, hardships and tough going, and still be open to the joys of the Camino. The pilgrimage is a real programme of regeneration and is intimately tied to the sense of solidarity, as its symbols - the staff, satchel and scallop-shell - reveal to us. In any case, apostolic tradition is the magnet that attracts the pilgrim and sets him squarely on the road of life.

The Codex Calixtinus, the first pilgrim guide-book in western Europe, describes the jacobean pilgrim as the most typical of Christian pilgrims. In the light of this compilation, it is possible to create a portrait of the pilgrimage to Compostela. The stories of the text, like a lighted pathway for pilgrims, invite them to recreate the

Liber Sancti Jacobi, 242.
panorama of medieval Europe: the road network, the religious and civil institutions and conditions, the worship and the provision of hospitality, the music and the literature... In the background of all of it, we can discern the pilgrims to Santiago, who have set out from the farthest corners of the then known world, being received at the tomb of the Apostle St. James. “To this place come the tribes of barbarians and those who inhabit every climate on earth... It arouses joy and admiration to see the choirs of pilgrims at the base of the venerable altar of St. James in perpetual vigil: the Teutons on one side, the French on another, the Italians on another; they stand in groups, with lighted candles in their hands; the whole Church is thus illuminated as if by the sun on a clear day. Each one with his compatriots individually and adeptly fulfils his turn on guard. There one can hear a variety of languages, diverse voices speaking strange tongues; conversations and ballads in German, English, Greek and the languages of other tribes and different peoples from all parts of the world.”

79. Jubilee graces

From the discovery of the Apostle’s tomb, pilgrims took to the road in great numbers, and continued to do so through the centuries. In the year 1122, Pope Calixtus II granted jubilee graces to the Compostellan Church, which celebrated Compostellan Holy Years from this date onwards. The basilica of Compostela was always open, as the Codex Calixtinus pointed out: “the doors of this basilica are never closed, neither by day nor by night, nor does the darkness of night have any place in it, since with the splendid light of the candles and tapers, it is as bright as mid-day.”

Thus recalling the celestial city of the Apocalypse, the account went on to mention the Holy Door, or Puerta Santa, as a symbol of a time of grace and forgiveness in the Year of the Great Pardon.

In this story of salvation, the pontifical concession of the plenary indulgence finds its rationale. Its doctrine and practice in the Church are closely tied to the effects of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, the reception of which lie at the heart of the pilgrimage. On every day of the Compostellan Jubilee Year, the pilgrim can obtain the plenary indulgence - or offer it for the dead in the manner of suffrage - as the total

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80. Ibid., 199-200.

81. Liber Sancti Jacobi, 200-201.
remission of the temporal punishment due for sins. With this practice, the Church wishes to offer spiritual help to the Christian on pilgrimage, and to motivate him or her to undertake works of piety, penitence and charity.

80. Memory, past and future

There have been millions of Christians, anonymous pilgrims, who in the solitude of the pilgrimage and its countless hardships were the protagonists of the Camino that has provided the underlying structure of the reality of Europe. Just as it was yesterday, today also “Santiago is the tent into which all gather, the culmination of the pilgrimage, the eloquent sign of the pilgrim and missionary Church, penitent and on the move, prayerful and evangelising, announcing the cross of the Lord until he comes again. Compostela, spacious dwelling-place with open doors, seeking to become the luminous focal point of Christian life, a reserve of apostolic energy for new paths of evangelisation, a stimulus of a faith that is forever young.” The memory of the past, commitment to the present and hope for the future are the threads with which we must carry on weaving the tunic of our Christian life. The pilgrim, insofar as he or she refuses to be centred on “self alone”, seeks to establish a two-way communion: to find a centre “vertically” in God, and as a consequence of this, a “horizontal” communion, extending outwards to others.

For this reason, the pilgrim, in the midst of the difficulties of the Camino, is the image of the attitude of search that is characteristic of us as Christians. In our state of weakness and in our fallen nature we are essentially pilgrims. What motivates us is the instinct to seek the Good. “Our nature is in the movement; total repose is death.” To halt and rest in our afflicted state would be death. The search, although our feet are tired, is always ongoing, in the hope of finding our rest, because according to the well-known saying of St. Augustine, “You have created us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”

The pilgrim on the road learns, considers and experiences, returning to teach as a witness of what he or she has seen, heard and lived. Let us not forget that we are obliged to earn the inheritance we receive. The jacobean pilgrimage is a call to Christian hope, which is not an ingenuous optimism based on the calculation of probabilities, and which has to ring out from the House of the Apostle St. James. The pilgrim gazes “upward”, even as the road “ahead” unfurls.

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\[82\] Cf. CCC, 992-994.
\[83\] Cf. CCC, 1478.
\[84\] JOHN PAUL II, Discourse in the Plaza del Obradoiro, 19 August 1989, during the celebration of the pilgrim rite.

\[85\] B. PASCAL, Pensées, nº 641.
\[86\] St. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, Confessions, 23.
81. United in prayer

This particular Church of Santiago de Compostela goes forth to meet all pilgrims, offering them its welcome and encouraging them to renew the memory of apostolic tradition and to strengthen their faith so as to be witnesses to Christ in the events of everyday life. Even now we are praying fervently that this Holy Year may be for the glory of God and the good of the Church and the world. I commend you to the protection of the Apostle St. James the Great, and of Holy Mary, Mother of mercy and Virgin Pilgrim, in the hope that the abundant fruits of this jubilee celebration may help us to revitalise our Christian life, keeping us firm in faith, secure in hope and steadfast in charity.

On the Feast of the Translation of the Apostle,
30 December 2008

+ Julián Barrio Barrio,
Archbishop of Santiago de Compostela