

# THE CHURCH, SEED OF UNITY FOR MANKIND

**Third Sunday of Ordinary Time**  
**January 22, 1978**

*Isaiah 9:1-4*

*1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17*

*Matthew 4:12-23*

My dear sisters and brothers, we find ourselves at the beginning of the third week of Ordinary Time. The time between the Epiphany and Lent is called Ordinary Time. This period of time will be interrupted to celebrate the mystery of our redemption which we prepare for during Lent and Holy Week. The celebration is then prolonged for fifty days until the feast of Pentecost, the feast that commemorates the coming of the Spirit. Thus, in this period between the Epiphany and Lent and then Pentecost and Advent, there are thirty-three or thirty-four Sundays and weeks that are called Ordinary Time. This time is characterized with the wearing of green vestments, a sign of the hope of the people that is on pilgrimage. Despite the routine and ordinariness of a time that for many can seem to be hopeless, weary and difficult, despite the fact that life seems to have no meaning and people lose their perspective, yet as Christians we ought to carry this hope in our hearts. Indeed, hope is the characteristic of Ordinary Time.

During the recent celebrations of Christmas and Epiphany, the gospel that corresponds to this year initiates us to the public ministry of Christ. Notice that the Sunday gospel readings are divided into three cycles: cycle A, B and C. Three distinct cycles and for this year, Cycle A, we will be reading the gospel of Saint Matthew during the thirty-four weeks of Ordinary Time. During Cycle B, the gospel of Saint Mark and in Cycle C, the gospel of Saint Luke is read. Thus in two years we will begin the third cycle. The gospel of Saint John, rich in content concerning the mystery of Christ, is placed before us every year during those intense periods of the Liturgical Year: Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Therefore, if we are faithful to Sunday Mass during the period of three years, we will have listened to the reading of the four gospels.

Together with the gospel reading, each Sunday a passage from the Old Testament is chosen to show the concordance between the New Gospel, the Gospel of Christ --- the fullness of times --- and the Old Testament that announces its fulfillment in the New Testament.

The epistle, that is, the second reading, is not properly connected with the gospel reading or the first reading, but is read throughout the three year cycle so that we have an idea about the letters of the Apostles. At this time, for example, we are reading Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. If we want, however, we can always find a link between these readings. In this way the Biblical message is synthesized in a way that makes it understandable and ultimately enables us to live this message.

Why then do we preach on the gospel, on the bible? The homily is like a reading or a vital reflection. It is for this reason that the homily is arranged. The word *homily* means to

make real or actual, to tell the assembly that has gathered together that this Word, even though it was first proclaimed many years ago, still has meaning for us as Catholics who have gathered together today, Sunday, January 22, 1978. Today, all those who are here in this Cathedral, as well as those who gather together in so many different communities and through the radio join together with us in our reflection and listen to the humble, human accent --- an imperfect accent --- all these people can come to an understanding that the proclaimed Word has meaning for all of us. Do not focus on my person or accent, but focus on the Word that bears the accent of God. The message of God is meant to orient and give us life, as well as provide a Christian meaning to today's society and to the men and women who live in the world today.

### **Events of the week**

It is for this reason that before expressing my thoughts about the Biblical readings, I attempt to provide a historical framework. Thus the words of Isaiah, Paul and Matthew are not meant to be read in a way that separates their words from our time. Rather they should give light to the events of the week, orient us and speak to us. As the Council says: *Every true mediator of the Word of God ought to illuminate the signs of the times with the Word of God. In this way they are able to give history and the actual moment in which we live a sense of transcendence that unites people with God and orients them toward God (a)*

Who was not moved with national pride --- and I say this in the best meaning of the word --- as we witnessed this beautiful scene: children carrying their notebooks and textbooks and walking to school. Classes have begun and this has caused us to reflect on this national event. What does the Church think about this beautiful scene as she watches children and young people enter their schools? What does the Church think now that the time of vacation has come to an end and teachers await the return of their students?

In the first place, we must praise the efforts of the government as educational opportunities have been extended to every part of our nation. On the other hand, together with this praise and applause, the Church wishes to express her reflections on the educational process and is oriented in these reflections by the Medellin Documents. When we mention the Medellin Documents, many people are surprised, but this is due to the fact that people do not know how to read these documents. The Medellin Documents express the Church's thinking about Latin America. True, many have abused these documents in the same way that others consider these documents to be taboo or view them with fear. Yet these documents are meant to provide a Christian orientation to the people of Latin America.

One of the Medellin documents (b) refers to the theme of education and I base my reflections about the opening of our schools on this document. We have to criticize the educational process in Latin America because in general it does not correspond to the needs of people who are in search of their development (c). The content of education is often abstract, formal and a teaching that is more concerned about transmitting thoughts than creating a critical spirit (d). True education ought to create a critical spirit in children and young people. In other words, students should not swallow everything that is said to them, but rather they should be awakened to analyze what is being said. The news that is published in our papers should not be accepted simply because it appears in the newspaper. This news has to be analyzed and evaluated. When a new law is enacted, it too must be analyzed. People must be able to evaluate what is happening around them.

In actuality, our educational system is oriented toward the maintenance of dominant social and environmental structures and has not promoted a sense of collaboration that might bring about the transformation of these structures --- a transformation that our people need (e). Our education is uniform and this occurs at a time when the Latin American community has awakened to the richness of human pluralism and human values present in the distinct countries of America. True education must lead students to discover what is distinctive about their culture and must give its seal of approval to national and local idiosyncrasies and integrate them into the pluralistic unity of the continent. Our educational system must no longer attempt to provide something which is the same for everyone.

In general, education in Latin American countries is directed toward the desire *to have more*, (f) whereas today's youth demand rather *to be more*, to develop themselves through service and love. Let us not continue a system that creates in the mind of the student a hope of becoming rich and having the power to dominate. This does not correspond to the time we live in. Let us form in the heart of the child and the young person the lofty ideal of loving and preparing oneself to serve and give to others. Anything else would be an education for selfishness and we want to escape this selfishness which is precisely the cause of the great malaise of our societies.

The Church must propose an education that makes people *agents of their own development*, (g) protagonists of history, not a compliant, passive mass, but human beings who are able to demonstrate their intelligence and creativity and their desire for the common service of the nation. Educators must recognize that the development of the individual and of people is the *advancement of each and all from less human to more human conditions* (h). Thus we must enable women and men to see that in our education we provide a perspective in which people, the subject of all education, are able to commit themselves. They do not have to wait for everything to be accomplished, rather they should see themselves as protagonists who are able to make a contribution to the transformation of Latin America.

A creative education has to anticipate a new type of society that we search for here in Latin America.(i) No one is satisfied with the society that we currently have in place in our communities. If some people pretend to be satisfied it is either to protect their own advantage in society or else they are trying to deceive someone. If we are sincere, however, we all want a better society, a better world. Therefore, in our schools, our education has to anticipate --- if even in some small way --- this image of the society that we desire. Thus teachers, parents and students are challenged to form a model community of love, collaboration and mutual correction, etc.

The Church also wants to provide an education that is personal, that is, the Church wants to help every child and young person to become aware of their own *human dignity*, the meaning of *self-determination* and an understanding of community. (j) We cannot live in isolation, like a sea shell on the sand. Rather we are invited to open ourselves to others --- to the meaning of community. We can be mutually enriched if our education is open to dialogue so that conflicts between different generations and social classes do not become barriers that divide us.

Our education must also provide people with an appreciation for those things that are particular to them and at the same time integrate these particular differences into the *pluralistic unity of the Continent and the world*. (k) In other words, the people of El Salvador must recognize that they have unique values that only they can contribute to other nations of

the world. We must encourage people to develop these autonomous, unique values but not in some selfish way --- as though the people of El Salvador were the only people in the world --- but rather in a way that enables them to enrich others with this spirit, so unique in El Salvador, and with the many other beautiful qualities of our nation.

What a beautiful harmony could be brought about if all the nations, instead of thinking about themselves, recognized their unity with the God of all nations: *Sing a new song to the Lord of all the people because he has done marvelous deeds. (l)* How beautiful, my sisters and brothers, if we educate people so that they can bring about the changes that this continent needs. In this way, then, the Church is *in solidarity with the educational efforts (m)* that are being made in our country, but we also want to ask those in the educational field to keep in mind the realities of our continent so that this nation becomes aware of the fact that our contribution is valid.

It was in this context that the Pope recently spoke with our Ambassador to the Holy See<sup>1</sup> and stated: *the Church... claims... the indispensable freedom to preach the faith, teach her moral and social doctrine* and educate all Christians so that they might develop their baptismal faith. The Church is not begging for alms, but rather she has a right to educate the members of society, who through Baptism have committed themselves to Christ, so that they might know how to live as citizens of the Latin American continent and citizens of the Kingdom of God. Thus the Church must prepare the Christian community of El Salvador not only to serve this earthly nation but also to live with hope and as Christians to transfer this hope to the great realities of our nation.

Therefore the Church preaches, brings people together to reflect, instructs people through catechetics and, despite the evil interpretations that are given to the Church's actions, she cannot remain silent. She has an obligation to teach the Gospel in an integral way and the Church is promoting this kind of instruction in all the countries of Latin America. For this reason, my sisters and brothers, the Church takes advantage of what today is called holistic education, that is, the Church uses all the different means of communication so that her message might become known in all the communities, the youth movements and the base communities of faith. For example, how wonderful it is to know that at this moment I, a poor teacher, am able to communicate this message of Christian education to so many communities! I know that in many of these communities people are listening to us on the radio and in some communities have placed loud speakers in the bell towers of their churches so that our message might be heard by an even greater number of people. Thus the people of this Archdiocese are able to discover what God wants of them as Christians.

Together with these events concerning education which, as you see, lend themselves to profound reflection, I wish to invite our beloved teachers, with whom, thanks to God, we share many friendships, to participate in these reflections. In this way you will be able to translate these reflections in your classrooms and not betray your role as employees of the government or your own conscience. Here we are not simply talking about giving catechism lessons in your school, rather we speak about teachers who develop the curriculum of the Department of Education and who are also living witnesses of the material that they present in the classroom. Your life is what is of interest to your students! They want to see you as Christians who personally and professionally have been able to create a synthesis between faith and culture, between faith and life. The teachers who present this living synthesis are faithful to the government's program and at the same time are also faithful to the demands of the Church, Christ and their baptism.

## Church events

In this same context the Church attempts to live her own reality as Church. Therefore in this family environment where we gather together to celebrate this Eucharist at 8:00am, I share with great satisfaction the news and some announcements concerning the Church with all of you

Today, I want to express my profound thanks to my dear priests, women religious and laity who have signed this document of solidarity that appears on the first page of *Orientación*.<sup>2</sup> I thank all of you, not because of my person which naturally merits all types of contempt but because of what this means for the person of the bishop: a sign of unity. In fact it could be said: *whoever attacks the Archbishop, attacks the soul of the Church!* This is not a vain statement, but a statement of faith that leads me to think in this way. As a person I am not pained by these unjust slanders, but because of the office that I hold, these slanders cause me great pain because they show a great indifference to the Church. Therefore I am grateful for this call for solidarity and I recommend that you read and reflect on the statement that appears in *Orientación*.

I am happy to share with you the news that during this week the Sisters of Bethany have celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their foundation. May the Lord continue to make them a community that is able to serve the Church during these difficult moments of transformation. Indeed, may all of us --- religious, laity and priests --- understand the need for this renewal and thus place ourselves at the service of the Church that wishes to serve the world. At the same time I also extend my congratulations to the Guadalupana Sisters and the Carmelite Missionaries who during the coming months will also celebrate the jubilees of their foundations.

On behalf of the Carmelites I want to invite all of you to a celebration that will take place here in San Salvador on February 11<sup>th</sup>, the feast of our Lady of Lourdes, a day when we honor the Virgin of those who are ill. All those who are ill will come together at the grotto next to the School of Lourdes that is under the direction of the Carmelite Sisters. They have asked to celebrate the foundation of their community in this way. Therefore at this time I invite all those who might have a family member who is ill to come there. We will celebrate the Eucharist and anoint those who are ill and thus sanctify them and give a sense of consecration to their illness.

While talking about the religious life I want to share with you the fact that from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, twenty religious women who work in the area of Chalatenango gathered together and planned their activities for the year. The pastoral guidelines of the Archdiocese continue to orient their activities in this area of the diocese which today gives us great hope. We greet these heroic Sisters who are working in towns and villages that are quite distant, but have harvested many fruits because of their labor. May the Lord bless them!

I also ask a blessing upon the Religious women who are gathered together and meeting in the Colegio de la Asunción. All the religious communities of women have been invited to participate in this meeting. There was a celebration in the communities of San Antonio Abad. Many of you have already heard about the great quantity of fireworks and the money that was spent during this celebration of their patron feast. In Ciudad Delgado and other

places, people celebrated their patron feast in honor of Saint Sebastian who has many devotees among us.

In order to provide a framework for my homily, I have left for last the celebration that began last Wednesday, namely our coming together to pray for the unity of all Christians. This has been a very gratifying experience. Wednesday we were in the Church of El Rosario, Thursday in the beautiful chapel of the Marist Brothers in El Liceo Salvadoreño, Friday in the First Baptist Church where the Pastor and the congregation received us with graciousness and a true Christian hospitality. Last night we gathered here in the Cathedral and tonight we will once again gather in the Cathedral. Tomorrow, Monday, we will come together in Emmanuel Baptist Church in Barrio San Jacinto and then on Tuesday we will meet in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. I invite all of you to come here on Wednesday night at 7:00pm for the closing of this week of prayer. Each night we have expressed the desire that Jesus lived in his gospel: *that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, [and] that the world may believe that you sent me* (n). In this light, Protestants of good will (I underline this word because we have also seen some of our separated sisters and brothers who have evil intentions and do not believe in the prayer of Jesus that unites all people who believe in him. There are, however, many more non-Catholic Christians, men and women of good will whom we call Protestants.) and Catholics have accepted the invitation to come together as one family that follows the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have come together to pray that the differences that hinder our evangelization might disappear. As long as we are divided we are a hindrance to this process but when we are united and present the gospel as one single Christian congregation, then the world will be converted. Let us never doubt that fact!

Today, my reflections on the Word of God follow this line of thought. Perhaps my homily could be titled: the Church, a sure seed of unity for the human race. The Council states this same idea: *the Church is a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race* (o). I want to offer you these three thoughts: (1) in Christ, God becomes present in the human history; (2) Christ present in human history calls all people to conversion and collaboration; (3) the lack of unity among Christians is a hindrance to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Therefore I call upon all people to come together as one --- I extend this call equally to Catholics and non-Catholics.

### **In Christ, God becomes present in human history**

In the first reading my first thought is expressed in a very eloquent way by the prophet Isaiah: *in former times the Lord humbled the lands of Zebulun and Naphtali, but they are now filled with joy because of the Lord's presence* (p). In his gospel, when Saint Matthew wanted to confront the Old Testament with the New, he stated that Jesus preached in these lands of Zebulun and Naphtali --- a part of Galilee. Thus the gospel states that the words of the prophet were fulfilled: *Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea... the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, on those dwelling in a land overshadowed by death light has arisen* (q). What a beautiful way to present the presence of God in history. That corner of Palestine, the regions where the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali dwelt, was the first area to be invaded by the King of Assyria who wanted to conquer all of Palestine. Thus a pagan empire in the Holy Land cast a shadow on the lands of Naphtali and Zebulun. For this reason the prophet speaks of the humiliation of these tribes. The prophet, however, foresaw the times spoken about in Matthew's gospel and so he announced the joy of these lands when

light and freedom would once again appear over these lands that had been enslaved by foreign invaders.

Isaiah describes this moment when he says: *You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as men make merry when dividing spoils* (r). Look at what follows: *for the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulders, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian*. In Midian, Gideon engaged in a battle and won that battle in a very unique way. The victory was easy. The prophet Isaiah says: *the kingdom of God will come and break the yoke of the oppressor* (s). The yoke was the symbol of a people who had been oppressed, who had been placed under a heavy burden. *God will break this yoke. God will give the people freedom and those who were oppressed will be filled with joy because God has visited them and saved them*. My brothers and sisters, this is how God acts when he becomes present among people: he destroys the yoke and the burdens of oppression. Thus this is how every man and woman and family and people ought to shout out when they feel the humiliation, affliction and depression of the people of Zebulun and Naphtali: there is reason to hope!

The prophet has not deceived us. When Christ appeared in those lands, curing the ill, raising the dead, preaching to the poor, bringing hope to the people, something began on earth like when a stone is cast into a quiet lake and ripples start to appear, ripples that finally reach the farthest shores. Christ appeared in Zebulun and Naphtali with signs of liberation: he broke the yoke of the oppressors, he brought happiness to the hearts of people, and he planted hope in their hearts. This is what God is doing now in the midst of our history.

The Church wants to preach this presence of God in history and the happiness of this presence. Let no one destroy this happiness but rather let us all live in this love that God has given us, for indeed God truly loves us. Even though God allows us to experience the humiliation of Zebulun and Naphtali to purify us from our sins, yet God has not abandoned us. God is with us. Let us maintain this great gift of faith! Let us pray! Let us call upon our God! I am greatly saddened to see so many pessimistic people who walk about as though they are lost, as though they have entered a dead end street. This is not true. Perhaps we are living in the darkness and clouds of Zebulun and Naphtali. But unlike Isaiah who did not experience the presence of Christ who came eight centuries later, we do not have to wait eight centuries because Christ is present in our history. We await something else. We await what I will talk about in the second point of my reflection.

### **Christ calls all people to conversion and collaboration**

Christ has come and calls us. Look at the gospel, how beautiful! *Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (t). The passage that we have just read today recounts the vocation of four Apostles: Peter and Andrew, who were brothers, and John and James, also brothers. Jesus called them by the side of the lake where they were fishing: *Come, leave everything; I need you. I will make you fishers of men!* (u). After these four people, Jesus called more and more and more people. Jesus calls all people.

Jesus has given life to every person so that they might follow their vocation. Not everyone is called, as I have had the honor, to the vocation of sacred ministry. You have been called as laypersons to the vocation of married life, the vocation of a professional, one who enters the economic, political and social arena. The political area is a place where one is also able to serve God.

Christ calls everyone, but he calls them to conversion. Previously I explained to you the meaning of the word. *Conversion* means to orient oneself in a certain direction. Military personnel will give an order: move to the left; move to the right. We say, move toward Christ. Christ says: *Repent and be converted* (v). Thus the condition for following Christ is repentance and conversion. Conversion is necessary in order that the liberation that people await might become a reality. Therefore, as the Church proclaims this conversion, she must point out the kingdom that is opposed to the Kingdom of God, namely, the kingdom of sin. A preaching that does not point out sin is not the preaching of the gospel. A preaching that makes sinners feel good and thus enables them to become entrenched in their sinful state, betrays the gospel's call. A preaching that causes sinners no discomfort but lulls them deeper into sin is like leaving Zebulun and Naphtali in the shadow of death (cf. Matthew 4:15-16; Isaiah 9:1-2). A preaching that awakens, a preaching that enlightens (like a light that is turned on and awakens and disturbs one who is sleeping), that is the preaching of Christ, calling: *Wake up! Be converted!* This is also the Church's authentic preaching. Naturally, such preaching must meet conflict, must spoil that which is labeled prestige, must be persecuted. The Church's preaching cannot get along with the powers of darkness and sin.

*Repent and be converted!* is the call that Christ extends to us. Thus if among those people who repent and convert there are men and women who feel this call more deeply, then there arises among the People of God the sacred vocation: *Come, and I will make you fishers of men* (w). This is precisely the feeling of those young men who are going to enter the seminary, of those young men who are preparing themselves for priesthood. I hope that this word will awaken in the hearts of many young people and families the meaning of a sacred vocation. We also admire women and children who want to consecrate their love in the same way as Saint Agnes whose feast we celebrated yesterday. People wanted Saint Agnes to marry a pagan man but she stated that she was already mystically married to Christ. Faithful to this mystical union with the Eternal Love, she died as a virgin and martyr.

How many young men and women feel the inspiration of the Spirit of God who calls them to dedicate their lives after the example of Saint Agnes. A woman religious spoke to me during these days and said: *Look at how vocations are flourishing! So many young women are discerning the possibility of entering the religious life.* Father Seguro has expressed similar thoughts as his own hopes have been more than fulfilled --- there is not enough room in the seminary for all the young men who feel called to this vocation. They have begun their studies and are preparing themselves in their homes and schools and waiting for the time when we will be able to accept them into the seminary.

My sisters and brothers, there is a great concern that the call to conversion has awakened many hearts that, like the people in Zebulun and Naphtali, were asleep in sin. They thought that the Church was meddling in politics and other areas that are not within her competency. Finally, they have understood that we are simply preaching the Kingdom of God and that we must point out sin even when that sin is found in political and economical situations --- indeed we must point out sin in whatever human situation it is found. The Church must be the voice of Christ and say: *Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand* (x). Those who want to become part of this Kingdom must repent of their sins and be converted and then draw near of God. This has been the cry of the Church during this time: *repent*. Therefore, my sisters and brothers, *repent*. I am the first one who needs to be converted, but we all need to be converted for as the book of Revelations says: *the righteous must still do right, and the holy still be holy* (y) and naturally those who are in sin must be restored to God's grace and



renounce all forms of injustice and selfishness and abuse. Let us become friends of God, for God has no part in sin.

### **The divisions among Christians --- an obstacle to the establishment of the Kingdom of God**

My third thought is this: if Christ calls everyone to participate in his plan of salvation then, as the Council says: *everything that separates us from the plan of Christ is sin*. Thus division among Christians is sinful.

The Council uses a beautiful phrase when she calls the Church *a Messianic People*. All of us, you and I, are part of this Messianic People. The Council states: (z) *this Messianic People --- and I am thinking particularly about all of you even though it does not include all people and frequently appears as a small flock --- is nonetheless a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race. Established by Christ as a communion of life, charity and truth, it is also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all, and is sent forth into the whole world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (a2)*.

My dear Christians, what a great honor --- and I say Christians because to use this word today during this week of Christian Unity, the word *Christian* does not simply refer to Catholics but also to the two other great branches of Christianity that have broken away from this one unity. I refer to our Orthodox sisters and brothers who during the eleventh century separated themselves from communion with Peter, with the Holy See. The Council says that this separation occurred because of the sins of men and women (b2). The other branch that we refer to is called Protestantism that arose as the result of the reforms of Luther during the sixteenth century. From this movement arose the diverse sects that are now part of the people and are called Evangelicals or Protestants.

These two great branches that separated themselves have broken the unity among Christianity. But we are all Christians. There are many things that unite us. For example, with the Eastern Churches --- so many beautiful things. The first Councils that proclaimed and clarified the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation of God-made-man were convoked in an atmosphere of unity with the Eastern Churches. It causes us sadness when we remember that great dogmas of our faith were defined with that group of people who are now separated from us.

Later, in the sixteenth century, Protestants proclaimed the doctrine of free interpretation of the Bible. They separated themselves from the teaching of the Church in order to interpret the Scriptures in a specific way. Yet they have retained a great love for the Scriptures and for Christ; indeed, they have never lost this love. In fact their love is most intense, perhaps more intense than that of many Catholics who are Catholics in name only and are also far from being able to call themselves Christian. For if they were Christian (let alone if they Catholic), they would not hate or slander or tear apart Christianity in the way they do.

Thus, today the word *Christian* refers to that call to become part of this great family of unity. Today the Church is working together with our separated sisters and brothers for a closer unity and communion. I want you to have very clear ideas about this unity that we search for with our separated sisters and brothers.

The Council says that this unity has to be based on interior conversion (c2). I have felt this very much during these nights --- as Catholics and Protestants we are sincerely seeking Christ through a conversion to the Lord.

The Council also speaks of a communion in prayer even though this does not lead to a conversion in all the things that we believe in but it need not keep us separated from one another. (d2)

The Council also speaks of reciprocal knowledge. (e2) My sisters and brothers, I believe a great reason why we remain separated from our Protestant sisters and brothers is this lack of knowledge. Neither they nor we know one another's psychology and way of thinking. But when we approach one another we begin to see the good will that is expressed on both sides and we also see the human failings and limitation of both sides.

As a result of this mutual knowledge the Council asks us to remember that which is most important: faithfulness to doctrine. (f2) Do not go about saying that because the Archbishop visits the churches of our Protestant sisters and brothers that he is becoming a Protestant or today because the Cathedral opens its doors to Protestants so that they can sing and preach here, do not say that there is no difference between Catholics and Protestants. We are not saying that. Rather we are saying that each one must be faithful to their doctrine. Catholics know that nothing and no one can shake them from their belief in confession, the Eucharist, their love for the Virgin, their devotion to the saints or their obedience to the Pope. Catholics can never betray their belief in these realities. Protestants must also be faithful to those realities that they believe in conscience to be true.

This faithfulness to our doctrine should not prevent us from cooperation with one another in those things that unite us. (g2) For example, today it is most useful for Christians to work together in the area of human dignity, in the promotion of peace and justice, in the social application of the gospel, and inspiring the arts and literature with Christian values. There are many areas in which Catholics and Protestants, instead of fighting among ourselves, are able to come together with our profound doctrinal difference and join together in love. While we share many similarities, we can still come to understand our differences and soon they begin to disappear and very soon, with no restraints, the dream of Jesus can become a reality: *Father, may they be one, one flock under one Shepherd who is Christ the Lord* (h2 & i2).

My dear sisters and brothers, this is the call that the Word of God extends to us today. How appropriate that during this week of Christian Unity we should be called to pray intensely so that the unity that Christ desires might become a reality among us! May Christianity give witness to the presence of God in our history so that all people might find our Church united, *a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and love.*

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<sup>1</sup> See *Osservatore Romano*, 18 December 1977.

<sup>2</sup> See “Tocar al arzobispo, es tocar el corazón de la Iglesia. Pronunciamento de solidaridad del presbiterio de la arquidiócesis”, *Orientación*, 22 January 1978.

*Margin References* (a) GS 11: (b) M 4: (c) M 4,4: (d) M 4,4: (e) M 4,4: (f) M 4,4: (g) M 4,8: (h) PP 20: (i) M 4,8: (j) M 4,8: (k) M 4,8: (l) Ps 98,1: (m) M 4,9: (n) Jn 17,21: (o) LG 9: (p) Is 9,1: (q) Mt 4,15-16: (r) Is 9,2-3: (s) Jg 7,14-22: (t) Mt 4,17: (u) Mt 4,19: (v) Mt 4,17: (w) Mt 4,19: (x) Mt 4,17: (y) Rv 22,11: (z) LG 9: (a2) Mt 5,13-14: (b2) URF 3: (c2) UR 7: (d2) UR 8: (e2) UR 9: (f2) UR 11: (g2) UR 12: (h2) Jn 17,21: (i2) Jn 10,16.