

THE CHURCH, CHRIST'S RETURN IN THE SPIRIT

Fifth Sunday of Easter
April 23, 1978

Acts 6:1-7

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:1-12

My dear brothers and sisters.

This is the fifth Sunday of the Easter season. As I have been saying all during this time, the Church considers the fifty days of Easter, from Holy Saturday until the feast of Pentecost, that is, the coming of the Holy Spirit (May 14th), as one single Sunday --- the great feast of the Lord. I do not want us to lose sight of this triumphant person of the risen Christ. This is the center of the gospel message.

For this reason when I announce this risen Christ I attempt to place this event within an historical framework. But many people focus simply on the framework and then begin to criticize the preaching. They say that I have become political, subversive, rebellious and so many other things. You have been able to read these criticisms in the media (perhaps it is better to call the media the media of defamation) and have been able to see how they speak against the person of the bishop and the Archdiocese and how they distort the truth of the message that I proclaim. I ask you to center your attention on the main focus of my preaching. I want my preaching to echo the Liturgical Year. Therefore I attempt to lead with you this flock of the Archdiocese as we travel together through the Liturgical Year. I want this flock to be guided by the presence of Christ. This is what is meant by liturgy: the presence of the saving mystery of Christ in the history of people where this mystery becomes reflected. Therefore the central aspect of all of this is the mystery that saves, for it is from this perspective that the reality that surrounds us becomes illuminated. This saving mystery saves those persons who, with Christian hope, seek in the central person of the Divine Redeemer the strength to resolve the grave problems that confront our nation.

But if we only focus on the framework and analyze the words from our own perspective, if we do not confront the divine message and its demands, then instead of listening to these words with faith, we become like the Pharisees who listened to Jesus and looked for a way to entrap him and accuse him in order to justify themselves. (a) Thanks to God that as I appeal to the public, I can speak the same words as Jesus: *I have spoken publicly. Ask those who have listened to me to see if there is any truth in what these people are saying, these people are who trying to conceal themselves as they utter so many slanderous words* (b).

Events of the week

An event that should be reflected upon in light of God's words that is spoken today is the fact that we are able to gather here in the cathedral once again. Last Sunday the Cathedral was occupied by the Popular Revolutionary Block. This occupation provided me with an opportunity to make some distinctions between the Bloc and the Church. The signs speak for themselves. Those who occupied the Cathedral have returned to their homes. Some have

said that not everyone in that group was a *campesino*. I ask you: who in El Salvador is not related in some way to the *campesinos*? We are all *campesinos*. But that is beside the point; those who occupied the Cathedral have returned to their homes.

I want to congratulate the Diplomatic Corp and the Red Cross who provided such efficient services. But this also leads us, as Christians and Salvadorians, to ask: why do people have to resort to the services of the International Diplomatic Corp and the Red Cross in order to resolve a simple problem like returning home? A new type of Salvadorian has been created here in El Salvador: those who are exiled in their own country.

I also want to clarify here that the charity that was shown to those who occupied the Cathedral and the Church of El Calvario should not be compared to the charity that is shown to other *campesinos* in other places where the charity of the Good Samaritan demands that we help and embrace them. The occupation of the Cathedral and the other parish church is also a sign, an extraordinary form of speech that expresses people's anxiety. I want you to understand me because someone who listened to me and read my article in the newspaper¹ and listened to my radio interview said: *then you are criticizing those who occupied the churches*. I told him: *Be careful! I did not say that! I said that those who occupied the churches did so without the consent of the churches. But the Church understands what they are trying to say by this action*. Now that the conflict has been resolved I can say this: the Church should not be manipulated. The occupation of a church is a powerful sign and should not be used as a common recourse that is employed at the whim of some particular group. Those who manipulate the Church in this way in order to apply some kind of pressure are not friends of the Church. They are concerned about their own interests and they leave the Church wanting. Therefore, my sisters and brothers, the Church is not with one side or the other. The Church is Church. The Church wants to be a place of prayer and a place where, with freedom, we are able to proclaim the Word and speak about the rights of the human person from a gospel perspective. Therefore, I ask you to please not multiply or repeat these kinds of actions.

We are saddened by the many denunciations that have been made because of people who have been taken to prison: five students and a *campesino* from Cojutepeque. We are especially saddened by the growing intensity of the defamation against the Church. There are interests that want to maintain an environment that continues to discredit the Church. I call upon those who want to listen to the true voice of the Church to use sound criteria in distinguishing between the language of those who want to provoke disorder and those who raise their voice on behalf of justice and the gospel, those voices who point out society's sins and scars. The Church does not provoke disorder. Please, as I said before, do not confuse the voice of those who want to stir up people and cause disorder with the voice of those who cry out for justice that demands peace. Without justice there can never be peace in our land, for justice is the foundation of peace. Thus we see that those who provoke disorder are subversive while those who raise their voice on behalf of justice are peacemakers. The Church speaks words of evangelical justice and does not want her voice to be confused with revolutionary voices simply because she points out the need for change and the need for a more just order. I want to make it very clear that the Church cries out for peace (c), but in the words of Venerable Pius XII, *opus justitiae pax* --- peace must be the fruit of justice. Any other peace is fictitious and mere words.

Life of the Church

Therefore, apart from this historical framework of our nation I ask you who have gathered here in the Cathedral as a family to celebrate this Mass, I ask you, my sisters and brothers, living members of the Church, to focus on what the Church is doing: the Church is building up the Church in the same way that good Catholics must also build the Church. The information that I share with you now enables us to give thanks to God despite the persecution and slanders and misinterpretations and evil environment that all of these realities have created. I want you to know that the progress of the Church does not depend on these external circumstances. Rather the foundation of the Church is rooted in her fidelity to Christ and the gospel and to her carrying on the mission that was entrusted to her.

Therefore, I share with you some wonderful news about our celebration of the feast of Pentecost and I thank you for the ways in which you have collaborated in this matter. On Saturday, May 13th, the Vigil of Pentecost, we will have a gathering of young men and women who are at least sixteen years old and are now preparing to receive the sacrament of confirmation. This is a sacrament for young people, a sacrament of Christian commitment. These young men and women are school students or young people who are not in school but have at least sixteen years of age. They are being given a good catechetical preparation that will enable them to understand that this sacrament is only received when one is resolved to faithfully follow Christ, even though that might mean offering one's life. We would not have martyrs if it were not for confirmation. Confirmation is the sacrament of martyrs. I am sharing this information with you now so that our beloved pastors will have sufficient time to provide this catechetical instruction in their parishes. Also, when we begin the next Liturgical Year in December, we will cease our custom of confirming small children. Again the proper age for confirmation is sixteen.

I communicate to you with great joy another way in which our Church is building herself up despite the pain and suffering. The women religious who minister in our communities have come together for a day of profound reflection --- actually they have met for three days. One of their concrete proposals is to organize a mission of pacification, reconciliation and Christian love in those zones that have been assaulted during the recent conflict. It is the *campesinos* who have been assaulted and we recognize that these are noble men and women and we do not want them to live with hatred and a lack of unity. We want them to return to the paths of the Lord's commandment: *love one another* (d).

I also want to speak with you about the work of the Archdiocesan Federation of our Catholic Educational Centers. Our Catholic parochial schools and high schools are joining their efforts to establish criteria concerning the identity of the Catholic school that is an instrument of the diocesan pastoral mission. Very soon they will come together for a day of further reflection to continue to analyze the pastoral ministry of the schools which has very often been confused. There are some people who say that our schools are centers of socialism. This is a lie! This is slanderous! The Catholic schools are making people aware of the fact that true education has to be a reflection of the gospel.

As we consider the educational mission of our schools, we must be aware of the educational reforms, especially when these reforms want to continue to form *masses*, manipulate young men and women and professionals in order to maintain unjust structures instead of forming these people with independent standards that will enable them to be protagonists of their own destiny and the destiny of our nation. True educational reform has to seek that which the Church has pointed out for quite some time: the sharing of

independent and Christian standards that will make women and men aware of the fact that they can design the destiny of our nation.

While I could share with you much more information, it is better that I speak with you about my central theme. The central theme of this homily is based on today's three readings and could be summed up in the following words: the Church, the return of Christ in the Spirit. I repeat these words because they are a synthesis of my thoughts this morning: the Church, the return of Christ in the Spirit.

Easter, the Paschal Mystery, these days of the Church's reflection leads us to unite Jesus' departure from this earth with the presence of Christ in his mystical and heavenly life. In other words, the end of Jesus' earthly life is joined to the beginning of the Church's history. The gospel of Saint John, in those beautiful chapters where he presents us with Jesus' farewell discourses, provides us with the Church's constitution and presents us with a Christ who bids farewell to his own. Saint John calls the members of the Church *Jesus' own*. (e) What an honor for us this morning to be called Jesus' own. As Jesus looks at those who have gathered here to celebrate the Eucharist, he calls us his own, his disciples. With his own Jesus celebrated the inauguration of the Church that will be prolonged in all the followers of Christ --- and now we are those followers of Christ.

Using Jesus' words that appear at the beginning of today's gospel, we discover the meaning of this return of Jesus in the Spirit. Jesus says: *you have faith in God* (f). With these words Jesus exhorts the disciples who for three years, day and night, shared the problems, hopes and anxieties of the Divine Master to trust in the consolation of God's goodness. There is no reason to be sad. He tells them that they will not be alone, for where he is going, they will follow, but follow only later. (g) The passage from death to the ascension into heaven will also occur for them, but now Jesus must enter into his Passover event as head of the Mystical Body. One day, however, all people will follow him and he will then return. This is the theme of this morning's homily. Jesus will return to live with us in an invisible way, but a very real way. He lives in his Church, today, April 23, 1978. He lives not only in heaven, but he is here. My sisters and brothers, Christ has returned to *his own* in Spirit. The Church is the return of Christ in the Spirit.

Christ, true God and true man, has returned in the Spirit

In the first place, who is this Christ who is able to proclaim that after death he will return to live with us? The gospel presents us with a beautiful dialogue and we can say that this dialogue presents us with the essential and necessary concept of faith. Look at the dialogue in today's gospel, the dialogue between Jesus and his disciples Thomas and Philip. They still did not understand the meaning of the great mystery because Jesus had not yet returned in the Spirit. They were human persons who had listened to Jesus speak about sublime mysteries, but they did not understand his words. One of Jesus' disciples asked: *Where are you going? Tell us so that we can follow you* (h). Jesus replies with a phrase that summarizes his life and the gospel: *I am the way, the truth, and the life* (i). The other disciple says: *show us the Father and that will be enough for us* (j). These words express the desire of the whole Old Testament: to know God. Show us God. Jesus' response is like a theological treatise or a course in Christology: *Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?* (k).

My beloved sisters and brothers, as long as we do not see Christ as true God and true man we cannot understand the Church or the saving mystery of the Lord. Christ became this God-man, so that by means of this person Jesus, this God-man, we might be drawn into the mystery of the divine. *I am the way. No one comes to the Father except through me* (l). God did not come to save humankind apart from Jesus. Jesus Christ is the only mediator. Blessed are those who know and believe in Jesus! Blessed are those who are aware of the fact that even in the midst of these dark hours of our history, Christ lives! He lives all-powerfully as God and understands us as man. He is the man who is the *way*; the man who is involved in our history; the man of whom we sing²: *God appears as a worker, as one walking in the park, as one repairing the highway or changing the tire in a gas station. God is incarnated in every person and understands every worker and person who wants to follow him and love him.* Jesus said: *whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me* (m). He is *the way* to know humankind and he is also *the way* to know God. No one can come to God except through this bridge, *this way* that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Jesus, this God who was exalted by the Father on Easter, is the Christ who comes on Pentecost. Let us understand this very well, the coming of the Holy Spirit is the action of Christ in the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ comes to his Church. The Spirit of Christ, with his salvific power and love, the Spirit of Christ with his courage to denounce sin, the Spirit of Christ with his strength to tell people where is the only *way* that leads to salvation, the Spirit of Christ who points out the wide ways where people can become lost --- this Spirit of Christ comes to the Church. (n)

This Christ comes and with the final words of today's gospel proclaims: *Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these* (o). What is the meaning of these words? They mean that all the salvific power that Jesus brought from God will be entrusted to this group that forms the new born Church. Therefore, throughout the centuries and through the instrumentality of many people, the Church will do greater things than Christ in a geographical and numerical sense. Jesus saved the world with an objective redemption. He died on the cross and we might say he left us the source of redemption. Now his disciples have to make this salvific work available to the whole world. Christians see the Church of Christ extended throughout the world doing greater things than he was able to do personally.

Christ did not have in front of him the multitude that I have here in the Cathedral nor did he have the radio audience that I know today is very numerous. Christ is speaking through me and he is telling me: *You are doing greater things than I. Not because you are greater than I, but because through the miracle of the radio you are speaking my words. As this assembly of people listens, you are repeating my words. You are saving the world and pointing out the way. Like me, you are also offended and slandered. They stoned me and persecuted me. In my time there were also people who, despite the fact that through miracles I revealed the power of God, still did not believe in me. They sentenced me to death and crucified me because my doctrine disturbed them. Your teaching must also disturb people. But you are doing greater things than I because you are continuing my work.* Every priest, even the priest in the most humble parish, is doing greater things than Christ in the sense of today's gospel. The same can be said of the catechist and the parents and the leaders of the Word, his own, his disciples --- they are bringing to the world the Lord's redemptive work.

Christ returns in his Spirit. The Spirit of Christ gathers us together and the Spirit of Christ looks at the churches that are filled every Sunday so that his truth and life can be

transmitted to them. How beautiful, my sisters and brothers, is this Church! How beautiful is this Church that is the return of Christ in his Spirit! Christ is here. When we adore Christ in the sacred host and even though we cannot see him have no doubt, it is the return of Christ in his Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord anointed me as a priest so that I can pronounce the same words that Jesus proclaimed at the last supper: *This is my body* (p). Together we lift up our eyes and adore this Christ who is present among us. Christ is present in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation on Pentecost. When the bishop and the priests impose their hands, the Spirit of Christ comes and takes possession of these young men and women who have been prepared to receive the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ who returns in an invisible but very real, true and courageous way. Christ continues to speak with a distinct voice and inflection, the distinct voice and inflection of his instruments. Nevertheless, it is the same Christ who speaks, the same Christ who cares for the people, the same Christ who is offended and discredited when his Church is slandered and discredited.

The presence of Christ in the Church is a building , a people, a community

My second thought is the following. The presence of Christ who returns can be seen in three distinct ways that are revealed in today's readings. I invite you to reflect on these readings. The Church is presented as a building of living stones, the house of God; as the People of God, a chosen race; and finally as a community of *diaconia*, that is, a community of service --- for deacon means servant.

In the first place, the Church is a building of living stones. What a beautiful image! Today's reading tells us that Christ is *the cornerstone* and upon this cornerstone all Christians are *living stones* (q). Christians are not dead building materials, dead stones. Every person, with their individual qualities and charisms and their own degree of holiness, is a living stone. We are building a temple and when a Christian dies, this stone is placed in the temple of glory. The splendor of God illuminates this sanctuary formed with people from the quarries of this earth, formed with people who are enlightened with the light of the Spirit, with the blood of baptism, the blood of Christ. What a beautiful destiny for all of human life! Every person is a living stone.

My sisters and brothers, even when we are old and infirm, when we feel useless and poor and on the margins of society, let us realize that we are living stones that the divine builder is molding to become a temple that begins to reveal God's splendor on this earth. Saint Peter says: *the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone* (r). Yet many people have cast this stone aside as useless because it does not serve their interests. They prefer the darkness and material things. For them, Christ is the stone that causes them to stumble and fall. How terrible! Christ offers himself as a foundation upon which people can build their lives, yet many people cast this stone aside because they want to build on another foundation, on other idols and values. Christ does not fit into their construction plans.

Thus we can see that the Church, God's construction, does not conform to the materialist construction of the world. As an architect is well aware, cement made with mud does not adhere well. Building materials become separated when they are not made with materials that adhere to one another. People who live without Christ's Spirit are mud, clay, a weak construction. They do not adhere to the unshakeable rock of those who build in sincerity, love, truth, and justice. They do not adhere to that which is totally sincere. These people are unable to build their lives on the foundation of Christ because Christ disturbs those whose lives are based on lies and hypocrisy, those who use their pens to distill poison and hatred and

to defame others. Christ cannot be part of a construction project of hatred or a project that is as weak as clay.

The other beautiful figure of the Church is the People of God. In the second reading we find an echo of the Old Testament speaking of Israel which shared aspects of a Christian people. My sisters and brothers, I would like you to engrave in your life the four phrases that Saint Peter uses because they are four honorable signs of true Christians. Saint Peter tells us today that those who are baptized are (a) a chosen race, (b) a royal priesthood, (c) a holy nation, (d) a people of his *own* called to proclaim the wondrous deeds of the Lord (s). This is our duty, this is the mission of the Church as the people of God.

It would be wonderful if you were to re-read today's second reading. This reading is dedicated to all Christians who have been scattered about and are unable to live in their homeland (t). They are told: *Christians, because of your baptism you are a chosen race*. Whatever the color of your skin, whatever your social status, whatever political beliefs you hold, you are a chosen race. This is similar to the words spoken to the people of Israel when they had to leave their land and live in exile. Wherever they lived they remembered their origins and the destiny of their history. So every Christian, wherever they might be, should feel that they are part of this chosen race. Through baptism, we have become part of God's chosen race. Through baptism, we have entered into a relationship with Christ. In our blood, our veins, and our lives, we carry God's dynasty. What an honor!

This people of baptized persons have true priestly functions. How I would love to have the time, my sisters and brothers, to describe for you the priestly functions of the people! At the time that children are baptized, they become part of this people that has been placed in the world to worship God. This is their priestly responsibility, to worship God. Saint Peter tells us that we are a royal priesthood that must offer spiritual cult to God (u). Thus the life of every Christian, whatever their profession, is a worship of God.

The Mass is not only celebrated here in the Cathedral on Sunday. The Mass is also celebrated by those people who make their lives a worship of God. Never a lie falls from their lips. Never in their conscience is there resentment or hatred. In their daily work, no matter how humble, they give glory to God. In this sense Mass is being celebrated by the tinker, the carpenter, the street cleaner, the woman in the market, the student and the professional. Mass is celebrated in every type of labor that you who are listening to me perform. I say to you, my sisters and brothers, that you are priests who celebrate the Mass in your own occupation and in your own individual lives. Do not lose this divine sense of your existence.

When pain and suffering put us to the test, you my beloved infirm sisters and brothers --- if you are listening to me in Divina Providencia Hospital or any other hospital or if you are resting on your sickbed --- I know that you my beloved people who are ill are able to say with John XXIII, who when gravely ill was told to lie down and rest: *the bed is also an altar and now I am the victim on this altar*. What a beautiful concept! These same words can be spoken by the worker or the employee in any office: *my work is an altar and in this case I am the sacred victim on this altar. I will work with enthusiasm and fulfill my obligations*. Now tell me, my sisters and brothers, is this subversive? Tell me if this is not a way to resolve our present situation and restore order to our society? Can we not say to our officials: *you can also be sacred hosts for God if you carry out your political work with a true Christian sense*? Can we not say to those who are wealthy and own large tracts of land: *you*

are also able to be holy victims of God for if you were baptized, you are the host on the altar if you give a social character to justice and allow your relationships with others to be guided by Christian principles? This is what it means to be Christian, to be baptized, to be the People of God, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

This is what it means to be a nation that has been placed in the world to proclaim the marvelous deeds of the Lord.

This is what it means to be a people of his *own*. Christ has bought us with his blood and therefore we no longer have complete dominion over our lives. Christ is our Lord; he is our King. We have to govern our lives according to his laws. If people no longer want God to reign over their lives, then they would do well to do like the Christians in Germany. The German people are obliged to pay a tax that will assist the religious group of their affiliation. If people do not want to pay this tax, they have to say: *I am not a Christian. Erase my name from the baptismal books.* Yes, this would be preferable, not because they would no longer have to pay a tax, but because they are really saying that at this time they do not want to support the People of God who as a chosen people, a holy nation, and a courageous community must proclaim the marvelous deeds of God and denounce the injustices of the people who are around us. Yes, it would be preferable to erase one's name from the baptismal registry then to be baptized and go about living the life of ignominy of pagans and sinners. Such people are baptized but pagans at heart.

Therefore as we reflect on the approaching celebration of Pentecost, let us realize that this is a time to reawaken the Christian conscience of our people, a time to remind people of their dignity, for as Saint Peter said: *you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own.*

Finally, my sisters and brothers, Christ's return in the Spirit to his *own*, to us, makes us a community of service, a community of love, a hierarchical community and a community of prayer. Community and communion are characteristics of the Church. The Vatican Council invites us to educate ourselves and put aside an individualistic spirituality that proclaims: *My Lord and my God*, and instead clothe ourselves in the spirituality of the People of God (v). We are a people, a community, a communion. The first Christians referred to themselves as a *koinonia*. This is a beautiful Greek word that is used very often today by the base communities of faith and parish communities who are uncovering the significance of this *koinonia*, this community, this family life. They are living this family life and give this life together their own proper characteristics.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles refers to the ministry of the deacon. There were conflicts between the Hellenists and the Hebrews (division had begun in the Church). The Hellenists complained: *You are not taking care of our widows. You are neglecting our people* (w). Division in the Church always begins with some form of selfishness or materialism. This is the first time, the first news that we have of some form of division in the Church. Therefore, my sisters and brothers, we should not be surprised: in the human Church there are people with bad habits. As a result there will be division among people. We should not be scandalized by this fact but should look at the way in which this crisis was resolved.

The hierarchy, Peter and the apostles, called together the community, the *koinonia*, and told them: *The community has grown in great numbers and we cannot care for all of these*

people. We cannot neglect our primary obligation of prayer and the ministry of the word. Select from among your group seven persons filled with the Holy Spirit (x). Thus, the community chose seven people and imposed hands on them (y). Saint Stephen, the first martyr, was among those who were chosen. Look, my sisters and brothers, at this beautiful gesture of the Church. The hierarchy proposed a way to resolve this situation and the community collaborated by selecting seven individuals who then received the power of the hierarchy. Once again the Church and the hierarchy are acting together. Let us never forget this fact because the day when we give this community just a charismatic meaning, a meaning of love and communion and forget the authority of the Pope, the bishops and the priests, then we are destroying the structure of this community.

Diaconia is a Greek word that means service. Deacons and all those who belong to the hierarchy are part of this *diaconia*. Bishops do not rule as despots. At least they should not act in this way. The bishop should be the most humble servant of the community because Jesus told his disciples, the first bishops: *let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant (z)*. The command that we follow is one of service. Our way of life and our world is also one of service. Note well the following aspect of Saint Peter's life: his primary mission was prayer and the ministry of the Word (a2). My sisters and brothers, at this moment I am serving you. My preaching is a service of the Word of God and that allows me to communicate this Word to the people. Thus I have an obligation to prepare my homilies, my interventions and my writings so that I can communicate this word in the clearest way possible. Therefore, I am pained --- who as a servant of this Word would not be pained? Who as a humble servant of this Archdiocese would not be pained? --- I am pained when I offer this service and some people, instead of being grateful, spit at this word. Like the arrogant masters who speak to their poor cooks and say: *this is no good!*

My sisters and brothers, I am grateful to you for all your beautiful expressions of solidarity. I repeat that when you express your solidarity, I want to raise my voice and say with Jesus: *I give thanks to you, Father, because this ministry of the Word that I attempt to fulfill is understood by the hearts of the humble and simple people.(b2) On the other hand, diatribes, offensive and slanderous words are proclaimed by those who believe they are self-sufficient. They are arrogant and locked up in their own way of thinking. They do not want anyone to approach them with the authentic doctrine of the true gospel.*

My sisters and brothers, I conclude with this thought: a community can solve everything with service and love. *This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another (c2)*. Love is the sign of this community. As we conclude this reflection I invite everyone to examine their hearts. If you find you can love and love even those who offend you, then you are Christian. Blessed be God! If you hold on to resentments, resentment against someone who upsets you, then you yourself know that you are not acting in a Christian manner. Your heart tells you that you are not being a Christian. If you pay someone to write or speak on the radio against a brother or sister, even though that person might be a bishop, you are not Christian. If you earn your living and fill your stomach by selling your pen or your voice to serve the selfish interests of others, you are not a Christian. But all of this, however, is understandable, and I understand you. You are hungry and so you are willing to sell you good name. Let us be careful, my sisters and brothers! Let us not sell ourselves to anyone! We have been bought by Christ and his love ought to govern our lives.

Let us celebrate our Eucharist! What an honor to know that the sacrament of baptism that made us a chosen race of God invites us to celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday so that we can be nourished by his divine life! Our divine life is the most beautiful gift that Christ has given us. Christ has risen and has not abandoned us. He has returned in his Spirit and his risen life, his immortal life, and his eternal life wants to become part of our life. Through faith and the sacraments we are able to possess this presence and life of Christ among us. Therefore, let us now proclaim with profound conviction that Christ is here among us. Let us proclaim our Creed.

¹ See “La palabra del arzobispo. Que quede bien claro”, *Orientación*, 23 April 1978.

² Opening hymn of the Nicaraguan “Misa campesina” (Carlos Mejía Godoy).

Margin References (a) Lk 20,20: (b) Jn 18,20-21: (c) Is 32,17: (d) Jn 13,34: (e) Jn 13,1: (f) Jn 14,1: (g) Jn 13,36: (h) Jn 14,5: (i) Jn 14,6: (j) Jn 14,8: (k) Jn 14,9-10: (l) Jn 14,6: (m) Mt 25,40: (n) Mt 7,13: (o) Jn 14,12: (p) Lk 22,19: (q) 1P 2,4-5: (r) 1P 2,7-8: (s) 1P 2,9: (t) 1P 1,1: (u) 1P 2,5: (v) GS 30: (w) Ac 6,1: (x) Ac 6,2: (y) Ac 6,5-6: (z) Mk 9,35: (a2) Ac 6,4: (b2) Lk 10,21: (c2) Jn 13,35.