

## NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S  
APOSTOLIC LETTER, January 6, 2001.  
(Some important quotes)



DUC IN ALTUM!  
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n. 1: At the beginning of the new millennium, our hearts ring out with the words of Jesus when one day, he invited the Apostle to "put out into the deep" for a catch: "*Duc in altum*" (Lk 5:4). Peter and his first companions trusted Christ's words, and cast the nets. "When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish" (Lk 5:6).

N. 15: Now we must look ahead, we must "put out into the deep", trusting in Christ's words: *Duc in altum!* the experiences we have had should *inspire in us new energy*, and impel us to invest in concrete initiatives the enthusiasm which we have felt. Jesus himself warns us: "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk 9:62). In the cause of the Kingdom there is no time for looking back, even less for settling into laziness. Much awaits us, and for this reason we must set about drawing up an effective post-Jubilee pastoral plan.

n.16: "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn 12:21). . . Like those pilgrims of two thousand years ago, the men and women of our own day ask believers not only to "speak" of Christ, but in a certain sense to "show" him to them. And is it not the Church's task to reflect the light of Christ in every historical period, to make his face shine also before the generations of the new millennium?" "Our witness, however, would be hopelessly inadequate if we ourselves had not first *contemplated his face*."... our gaze is more than ever *firmly set on the face of the Lord*.

n. 28: Two thousand years after these events, the Church relives them as if they had happened today. Gazing on the face of Christ, the Bride contemplates her treasure and her joy... "how sweet is the memory of Jesus, the source of the heart's true joy!"... "the Church today sets out once more on her journey, in order to proclaim Christ to the world at the dawn of the Third Millennium: he "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8).

n.29: "I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20)... we must gain *new impetus in Christian living*, making it the force which inspires our journey of faith."... "It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new program". The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem."... "This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium." ... "what awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization — a work involving all of us..." *certain pastoral priorities*"...

### Holiness

n.30: "First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to *holiness*." ... "stressing Holiness remains more than ever an urgent pastoral task."... "To profess the Church as holy means to point to her as *the Bride of Christ*" ... "This as it were objective gift of holiness is offered to

all the baptized." "But the gift in turn becomes a task, which must shape the whole of Christian life: 'This is the will of God, your sanctification' (1 Thes 4:3). It is a duty which concerns not only certain Christians: "All the Christian faithful, of whatever state or rank, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity".

n. 31: " In fact, to place pastoral planning under the heading of holiness is a choice filled with consequences. It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity. To ask catechumens: "Do you wish to receive Baptism?" means at the same time to ask them: "Do you wish to become holy?" It means to set before them the radical nature of the Sermon on the Mount: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48).

### Prayer

N. 32: ... "a Christian life distinguished above all in *the art of prayer*."... We have to learn to pray: as it were learning this art ever anew from the lips of the Divine Master himself, like the first disciples: "Lord, teach us to pray!" (Lk 11:1). ... " Abide in me and I in you" (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the very substance and soul of the Christian life, and the condition of all true pastoral life. " living it fully, above all in the liturgy,... but also in personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity," ...

n. 34: ... " it would be wrong to think that ordinary Christians can be content with a shallow prayer that is unable to fill their whole life. Especially in the face of the many trials to which today's world subjects faith, they would be not only mediocre Christians but "Christians at risk". They would run the insidious risk of seeing their faith progressively undermined, and would perhaps end up succumbing to the allure of "substitutes", accepting alternative religious proposals and even indulging in far-fetched superstitions. It is therefore essential that *education in prayer* should become in some way a key-point of all pastoral planning."

### The Sunday Eucharist

n. 36...I therefore wish to insist that *sharing in the Eucharist* should really be *the heart of Sunday* for every baptized person. It is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept but as something felt as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life. ... "challenge, often in isolated and difficult situations, to bear stronger witness to the distinguishing elements of their own identity. The duty to take part in the Eucharist every Sunday is one of these.... through sharing in the Eucharist, *the Lord's Day* also becomes *the Day of the Church*, when she can effectively exercise her role as the sacrament of unity.

## ***The Sacrament of Reconciliation***

n. 37: "I am also asking for renewed pastoral courage in ensuring that the day-to-day teaching of Christian communities persuasively and effectively presents the practice of the Sacrament of Reconciliation."... "make every effort to face the crisis of "the sense of sin" apparent in today's culture but I was even more insistent in calling for a rediscovery of Christ as *mysterium pietatis*, the one in whom God shows us his compassionate heart and reconciles us fully with himself. ... Sacrament of Penance, for the faithful is "the ordinary way of obtaining forgiveness and the remission of serious sins committed after Baptism"... it is probably necessary that Pastors should arm themselves with more confidence, creativity and perseverance in presenting it and leading people to appreciate it... The Lord's gifts — and the Sacraments are among the most precious — come from the One who well knows the human heart and is the Lord of history.

## **The Primacy Of Grace**

n. 38: a pastoral activity that gives personal and communal prayer its proper place, we shall be observing an essential principal of the Christian view of life: the primacy of grace. There is a temptation which perennially besets every spiritual journey and pastoral work: that of thinking that the results depend on our ability to act and to plan. ...of course cooperate with the grace, ... "invest all our resources of intelligence and energy ... But it is fatal to forget that "without Christ we can do nothing" (cf. *Jn 15:5*). It is prayer which roots us in this truth. It constantly reminds us of the primacy of Christ and, in union with him, the primacy of the interior life and of holiness. When this principle is not respected," ... "nothing" ... "frustration"...: "We have toiled all night and caught nothing" (*Lk 5:5*). This is the moment of faith, of prayer, of conversation with God, in order to open our hearts to the tide of grace and allow the word of Christ to pass through us in all its power: *Duc in altum!* ... word of faith: "At your word I will let down the nets ... this act of faith, expresses itself in a renewed commitment to prayer.

## ***Listening to the Word***

39. ...A renewed *listening to the word of God*... pre-eminent role of the word of God ... great progress has certainly been made in devout listening to Sacred Scripture and attentive study of it... Individuals and communities now make extensive use of the Bible, ... But it is above all the work of evangelization and catechesis which is drawing new life from attentiveness to the word of God. ... this development needs to be consolidated and deepened, also by making sure that every family has a Bible. ... necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, ... *lectio divina*, which draws from the biblical text the living word which questions, directs and shapes our lives.

## ***Proclaiming the Word***

40. To nourish ourselves with the word in order to be "servants of the word" in the work of evangelization: a priority for the Church at the dawn of the new millennium" ... "the reality of a "Christian society" which," ... "is now gone. Today we must courageously face a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and

demanding. I have often repeated the summons to the *new evangelization*... "we must rekindle in ourselves the impetus of the beginnings and allow ourselves to be filled with the ardor of the apostolic preaching which followed Pentecost. We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: ... "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (*I Cor 9:16*). "This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission,"... "must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God. Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves: they must proclaim him. A new apostolic outreach is needed," ... "lived as *the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups*". "In the Third Millennium, Christianity will have to respond ever more effectively to this *need for inculturation*". "Christ must be presented to all people with confidence. We shall address adults, families, young people, children, without ever hiding the most radical demands of the Gospel message, but taking into account each person's needs" ...

41. ... "witnesses to the faith"... "For the Church, the martyrs have always been a seed of life. *Sanguis martyrum semen christianorum*... this famous "law" has proved true in all the trials of history. Will this not also be the case of the century and millennium now beginning? Perhaps we were too used to thinking of the martyrs in rather distant terms," ... "witnesses",... "were able to live the Gospel in the midst of hostility and persecution, often to the point of the supreme test of shedding their blood"... "By their example they have shown us, and made smooth for us, so to speak, the path to the future. All that remains for us is, with God's grace, to follow in their footsteps."

## **CONCLUSION**

### **DUC IN ALTUM!**

58. "Let us go forward in hope! A new millennium is opening before the Church like a vast ocean upon which we shall venture, relying on the help of Christ."... "the Christ whom we have contemplated and loved bids us to set out once more on our journey: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations', ... (*Mt 28:19*). The missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the very first Christians: we can count on the power of the same Spirit who was poured out at Pentecost and who impels us still today to start out anew, sustained by the hope which does not disappoint (*Rom 5:5*). "At the beginning of this new century, our steps must quicken as we travel the highways of the world"... "Every Sunday, the Risen Christ asks us to meet him as it were once more in the upper room where, on the evening of 'the first day of the week' (*Jn 20:19*) he appeared to his disciples in order to "breathe" on them his life-giving Spirit and launch them on the great adventure of proclaiming the Gospel." "On this journey we are accompanied by the Blessed Virgin Mary"... "**Star of the New Evangelization**".

59. "The Risen Jesus accompanies us on our way and enables us to recognize him, as the disciples of Emmaus did, 'in the breaking of the bread' (*Lk 24:35*). May he find us watchful, ready to recognize his face and run to our brothers and sisters with the good news: 'We have seen the Lord!' (*Jn 20:25*)."