

IN THE COVENANT GOD ADOPTS US INTO HIS FAMILY

Feast of the Holy Trinity
June 10, 1979

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

My dear sisters and brothers.

Today is the feast of the Most Blessed Trinity. This then is a celebration in honor of God. The Trinity is a Christian expression that identifies the true God who is one God but three distinct persons who are called: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is very logical that after having celebrated the mystery of Jesus Christ who came to save the world, we should go back in time with him to the heights from which our redemption was brought about. It is very logical that after having received the Spirit who came from on high to share the Christian life with his Church --- and we are the Church --- then now we should go back in time with him to the heights from which he came. Through the Spirit we come to the source of that which is divine and this is the meaning of today's feast: a return to the origin and the goal of the whole mystery of Christ which we continue to live as Church.

This celebration is like the crown of the Easter Season, the crown of the celebration of our redemption which, as we have said many times, was initiated by the Father who so loved us that he sent his Son to save us and to carry out the work of redemption here on earth. The Son has returned to the Father and completed his mission and then the Father and the Son sent us the Holy Spirit. This feast is not only a feast of God but also a feast of all people who believe in God. It is a feast of all of us who believe and have a blessed faith in our Lord.

I wholeheartedly congratulate all of those who have kept this faith. I am happy to come to Mass on Sunday because this means that faith has brought us together and that faith unites us as one family, the family of God. Without faith in God the problems of the world and of the human person are unsolvable, absurd, and meaningless. This is especially true when we see how much disorder there is in the world. Look at the disorder in our country, in our people, in our present situation! Look at the disorder in Nicaragua! There are so many things that can only be explained by faith in God, by returning to the heights where we can obtain a perspective that allows us to see the reasons why things in this world seem so absurd.

This is the message of the divine Word on this celebration of the feast of the Blessed Trinity. We have joined together the message of Lent and Holy Week and Easter by our reflection on the covenant between God and people and so today, on the feast of the Holy Trinity we will also reflect on the Word from the perspective of the covenant. We can title our reflection this morning: *Through the covenant God adopts us as members of his family.* With very inadequate words this is the title that reflects the great reality that we want to be mindful of this morning: through his covenant, the covenant that God desired to establish with people, all women and men become adopted members of God's family. We are adopted

children of the family of God if we accept the invitation to participate in the covenant that God offers to us this morning.

The first point that I will develop is the idea of the God of our fathers and we will discover this reality as we reflect on the first reading. (1) The second point I will develop is the fact that the God of Jesus Christ is a family, Father Son and Holy Spirit. In the gospel we find a notable development of the revelation of the God of our fathers. We will also see this in the writing of Saint Paul where this morning we hear reference to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Finally, we reflect on the idea that we become the family of God because of the Holy Spirit. This idea is stated in the second reading where Saint Paul outlines the effects that flow from this God who is also family: God establishes a covenant with us through Baptism and through Baptism we become adopted members of this divine family. The great mystery of this reality of adoption is revealed through the Holy Spirit who was sent by the Father and the Son so that all people might become members of the family of God, the People of God. Let us reflect clearly on these ideas so that we might build up the family of God. Let us not confuse people in general with the People of God, the family of God that is formed by those who want to accept the covenant established by God. My sisters and brothers, there is no reason to confuse people in general with the People of God.

In El Salvador we are all people but the People of God is formed by those who believe in the mystery of God and enter into this covenant relationship with God. Therefore, the Church should not be confused with any other human group because the Church desires to be the family of God that believes in the Father and the redemption of the Son and the sanctification of the Holy Spirit. The Church wants to be nourished with the Word of God and with the sacraments. The Church wants to live a life that is proper to the Church. The Church is light for all human groups and organizations and from the Church come forth women and men who believe in God and who act as a leaven in every sphere and dimension of society: political, social, economic. Do not, however, confuse the Church with these institutions.

It is very important to be clear about these ideas and so today, the feast of the Blessed Trinity, we are going to have the opportunity to clarify the meaning of the People of God that is formed by those who believe in God and follow Jesus Christ and are nourished by his Spirit. To the degree that we integrate ourselves into the family of God, the People of God, we will be an enlightened human group, a ferment of hope, a seed of light and unity in the world. I invite you to be truly Christian, to be truly Church, and this does not mean that we are not interested in the struggles of this world. In no way is that true! I am experiencing the reality that some people are interested in distorting my preaching no matter how clear I try to be. I have always said that the Church does not identify herself with politics or the worldly struggles but I have also said that the Church provides light and leaven to all worldly struggles. The Church is not in the world in order to remain hidden in the sacristy but rather the Church preserves the family of God in order to be the ferment of God in the midst of all the different struggles and dimensions of peoples' lives. The Church is the servant of humanity. As the Pope was leaving Poland today he said: *Let us open the frontiers because in the Church there is no room for imperialism. The Church is service; the Church serves the world!*¹

The God of our fathers

The first reading presents us with two ways of coming to a knowledge of God. The reading begins with the words: *Ask now of the days of old, before your time, ever since God created man upon the earth: what people has heard the voice of God like Israel?* (3). In other words, from the time of the creation of the world God has revealed himself to all people in the act of creation. There is, however, a special voice that is called revelation in which God not only allows himself to be discovered naturally but also speaks directly and thus reveals himself.

Saint Paul recognizes this fact when he states in his letter to the Romans: *Ever since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be understood and perceived in what he has made and as a result they have no excuse for denying God* (4). We must also be mindful of the thought that was expressed by the First Vatican Council that took place during the last century and that defined as a dogma of faith: *It is possible for human intelligence to discover God in creation with its own natural light and without any need of religion.*(5) It is for this reason that this method is often referred as the intellectual path --- a process of reflection on creation that leads us back to the Creator. Therefore, Saint Paul was able to say: *They have no excuse; for although they knew God they did not accord him glory as God or give him thanks* (6). Thus according to our Christian faith a lack of knowledge concerning God or a denial of God is always a moral fault. Those who deny God, deny him not only because they are unable to discover him but because there is something about their moral conduct that does not allow them to see God and for this reason they have no excuse. Atheists are sinners because they glory in their denial of God. This is not pride or bragging but simply the truth. It is a truth, however, that is not rooted in the impossibility of knowing God but rather is rooted in sin that people bear within themselves.

The lack of knowledge concerning God implies a moral fault: vacillation in our thinking, clouded reasoning, hardness of heart, blindness and even foolishness. Only those who are foolish are atheists or sinners. For the love of God let no one glory in the words: *I do not believe in God.* It is sad that there are people who glory in science and because of their scientific thinking say that they do not believe in God. The day before yesterday I visited a very infirm, elderly woman in the hospital. This woman possessed a profound faith! She said to me: *I have tried to inculcate this faith in my children and they have walked on other paths and I do not know how they are at the present time.* How true this is! That which a mother inculcates in her children with such tenderness and holiness can be lost so easily. It can be lost in high school or the university, in books or in groups that have no regard for God, or in so many different forms of vice. The hearts of these individuals then become hardened and their minds clouded. There is no greater deterrent for sinners than their faith in God who demands: *Don't do it!* Therefore it is easy to throw out and rid oneself of the idea of God and then one can feel free to sin. The atheist has no right to glory in atheism --- it is the fruit of sin and is not worthy of the human person.

The Second Vatican Council has stated that the highest vocation of the human person is to achieve a communication with God who created them in love.(7) Slowly people begin to discover that they were not created alone and in isolation and the same could be said of their parents. In fact their parents were instruments of God and our lives come from God. In this process of reflection people enter into a state of contemplation which is the highest form of

prayer and there they are able to speak with God as a friend. This is the highest form of development that people can achieve: to enter into communion with God.

But this is the God of the philosophers, the God of reflection or, as Tertullian said during the fourth century: *the God of Athens is not the same as the God of Jerusalem.*² The God of Jerusalem who is revealed in the Bible does not require such philosophy or explanation. In today's reading it is beautiful to listen to the words of Moses who dealt intimately with God: *Ask from one end of the sky to the other: did anything so great ever happen before? Was it ever heard of? Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live?* (8). The reading continues and describes the Biblical wonders: *Or did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, with his strong hand and outstretched arm, and by great terrors, all of which the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?* (9).

How beautiful is revelation! The God of revelation does not need to go crawling before people so that they might form a religion that is both pleasing to them and invented by them. This is the difference between human religions, invented by women and men and the great religion that God has revealed. God speaks. God lives. God presents himself to the chosen people and seeks out a nation like a bridegroom seeks a bride to take as his wife. God seeks among all peoples a people with whom he will establish a covenant. The covenant that God established reveals a certain exclusivity just as a husband loves his wife exclusively and loves her above all other women. In the Old Testament we see that God loves in the same way, with a wonderful preference that Moses calls to mind when he says: *Where is the nation that is able to glory in this friendship with God?*

Speaking about wonderful deeds it is necessary to keep these in mind especially during this time when our people struggle for their liberation, their freedom and their dignity. It is wonderful to be reminded of this God who is the same God of our people, the God of our fathers who worked wonderful signs with his powerful arm. Wonderful signs and war! God uses war as a sign of his predilection to preserve the freedom of his people with his strong arm and outstretched hand. (10) The God of those who believe and those who are not atheists is not a weak God. Who knows if it is not the atheist who is really weak! There are no more terrified people or people who pray with more fear at the time of testing than those who say they do not believe in God. Those who believe that God exists, know that God is the God of our people, know that God is among us with his signs and accompanies us in our wars and struggles, know that God is on the side of the people who seek a response to their just demands, know that God is wonderful and is the God of Christians who have continued to be adopted by him.

This is the God of revelation and there is no need for grand abstractions or the philosophy of Athens. Our God is not the God of philosophers but the God of whom Jesus spoke: *I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike, to those who are humble and simple* (11). The God of the humble! Let us give thanks to God on this feast of the Blessed Trinity, for although he was so great and elevated and high above us yet he wanted to be discovered not through the wonders and marvels of nature but through the simplicity of children who learn from their mothers: *be good because God is watching! God loves you and God loves all good children!* Yes, we have learned this because the words of the Bible were on the lips of our parents. We have learned this because Moses spoke through our catechists. The Bible taught us about the God of our fathers, the God of Christian

revelation, the God whom Jesus came to reveal more fully and thus Jesus became a brother like us in order to teach us the ways of God.

Events of the week

Before speaking to you about the God of Jesus Christ and the God who came to bring us the Holy Spirit, I want to pause here, my sisters and brothers, and speak about the present historical reality of our country as we continue to reflect on the God of our fathers. We do not simply call to mind the history of Egypt, the exodus and the Promised Land where the God of Israel was revealed as a God who is present with his people. Let us also be mindful of the following: we are speaking about the God who in 1979 is present in Nicaragua, present in El Salvador and present in Poland where the Pope has unmasked the disorder of that nation. This is the God that speaks with justice and speaks strongly and if necessary speaks through war and through his words that unmask so many hidden realities. In light of the God of Israel, the events that have occurred during this past week lead us to a deep reflection. Let us look at the God of El Salvador.

The UND party has denounced the appearance of twenty-bodies, many of them with evident signs of torture and many of the bodies cannot be identified. Other assassinations have occurred and these victims have been identified by their families. The statement of UND attributes this extreme violence that our country is currently experiencing to different organizations of the police that are affiliated with the government: *we have seen that the method that is put into practice so many times in our country by the security forces always seems to occur when a State of Siege is declared.*³

At the very beginning we said that we hoped that the declaration of a State of Siege would not be an occasion, as has happened in the past, or serve as a pretext for the abuse of the dignity and freedom of the human person. The God of our people cannot look kindly on a law that is decreed which is repressive in nature. The God of our people is on the side of these tortured bodies that cry out to heaven. The God of our people is on the side of the families who have been orphaned and made to feel so helpless. How could God not be with our people when fourteen teachers have been killed since April 24th? During this month which is dedicated to teachers we have to remember these persons: Noel Saúl Ramos, Ricardo Villalobos, Emma Guadalupe Carpio, Rafael Vásquez Martín, Antonio Merino, René Mauricio Pacheco, Orlando Guerrero Chamul, Pedro Federico Colorado, Francisco Borja Caranza, René Guevara, Lázaro Arias, José Manuel Funes Minero, Manuel de Jesús Chávez, Héctor Joaquín Torres. Fourteen mentors of our children have been assassinated!

At the same time I want to denounce the systematic malicious attack against the education that is occurring in our Catholic Schools.⁴ I have said this many times that the education that is carried out in our schools is often confused and misunderstood because we want to awaken people to a Christian awareness and help people to think critically. We seek to provide a liberating education, an education that makes people architects of their destiny, an education that creates women and men who are able to create a better future for their country. When we speak about all of this we are accused of Marxist indoctrination. It is most convenient to tag us with this name so that our educational system becomes despised and hated. Pope Paul VI clearly stated that Christian education must be concerned about the authentic promotion of the human person.

Union members at Luz Eléctrica have been threatened with death and repressed. Two union members were recently arrested in Cerrón Grande. There is a list of persons who have been arrested and yet have not been brought before the courts and there is fear about their situation: Oscar Atilio Chicas, Julián Medía Ardón (a *campesino*), Sara Brizuela, Manuel Barahona Chávez (a *campesino*), Cruz Flores, Domingo Murcia, Manuel Antonio Mejía, María Reina Mejía, Carlos Mejía, Blanca Elia Beltrán. Also Carlos Durán, a student, eighteen years old, was arrested and later assassinated. His body was found in Playón.

. On June 4th masked individuals entered the control room of the geothermal plant in Ahuachapán and left threatening letters addressed to the workers and union leaders. It is said that this was done in the name of the armed organization, the White Warriors Union. The trade union played an important role in the series of strikes that took place during the month of March.

Numerous people have been threatened by anonymous phone calls and letters. The director of the newspaper, *La Crónica*, denounced these threats and has had the courage to take responsibility for what might happen to General Romero.⁵

On June 5th, a horrible event occurred in the Hospital Usulután and all of you have read about this in the newspaper.⁶ Manuel Rodas Umaña, a prisoner, who was recuperating after having been wounded during his arrest, was riddled with bullets. He was under the jurisdiction of the First Court of Recourse. The assassins then boldly left the hospital as though there was nothing impeding their departure.

The Minister of Education has lamented the fact that teachers have become involved in this wave of violence and that so many citizens from different sectors of our country continue to be victims.

. A thorough investigation of these events has been promised but in the recent past we have heard of so many promises that are never realized. Again we are reminded of the fact that the role of the Judiciary seems to be asleep while so much crime surrounds us and so many families are in mourning. The government has shown on previous occasions that they are able to restrain the wave of violence of the extreme right and now we want the government to make every effort possible to put an end to the crime in this area of our country.

Nor are we going to cover up the crimes of the other extreme. We are not in agreement with terrorist activity because it is clear that the actions of the military political movement have also gone to the extreme. In a confrontation with the National Guard two supposed members of the FPL and a member of the National Guard were assassinated. Also three members of FARN were killed and the circumstances are very unclear. No news has been heard about the three persons who were abducted and we have continually spoken out on their behalf: two Englishmen and Miguel Miguel. On June 3rd the FPL burned three small planes in Santa Ana, a gasoline station in Sonsonate, the mayor's office in San Martín and four other offices. No one knows who destroyed the offices of the Treasury Police in El Cataño on June 4th. The assassination of the Swiss representative remains a mystery. We hope that means are being taken to investigate these cases. I repeat: the Church in no way is able to approve these acts of terrorism that perhaps are inspired by resentment or vengeance.

At the same time our people have received very encouraging testimonies of solidarity and I want to publicly express my gratitude for the letters that have arrived from France and

Venezuela and Costa Rica. I want to clarify what I have already said in the newspapers and other media that I have not asked any communist in Costa Rica to condemn our government.⁷ This is a lie and I have not done this. It is interesting that the media has continued to publish this news despite the fact that I have sent my clarifications on this matter to the press. It is obvious that this is another one of those campaigns of slander. Who is paying for the publication of this news? Who wants to slander the Archbishop?

These are our people and I want to use this as a framework for our reflection on God who seeks out a people in order to guide them along the paths of peace and holiness. God with his strong arm wants to correct the present disorder. The Pope expressed the same thought when he celebrated the last Mass in Poland in front of the patron of Poland, the patron of moral order. He said: *In the final analysis the moral order is built up by means of human beings. This order consists of a large number of tests, each one a test of faith and character. From every victorious test the moral order is built up. For every failed test moral disorder grows. We know very well from our entire history that we must not permit, absolutely and at whatever cost, this disorder. For this we have already paid a bitter price many times.*⁸ The God of eternal order could never desire the disorders in our country.

I want to ask all those persons who have faith in God to intensify their prayer and their commitment to this Church that proclaims the holy order of God. Let us work together according to our possibilities: those who have a political vocation work in the political arena because this is a duty of citizens. All of you, especially all laypersons, remember that faith in God that is not translated into action that attempts to reestablish a more just order in the country in which God has placed you, is not the true faith. Each one of us (and here I include myself) has the obligation to make a commitment to work in the area of our competency, for example, in pastoral ministry, in our homes, in our country, in those areas where we might have influence be it in the political, social, or economic area, be it with the government or with organized groups. We all have to work so that this people that has not only been chosen by God but also been baptized with his holy name, El Salvador, might truly be the people in whom God acts and lives with his strong and powerful arm.

Let us now focus on another people: the people of Poland. During these days of the Pope's visit we have seen a wonderful example that even in the worst situation and even under the worse regimes, the faith of the people remains filled with hope and keeps them united and willing to work together so that God reigns. I have been very pleased to see the agreement between the Pope's thoughts that were expressed in Poland and the lines of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. The Pope said: *Normal relations between the Church and the State in Poland are joined to the cause of fundamental human rights.*⁹ He then said: *no true dialogue can be undertaken unless the authorities respect the convictions of believers, guarantee the rights of all citizens and establish normal conditions for the activity of the Church.*¹⁰ This is exactly what we have said here. We are not opposed to dialogue but it seems to me that the Pope also sees the need for certain conditions to be met in order to have an effective dialogue: *if these conditions are created, conditions that respect the people whom the Church never abandons.* The Church could never abandon the people who suffer.

The prayer that the Pope offered to the Virgin Mary was most beautiful. The people of Poland are most devoted to Mary and the Pope prayed: *Mother of the Church, enable the Church to rejoice in freedom and peace as she fulfills her mission of salvation. With this mature objective give her a new maturity in faith and an inner unity. Help us to overcome opposition and difficulties. Help us to overcome the great moral threats against the*

*fundamental values of life and love.*¹¹ He then added: *justice and peace can only be protected by respecting the rights of the people and nations and not through hatred or war or self-destruction.*¹²

Finally, this morning, as we continue to reflect on the People of God, the people under the guidance of God, I want to express my solidarity with the sufferings and the concerns of our sister nation, the people of Nicaragua. I ask all of you to join with me in this expression of solidarity. In total agreement with the guidelines and principles of the Archdiocese of San Salvador, the bishops of Nicaragua wrote a letter about the difficult situation of the people and invited the authorities to examine a series of procedures that are contrary to the civic order and yet these procedures have become routine and daily occurrences. They list a series of events that are very similar to those that are occurring here in El Salvador: *the disappearance of persons, imprisonment without cause, burdensome fines, torture, assassination of innocent persons, execution of prisoners, desecration of corpses, leveling and destruction of homes, hospitals, churches, and schools, the arbitrary closing of radio stations and slander against bishops, priests, religious and laypeople.*¹³

The bishops went on to say: *It is painful to see the state of insecurity and even desperation that afflicts our people. Yesterday, legal subterfuge closed peaceful paths toward democracy and the extermination of those paths destroys any possibility for a just and civil restoration of national order. Our people have a right to be creators of their own destiny.*¹⁴

This is what the Church desires! The Church is not an opposition party but is the power of God who inspires the people so that the people create their own destiny. The Church does not want to impose political or social systems and should not do this because it is not within her competency to do so. The Church cries out for the freedom of people so that no one single person imposes policies on people but rather so that women and men, according to their knowledge and expertise, can promote that which people deserve and that which people desire: to be creators of their own destiny, free to chose their own paths in order to achieve the destiny that God has pointed out.

Therefore, as I speak about Nicaragua, I hope that the statement concerning the non-intervention by the Salvadorian forces in support of the tyranny that is taking place in Nicaragua will be heard. If any intervention is made then as the Bishops of Nicaragua stated it should be *an intervention on behalf of the people so that they can freely seek their own destiny.*

I hope that these three summaries of events in Poland, Nicaragua and El Salvador enable us to understand the faith in God that people ought to have. In Poland the Pope realizes that he is confronting an atheist government and in a certain sense he has more freedom to cry out for the religious freedom of his people. When this characteristic of atheism is camouflaged by Christian hypocrisy, then here in Latin America it becomes difficult to speak in the same way. Nevertheless as the bishops spoke in Nicaragua so also we try to do the same here in El Salvador. The Church is not an opposition party but defends God who wants people to be free. As stated by Moses who, in his very flesh bore the memory of slavery in Egypt and experienced the humiliation of his people at the hand of the Egyptians, God desires freedom and dignity for the people of Israel. Moses invited the people to lift up their voices in gratitude to the God who freed them with his powerful arm and outstretched hand. We also

ask the Lord to free us from this difficult situation and to grant freedom and dignity to our beloved people.

The God of Our Lord Jesus Christ

I will be briefer when talking about these next two points. We have spent a considerable amount of time reflecting on the God of our Fathers who continues to be the God of the people of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the God of all people of good will. The God of our fathers can be found in the midst of our history and supports us on our journey. When Jesus came in the fullness of time he spoke about the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.(12) This does not contradict what we have already said but brings these ideas to perfection because the God of the ancient covenant was a monotheistic God. After speaking to Moses about the wonderful deeds that had been done for the people, God told him that there is only one God. *Reflect on and mediate in your hearts upon the reality that the Lord is the only God above in the heavens and here below on earth.*(13) God is transcendent and infinite but not far from us. Indeed our God is near to us here on earth and there is no other God. The one God was known by the Israelites as an almighty God, the God of the people, and the God of the patriarchs but Jesus comes and makes more perfect God's revelation.

We heard the following words in today's gospel: *baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (14). The God of Jesus Christ is a God-family, not a solitary God. God is one and unique but in God there are three persons. The Father begets the Son through a mysterious process of eternity. Then through the Father who begets and the Son who is begotten there results a person, love, the Spirit of love, the Holy Spirit who unites and gives an identity to the three persons. This is the Trinitarian process that Jesus came to reveal. We see this as Jesus speaks about the Father and the Spirit: *the Father loves you* (15)... *I will send you the Spirit.*(16) This promise of the God of Jesus Christ is fulfilled when Jesus dies for our sins and rises from the dead and returns to heaven. As Jesus cries out to the Father: *it is finished!* (17) the Trinitarian mission is not interrupted but extended. The Spirit who unites the Father and the Son in an eternal love is sent to all people. The Holy Spirit comes among us with the power of God's life and makes us one family.

Let us focus on Christ who reveals the Father to us. We have already said that Jesus did not come to reveal to us a god of Athens or a god of the philosophers. Jesus came to reveal a living God, a God of love. Jesus speaks about this to the Apostles: *whoever has seen me has seen the Father* (18) or as Saint Paul said: *all the glory of the Father is revealed in the face of Christ, his Son* (19). This is the role of Jesus and in light of this the Council refers to Jesus as the fullness of revelation.(20) Now we know all of this because Jesus has spoken --- Jesus proclaimed that *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son who died for us*. All the wonderful parables of Jesus are revelations of God --- the lost sheep that the shepherd goes out to seek with love(21), the prodigal son who squanders his inheritance and then returns home to once again receive the embrace and love of his father.(22) This is the God that Jesus came in the world to reveal ... the God of Jesus Christ is the God of mercy.

Therefore we as Christians (certainly more than the Israelites who were with Moses) ought to give thanks because it is not through a burning bush that we have come to know God. Christ is the burning bush of the New Testament. In Christ love and the fullness of God burn. Those who know Jesus Christ have encountered God. *No one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son*

wishes to reveal him (23). How beautiful to have Christian faith, faith in Christ! How wonderful to have a faith that is self-giving and confident and trusting, a faith that is not simply some theory, a faith of the classroom and the intellect. *In you, Lord, I place all my trust; let me never be put to shame* (24). To believe in Christ who reveals the Father is to accept and affirm the faith that makes us truly free.

The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit

Finally, sisters and brothers, my third point: the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit. The second reading speaks to us about the women and men who become members of the family of God.

How blessed and chosen one feels when as a child one is adopted by a family who offers to pay for his/her education and is willing to do everything to help him/her develop his/her personality. But there is no comparison between this reality and the work of the Holy Spirit who came to adopt us, that is, came to invite us to share in his life. Do you want this life of the Father and the Son and the Spirit who is union and communion, love and self-giving and light, do you want this life to return here and make people loving, united, self-giving, generous and one?

Saint Paul says today: *Blessed are those who accept this invitation, who are led by the Spirit of God because they are children of God* (25). We have received this Spirit but what effects has this produced in us? Through Baptism and through living in the grace of God we have become part of the divine family. The second reading speaks about the consequences of this.

You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear (26). We should remember these words especially when we live in a situation in which we experience fear and tension. We did not receive a spirit of slavery but a spirit of adoption, the ability to be free. Therefore every struggle for freedom corresponds to the plan of God not only for the people of Israel but for all people of the New Testament. This adoption and freedom leads people to holiness.

The Spirit who makes us adopted children also makes us cry out: Abba.(27) This is an Aramaic word, the language that Jesus used when he prayed to the Father. *Abba* means *father* or *papa* and Jesus taught us the Our Father.(28) When we are in God's grace we are able to say these words because the Spirit witnesses to the interior reality that *we are indeed children of God.*(29) God has adopted us and allowed us to share in the divine life that elevates and raises us up, not only in eternity after our death, but also here, while we dwell on this earth. This is true of those people who live in God's grace --- and thanks to God we have many saints in our Church for indeed many women and men are truly saints because God has enabled them to share in the life of the Trinity. Many of these people struggle for the realization of the just demands of the people and all people should do the same and be mindful of the fact that this perspective of God's life provides a solid foundation to our ideals and hopes.

In closing I make reference to the idea of Saint Cyprian which was used by the Council when describing the work of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit in relation to the Church. As we experience this reality of adoption by the Holy Trinity we are invited to become intimate members of the family of God. We are invited to make the earth an image of heaven, the place that we desire to occupy at the time of our death. We conclude then with

the words of Saint Cyprian: *the Church has been seen as a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit* (30).

¹ See Homily of John Paul II in Cracow in the Mass celebrating the jubilee of St Stanislaus (10 June 1979), *Osservatore Romano*, 24 June 1979.

² See Tertulian, *De Praescriptione haereticorum* VII, 9.

³ *La Crónica del Pueblo*, 4 June 1979.

⁴ See paid advertisements by the Asociación Patriótica Libertad o Esclavitud, *La Prensa Gráfica*, 3 & 4 June 1979.

⁵ See *La Crónica del Pueblo*, 5 June 1979.

⁶ *El Mundo*, 6 June 1979.

⁷ See *La Prensa Gráfica*, 2 & 7 June 1979, and *Orientación*, 10 June 1979.

⁸ See Homily of John Paul II in Cracow at the Jubilee Mass for St Stanislaus (10 June 1979), *see above*.

⁹ Discourse of John Paul II to the Episcopal Conference of Poland (5 June 1979), *Osservatore Romano*, 17 June 1979.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Consacration to Mary in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Czestochowa (4 June 1979), *Osservatore Romano*, 10 June 1979.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Mensaje al pueblo de Nicaragua* of the Bishops' Conference of Nicaragua (2 June 1979), *Orientación*, 17 June 1979.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Marginal References (1) Ac 3,13; (2) 2Cor 1,3; (3) Dt 4,32-33; (4) Rm 1,20; (5) DF 2; (6) Rm 1,20; (7) GS 19; (8) Dt 4,32-33; (9) Dt 4,34; (10) Dt 4,34; (11) Lk 10,21; (12) 2Cor 1,3; (13) Dt 4,39; (14) Mt 28,19; (15) Jn 14,21; (16) Jn 16,7; (17) Jn 19,30; (18) Jn 14,9; (19) 2Cor 4,6; (20) DV 4; (21) Lk 15,4-7; (22) Lk 15,11-31; (23) Mt 11,27; (24) Ps 31,2; (25) Rm 8,14; (26) Rm 8,15a; (27) Rm 8,15b; (28) Mt 6,9; (29) Rm 8,16; (30) LG 4.