

**CHAPTER 3:  
RESPONSIBILITIES COMMON TO ALL JESUS' CLOSE COLLABORATORS**

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## Chapter Three

### Responsibilities Common to All Jesus' Close Collaborators

Jesus is still carrying out the Father's grand salvific plan (see Mt 28.19–20, LG 2–8). All Christians are called not only to abide in love with Jesus but also to cooperate with him in carrying out that plan. Each disciple has a personal vocation, and everyone's vocation includes the call to cooperate with a definite group of other Christians—one's family, coworkers, fellow parishioners, and so on.

Some Christians are called to cooperate with Jesus and one another in especially close ways. The ordained cooperate with Jesus by acting *in persona Christi* to make him and his saving actions present. In doing so, they must cooperate with one another in preaching the same gospel, offering the same Eucharist, and helping the whole pilgrim people reach their same heavenly home.

Very often, too, a cleric acts *in persona ecclesiae* to foster the fruitfulness of what he and other clerics do *in persona Christi*, and nonordained religious collaborate with Jesus precisely by acting *in persona ecclesiae* to foster the fruitfulness of his saving actions.<sup>1</sup> Despite important differences, then, clerics and nonordained religious undertake to serve Jesus and his Church in what is, for the most part, the same, very important way. Since the fruitfulness of Jesus' salvific acts is the single end of all close collaborators' service, they must cooperate with one another insofar as doing so promotes that common good.

The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that the Church is a communion of persons with and in Jesus. Church members do not always adequately appreciate her reality as communion, however, and whenever and wherever that is the case, this deficiency affects clerical and consecrated life and service. The effect is evident when clerics residing in the same house keep to themselves as much as possible, when religious have only a minimal common life, when close collaborators' spirituality focuses narrowly on their individual sanctification, and when the liturgy is regarded mainly as a means to that end or carried out merely as each individual's duty. The deficiency also can be seen when close collaborators prefer to work alone, seldom spontaneously pitch in to help one another in providing services, and are wary of offering one another unsolicited advice, much less constructive criticism.

By contrast, good close collaborators fulfill many of the responsibilities dealt with in this chapter not only by individual action but also by

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1. The work of Damien de Veuster, Ss.Cc., illustrates the importance of fostering the fruitfulness of Jesus' acts. Other priests had visited the leper settlement on Molakai to preach and administer the sacraments, and a chapel was there before Damien arrived. But he not only made Jesus' saving acts present; he helped people benefit from those acts by living among them and doing everything possible to help them. Damien's "role of disinterested benefactor quickly won him esteem and influence. No one was mistaken. He was a good shepherd and not a hireling" (Vital Jourdain, Ss.Cc., *The Heart of Father Damien: 1840–1889*, trans. Francis Larkin, Ss.Cc., and Charles Davenport [Milwaukee: Bruce, 1955], 113; and see 94–150).

cooperating in groups—often groups as small as two or three but sometimes much larger. For simplicity's sake, I will not repeatedly point out that a responsibility may be fulfilled, and perhaps better fulfilled, by cooperating. But even when the point is not made, that possibility should be taken into account.

In this chapter, I articulate how close collaborators really should act. Many of the moral requirements to be set out here, not least with respect to exercising authority and practicing obedience, have seldom if ever been met, even by saintly close collaborators, whether in earlier times or since Vatican II. But in every age, including our own, there have been good close collaborators, and some have been, or are likely soon to be, canonized saints. So, readers might take a skeptical view of much that I say.

Note, then, that I use *good* to refer to those close collaborators who are not only virtuous but also fully aware of all the moral truths bearing on their specific forms of service and life. Saintly close collaborators of even the recent past may have failed to meet some of the moral requirements to be set out here, and in earlier times some saintly close collaborators owned slaves, accepted torture in interrogating suspects, approved castrating boys for choirs, and so forth. For hundreds of years, many monasteries, following St. Benedict, accepted child oblates and held them to be as morally obligated to fulfill the requirements of monastic life as the adults who freely undertook it. For centuries, too, it was common to undertake close collaboration for economic advantages for oneself and/or one's family, and that practice went unchallenged even by saintly pastors and religious superiors. No one today thinks such practices are morally acceptable. The point is that what saintly close collaborators have done or failed to do, even in the recent past, does not show that I am mistaken about what *good* close collaborators do.

In chapter two, I used the expression *close collaborators* to refer to four groups: (1) celibate diocesan clerics, (2) members of religious institutes of consecrated life, (3) others committed to celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, and (4) married clerics. In this chapter, *close collaborators* refers exclusively to the first two groups.

Although most other members of the Church, including most of those who have undertaken to live an evangelical life in the sense defined in 2-A-9, above, do not share the common responsibilities of close collaborators, some members of groups (3) and (4) share most of those responsibilities, and all members share some of them. Many, however, share few, because in diverse ways their vocations substantially involve either direct concern with the things of this world or service not performed *in persona ecclesiae*, or both. Consequently, while some of what follows will be relevant to members of groups (3) and (4), some and perhaps most of it will not. Individuals must identify and adapt the norms relevant to themselves.

In what follows, *associates* does not refer to lay people but only to clerics and professed religious who live and/or work together. *Supervisors* is used as a generic expression that refers to all who shape the cooperation of close collaborators with Jesus and one another: the pope, other bishops, pastors of parishes, religious superiors, chapters, and general congregations; and those to whom the foregoing delegate authority. *Service* refers to all the

services good close collaborators provide: their perspicuous witness to the gospel and especially to the reality of the heavenly kingdom, their good example, their prayers on behalf of the whole Church and for the benefit of her members, clerics' ministries, and the apostolates of religious of both active and contemplative lives.

Many moral responsibilities of close collaborators are common to all of them. Those common responsibilities will be treated in this chapter.<sup>2</sup> One reason why all of them have many of the same responsibilities is that, despite differences in their forms of life and service, all undertake a lifestyle similar to Jesus'. Moreover, to foster the fruitfulness of Jesus' saving acts, good close collaborators must make not only those acts but Jesus himself available to the people they serve, and so they strive to imitate him so as to become good images in which others will be able to see him.

### **A: Making and Faithfully Keeping the Commitment to Close Collaboration**

#### **1) Good close collaborators give themselves completely to Jesus and his Church.**

"God is love" (1 Jn 4.7, 16). God's love is not a response to pre-existing goodness. It is the creative origin of everything that is good in his creatures, including us. "Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (Jas 1.17). No good whatsoever can begin to be or remain in being except by God's generosity.

Although every created good reveals God's love, his saving work reveals it in a perspicuous way: "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 Jn 4.9). Sins deserve punishment. God's gift of his Son therefore is astounding: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom 5.8). The incarnate Son, Jesus, transposes divine love into human self-sacrifice: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15.13). In giving himself completely for us, Jesus asks nothing for himself. He asks only—that we imitate him: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15.12; cf. Jn 13.34, 2 Jn 1.5). But we are not love; our love responds to others' goodness; and we need to be loved. How, then, can we love as Jesus does? The answer is: "Because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5.5).

In his complete self-giving, Jesus took "the form of a slave" (Phil 2.7). He teaches the Twelve to imitate him by devoting themselves entirely to the service of the actual and potential members of his Church (see **2-B-3**, above). He says: "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all" (Mk 10.43-44; cf. Mt 20.26-28, Lk 22.24-27).

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2. Why, then, do the concrete responsibilities of the bishop of a large city and a cloistered nun differ so drastically? Partly because the differences between his ministry and her apostolate generate some different, specific *moral* responsibilities; partly because canon law and the particular law of her institute generate many specific legal responsibilities, which each of them, of course, has a moral obligation to fulfill.

In being slaves of all members of the Church, good close collaborators also serve Jesus. The Church is his body and bride, and he identifies her with himself, as when he asked Saul, who was persecuting the Church: “Why do you persecute me?” (Acts 9.4). Moreover, since Jesus is God, serving him serves God.

Paul lived out Jesus’ teaching, imitated him by making himself “a slave to all” (1 Cor 9.19), and so made Jesus available to a great many people. St. Benedict modeled monastic profession on voluntary self-enslavement (see 2–C–2, above). In characterizing members of religious institutes, St. Thomas says they “completely give themselves over to divine service [*se totaliter mancipant divino servitio*], as offering a holocaust to God.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, good close collaborators are slaves of God, of Jesus, and of the Church.<sup>4</sup>

It might be supposed that this talk of *slavery* is a mere figure of speech. Not so. As Jesus’ being in the form of God is not merely an appearance but the reality of his divine Sonship, so his taking the form of a slave was not merely assuming the appearance of a slave but really becoming one (see Phil 2.6–7). He becomes man for one reason only, to carry out the Father’s salvific plan (see Heb 10.5–18). As man, Jesus is so focused on this mission that he forgoes everything else—forgoes having, doing, and being anything unless it is conducive to our salvation. Like other slaves, Jesus has no property, no family of his own, and no freedom to do as he pleases. Even his life is forfeit. He would prefer to live but, having given up his right to life, he is ready to die: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Mt 26.39). Therefore, in teaching the Twelve that they must become slaves, Jesus makes it clear that they must give themselves completely to their mission. Good close collaborators, too, forgo everything else, and even their lives are forfeit. As with Jesus, their slavery is real, not a mere metaphor.

Nevertheless, the evils involved in and resulting from the slavery imposed on some people by others are excluded from the self-enslavement of Jesus and his close collaborators. This self-enslavement is the Father’s gift, and, like all his gifts, it benefits not him but his creatures. It is obvious that those saved by means of this self-enslavement benefit from it; so does Jesus himself, as man, and so do his close collaborators (who also, of course, are among those saved). The Father does not impose slavery on them but gives them their free choice to accept it, and that choice is their act of loving both the Father and those to be saved. Jesus’ close collaborators and he himself are humanly fulfilled by their selfless love. Unlike the usual master-slave relationship, which involves loveless using and being used, this voluntary relationship between the Father-Master and his slaves—Jesus and his close collaborators—involves only loving communion. Therefore, although they truly are slaves—they really do give up everything else in

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3. *S.t.*, 2–2, q. 186, a. 1. The Latin phrase “*se totaliter mancipant . . . servitio*” means *they deliver themselves into slavery*, as “to be emancipated” means *to be freed from slavery*.

4. Tonsure of clerics and male religious—that is, partially shaving their heads or cutting their hair short—may have derived from the ancient practice of cutting the hair of slaves (see T. J. Riley, *Tonsure*, *NCE*, 14:199–200). If that explanation is correct, the rite and wearing of tonsure fittingly marked entry into the clerical state and membership in it.

carrying out the Father's salvific plan—the self-enslavement of Jesus and his good close collaborators is entirely good.

For that reason, Jesus tells the Twelve: “No longer do I call you servants [Greek: *doulous* = slaves], for the servant [slave] does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (Jn 15.15). Jesus does not deny that the Twelve are slaves, but he affirms that they also are friends, and that he prefers to call them friends. For he has explained the Father-Master's plan to them so that, unlike other slaves but like Jesus himself, they freely undertake selfless service.

As slaves of all, Jesus' close collaborators are no more robbed of their dignity than he is in taking on the form of a slave. He does so out of salvific love for his human brothers and sisters, a love that is the perfect model of love of neighbor. Inviting everyone to enter the heavenly kingdom and forming those who respond into his Church, Jesus loves the Church totally. Insofar as the Church is the one fold whose good shepherd is Jesus, his love for her and her members is pastoral charity. Ordination enables clerics to act in Jesus' person, to make his saving acts present to people now. But to help people cooperate with and benefit from his acts, not only clerics but all close collaborators must love people as Jesus does, bring them to him, and thus help them accept and attain all that he wants them to enjoy. So, whether close collaborators are pastors or not, all good ones participate as fully as they can in Jesus' pastoral charity, the love of the good shepherd. Imitating Jesus, each becomes a good neighbor who lovingly lays down his or her life for others.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, far from negating good close collaborators' personal dignity, their self-enslavement out of pastoral love affirms them and helps them become all that they can be.

Even when obeying a supervisor, close collaborators' true Master is the Father, while the supervisor, being first among them, is called to be everyone's slave. Although various close collaborators differ greatly in their status within the Church, good ones treat one another as brothers and sisters, called to work together in serving Jesus and building up his body, the Church. As slaves in God's household, this band of brothers and sisters is nobler than anyone who freely pursues his or her own agenda. No mere lackey, a good close collaborator, like Jesus, does not provide those he or she serves with whatever they want but obeys the Father in promoting their complete and unending fulfillment.

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5. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 75, AAS 88 (1996) 450–51, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XIV, describes the love that motivates the service of those in consecrated life in a way that is equally verified by the self-giving of good diocesan clerics: “In the washing of feet Jesus reveals the depth of God's love for humanity: in Jesus, God places himself at the service of human beings! At the same time, he reveals the meaning of the Christian life and, even more, of the consecrated life, which is a *life of self-giving love*, of practical and generous service. In its commitment to following the Son of Man, who ‘came not to be served but to serve’ (Mt 20.28), the consecrated life, at least in the best periods of its long history, has been characterized by this ‘washing of feet,’ that is, by service directed in particular to the poorest and neediest. . . . Even today, those who follow Christ on the path of the evangelical counsels intend to go where Christ went and to do what he did. He continually calls new disciples to himself, both men and women, to communicate to them, by an outpouring of the Spirit (see Rom 5.5), the divine *agape*, his way of loving, and to urge them thus to serve others in the humble gift of themselves, far from all self-interest.”

Having given over their entire lives to salvific service, good close collaborators do not say: “I am a person first; then I am a priest/religious.”<sup>6</sup> Rather, as Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1.38), they say: “I am a servant/handmaid of the Lord, and I wish to do whatever he wants.” Their lives are not their own. They consider themselves entitled to nothing in this world but opportunities to serve, the means needed to serve well, and the graces Jesus promises those who undertake to do the Father’s will.<sup>7</sup>

Realizing that the immense worth of their service entirely depends on Jesus and the Holy Spirit, not on themselves, good close collaborators bear in mind that doing their duty does not entitle them to others’ service: “When you have done all that is commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’” (Lk 17.10).<sup>8</sup> Instead of seeking a status superior to other Christians, good close collaborators aspire to greatness in serving others.

Sadly, the pastoral charity of some close collaborators is deficient. Finding duties that pertain to their ministry and/or apostolate burdensome, they fulfill them only insofar as they are constrained by fear of bad consequences to themselves: being punished, missing out on chances for advancement, being criticized, being shamed, and so on. St. Peter exhorted presbyters to whom he was writing: “Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly” (1 Pt 5.2). Love motivates good close collaborators to care well for those they serve: “We were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us” (1 Thes 2.7–8). When they feel burdened in serving, their love of Christ—of Jesus and therefore of the Church, his body—motivates them to persevere (see 2 Cor 5.14) and even to rejoice in their sufferings (see Col 1.24).

Close collaborators are committed to serving particular groups of persons in specific ways—for example, providing presbyteral ministry to the people who live in a certain parish or teaching this or that subject to students in a certain school. Seeing each person they serve as Jesus’ actual or potential member, they always love and serve Jesus in loving and serving others and always love and serve others in loving and serving him. They are affable and gentle with all, even the overbearing, much as good Christian slaves respect their masters, even when the masters treat them badly (see 1 Pt 2.18–23).

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6. The meaning of that saying is not the truism that giving oneself presupposes being a person but the false view that total self-giving is inappropriate for anyone, including a close collaborator.

7. While Jesus strongly condemns status seeking by any disciple and teaches humility to all of them (see Lk 14.7–11), he makes it clear that ambition is excluded and humility required especially of close collaborators (see Mt 20.20–28, Mk 10.35–45, Lk 22.24–27).

8. While Jesus here teaches the Twelve that they, as slaves, are not entitled to anything, in another place he promises: “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them” (Lk 12.37).



A good close collaborator realizes that not only he or she but many others are instruments by which Jesus carries on his salvific work. Conscious of the oneness in Jesus of those serving and those served, they love the Church's unity and zealously strive to maintain and foster it. They believe what the Church believes and hand on what the Church teaches—not their personal opinions, however sound, much less dissenting ones. They carry out and support only the Church's worship, not deviations or purportedly creative substitutes. They conscientiously obey the Church's law rather than rationalize arbitrary exceptions. In such ways, they provide for the faithful as a whole a shining model of how to maintain communion with the Church.<sup>9</sup>

Completely given over to imitating and cooperating with Jesus, whose kingdom is not of this world, good close collaborators avoid forming specific and firm expectations about outcomes in this world. They constantly bear in mind that not any human individual or group is in charge but only God, whose all-embracing providential plan far transcends human wisdom (see Rom 11.33–36).

Those who think they know what God will do for them and require of them are often upset, while those who keep open minds about everything short of the kingdom avoid many frustrations and temptations to betray the Lord. Although Jesus was the Messiah, his behavior challenged even John the Baptist's expectations (see Mt 11.2–6, Lk 7.18–23), and Jesus commended those who are not disappointed with him: “Blessed is he who takes no offense at me” (Mt 11.6, Lk 7.23). Peter's false expectations about Jesus also were dashed, and Jesus warned him to expect nothing better for himself (see Jn 21.15–19).<sup>10</sup> And even though Jesus himself strove to gather up the people of Jerusalem, the Father allowed his final effort not only to fail (see Mt 23.37–39, Lk 13.34–35) but to end in his passion and death.<sup>11</sup> Thus, although good close collaborators hope earnestly and work hard for great benefits to each person they serve, they are neither focused on measurable accomplishments nor disheartened by bad outcomes.

That may seem impossible. Yet to be at once fully engaged and completely detached is possible for good close collaborators because, being intimately united with Jesus and imitating him, they are intent on carrying out the Father's plan and care about nothing else.

Close collaborators provide their services not as individuals but as members of groups: religious institutes and their constitutive parts or clerical bodies such as the college of bishops, diocesan presbyterates, small groups

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9. With respect to the faithful in general, *CIC*, c. 205, defines what it is to be fully in communion with the Church: “Those baptized are fully in the communion of the Catholic Church on this earth who are joined with Christ in its visible structure by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical governance”; c. 209 prescribes: “The Christian faithful, even in their own manner of acting, are always obliged to maintain communion with the Church.” Due to the perspicuousness of close collaborators' witness, both its impact and the impact of any wrongdoing by them are greater than those of other Christians.

10. Failing to accept God's plan that Jesus suffer (see Mt 16.21–23), Peter was overconfident about his own fidelity (see Mt.26.30–35).

11. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Gospel according to Luke*, Anchor Bible, 28 and 28A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 1033–37.

pastoring the same souls, and so on. So, not only individuals but groups that collaborate closely with Jesus appropriately commit themselves completely and unconditionally, and good members of any such group do what they can—not least, by rightly exercising authority and practicing obedience—to ensure that the other members hold nothing back in their commitment to Jesus and their cooperation with him.

**2) Good close collaborators had sound reasons for their vocational commitment.**

As I said in the introduction to this chapter, *close collaborator* here refers only to celibate clerics and professed religious. To become a good close collaborator, then, a seminarian or novice must have both the charism for celibate chastity and sound reasons for making a vocational commitment that includes it (see **3–C–3** and **3–I–4**, below).

Some seminarians and novices prefer celibate chastity to marriage because they find repugnant the prospect of marital sexual activity, the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, or both. Some—one hopes fewer now than in times past—undertake celibate chastity because they regard it as an essential element of superior status in the Church and/or a surer way of becoming holy. Some promise or vow celibate chastity only because that is a necessary condition for ordination or element in religious profession. Such motives are not conducive to becoming a good close collaborator.

Only a love that precludes marriage can ground sound reasons for undertaking celibate chastity. Loving perfectly, Jesus had sound reasons for undertaking his mission and forgoing marriage. Knowing that his Father’s plan is wise and good, he realized that he would benefit others and himself by playing his part in carrying it out. Thus, he had three tightly integrated reasons for accepting and carrying out his mission: (a) to please his Father, whom he loved; (b) to save his fellow human beings, whom he loved; and (c) to fulfill himself as a man:

Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made. (Jn 17:1–5)

Sinless unlike us, Jesus loves the Father with his whole mind, heart, soul, and strength; loves us enough to lay down his life for us; and seeks self-fulfillment solely in his perfect submission to the Father and self-sacrifice for us.

During his public life up to the Last Supper, Jesus focuses on the kingdom and dedicates himself to announcing it, inviting us to enter it, and doing all he can to motivate us to accept the invitation. He has no time or energy for typical human concerns, beyond giving minimal attention to the bare necessities. Jesus desires to be as available to others and as free to serve them as he can. So, he never marries or takes an interest in public affairs, and when ready to begin his public ministry, he leaves behind his home and

mother, his way of making a living, and almost everything else. Having no family of his own, Jesus is free to lay down his entire life to save us sinners, to make a family of his “little flock.” Into it, he welcomes all who believe in him; for it, he is free to accept death.

Neither one flesh with any woman nor the sire of any child, Jesus is one with his body and bride, the Church, and in him all her members are God’s sons and daughters (see Jn 1.12–13; Eph 1.5–12, 5.25–27; Rv 19.1–10). Thus, Jesus’ celibate chastity is more than a necessary consequence of concentrating singlemindedly on his saving work. It is also and primarily the result of his total and exclusive love, as bridegroom, for his bride—the Church whom his love brings into being and constantly nurtures.

Detachment from everything but his beloved Church also contributes significantly to his work’s fruitfulness. In giving himself completely in his salvific mission, Jesus *shows* sinners his love for them, and thus provides them with a sound and powerful motive to repent, believe in him, and love him in return. Forgoing possessions and a family of his own makes clear his sincerity and lack of ulterior motives. Jesus’ detachment from the concerns of this world also points to the kingdom, which is not of this world. In particular, precisely because celibate chastity precludes the good of marriage and parenthood—an essential element of most adults’ authentic human fulfillment in this world—Jesus’ willingness to remain unmarried for the kingdom’s sake confirms his teaching about the kingdom’s incomparable value and the absolute priority every human being should give to entering into it (see **2–B–2** and **2–B–3**, above).

Jesus certainly knows that life is good and death is a privation. But for our salvation he freely accepts death. He also knows: “It is not good that the man [or the woman] should be alone” (Gn 2.18), and when he commends celibate chastity for the kingdom’s sake to his disciples, his phrase, “eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19.12), shows that he regards celibate chastity, considered in itself, to be a privation (see **2–B–3**, above). But for our salvation he freely forgoes marriage and a family of his own.

Neither in dying nor in remaining unmarried does Jesus choose the privation. To choose it as a means, even for the kingdom’s sake, would be sinful—doing evil to achieve good. In both cases, the privation is the inevitable side effect of his choices to do things in themselves conducive to our salvation: his death is the side effect of his celebrating the Last Supper and instituting the new covenant (see **1–C–5**, above); his celibate chastity is the side effect of his complete self-giving to his Church. In both cases, Jesus’ willingness to undergo the privation has the good consequence of bearing perspicuous witness to the kingdom, which is not of this world. However, just as he does not commit suicide but freely accepts death in bearing witness to the truth (see Jn 18.37), so he does not choose celibate chastity but freely accepts it, partly for the witness value of doing so.

For making their vocational commitment, however, those who have become good close collaborators also had an excellent reason that Jesus himself did not and could not have.

Friendship is good in itself, and Jesus, being the best and greatest of all human beings, is the best of all possible friends. By laying down his life for

all of us human beings, he showed that he loves each of us and regards us as friends (see Jn 15.13). In return, gratitude should move us to do all we can to please him, as good friends do (see Jn 15.14).

But friendship with him, as with other human individuals, can be more or less close. Jesus had a close friendship with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (see Jn 11.5), and also with at least one of his disciples, probably John, son of Zebedee.<sup>12</sup> And at the Last Supper, Jesus preferred to call the Twelve “friends” rather than “slaves,” because he had confided in them and prepared them to cooperate intelligently and closely in his ongoing salvific work: “All that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you” (Jn 15.15).

Thus, while other Christians may be as holy as good close collaborators are, and so may love God as well as they do, nevertheless those who give themselves totally to Jesus by undertaking close collaboration with him can enjoy an exceptionally close *human* friendship with him.<sup>13</sup> Like St. Paul (see Phil 3.7–12), they can cleave to Jesus as their cherished companion and imitate him in a way impossible for those with spouses and families of their own. Thus, good celibate clerics and religious imitate Jesus in forgoing marriage and parenthood for the sake of his close friendship and in order to collaborate closely with him in begetting and sanctifying spiritual children.<sup>14</sup>

Good close collaborators also had reasons similar to Jesus’ reasons for accepting celibate chastity and giving themselves totally to Jesus and those he wishes to benefit through their service.<sup>15</sup>

In virginity and celibacy, chastity retains its original meaning, that is, of human sexuality lived as a genuine sign of and precious service to the love of communion and gift of self to others. This meaning is fully found in virginity which makes evident, even in the renunciation of marriage, the

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12. See Jn 19.25–27; 20.2–10; 21.7, 20–24; Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *The Gospel According to John (i–xii)*, Anchor Bible, 29 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), xcii–xcviii.

13. Vatican II, OT 8, teaches that spiritual formation, closely joined to doctrinal and pastoral formation, should “be so imparted that the seminarians learn to live in friendly and constant society with the Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. They who are to be configured to Christ the priest by sacred ordination should also learn to adhere to him, as friends, in intimate sharing of the whole of life.” John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 64, AAS 88 (1996) 439, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XII, teaches that the work of promoting vocations to religious life “aims at presenting *the attraction of the person of the Lord Jesus* and the beauty of the total gift of self for the sake of the gospel. . . . After the enthusiasm of the first meeting with Christ, there comes the constant struggle of everyday life, a struggle which turns a vocation into a tale of friendship with the Lord.”

14. See **2–B–4**, above, on St. Paul’s argument in favor of celibate chastity based on the freedom it provides to give undivided attention to the Lord (see 1 Cor 7.32–35); see **2–D–2**, above, on close *human* friendship with Jesus as an element of the real superiority of consecrated life.

15. John M. Lozano, C.M.F., *Discipleship: Towards an Understanding of Religious Life*, trans. Beatrice Wilczynski (Chicago: Claret Center for Resources in Spirituality, 1989), 147–48, soundly argues: To imagine that Jesus’ “celibacy was the inevitable consequence of his being the Son of God, is to go beyond the idea of the Incarnation which the New Testament gives us: a man like us in all things except sin (Rom 8.3; Gal 4.4; Phil. 2.7; Heb 2.17, 4.15). The celibacy of Jesus was the result of his own choice, motivated by his exclusive dedication to his mission. Thus his celibacy becomes significant for those of his disciples who recognize themselves in the same personal vocation.”

“nuptial meaning” of the body through a communion and a personal gift to Jesus Christ and his Church . . .<sup>16</sup>

In practice, that personal gift includes undertaking to be as available to others and free to serve them as possible. Like Jesus, good close collaborators have neither the time nor the energy for marriage, family, and a home of their own.<sup>17</sup>

Good close collaborators also freely accept celibate chastity because it contributes to their special witness to the kingdom (see LG 44, PO 16; **2-B-3**, above). As some Christians, without committing suicide, follow Jesus in freely accepting death as martyrs, partly for its witness value, so good close collaborators follow him in making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom’s sake, partly for celibate chastity’s witness value, without choosing the privation of marriage and parenthood that this entails.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, good close collaborators love each person they serve as if he or she were a brother, sister, mother, father, son, or daughter. The breadth of their love points to the inclusiveness of the kingdom, and their celibate chastity enables them to represent before the communities they serve either Jesus as the Church’s bridegroom, the Church as his bride, or both.<sup>19</sup>

Vocations that include celibate chastity are neither absolutely better than marriage nor surer ways of holiness (see **2-D-6**, above).<sup>20</sup> So, good close collaborators do not renounce marriage to be better than other Christians or to have a surer route to sanctity. However, as Vatican II teaches, the likeness between the union of the divine persons and the union of God’s children in truth and love “shows that human persons, the only

16. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 29, AAS 84 (1992) 703, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VII.

17. Those whose primary reason for accepting their vocation is love for Jesus and the desire to be like him may well see the concentration on service that precludes marriage as St. Paul did: undivided concern with the “affairs of the Lord” and “undivided devotion to the Lord” (see 1 Cor 7.32–35). While sound, that formulation does not make explicit the similarity between their reasons for accepting celibate chastity and Jesus’ reasons.

18. Someone might suppose that one cannot *make oneself* something without choosing to become that. But one can make oneself X without choosing to become X by choosing to do Y while foreseeing that doing Y will, or may well, result in one’s becoming X. For instance, Damien made himself a leper without choosing to become a leper by choosing to serve lepers while omitting the usual precautions to avoid the disease. Damien omitted them because they were, in his estimate, incompatible with the brotherly compassion and pastoral love that motivated many lepers to cooperate with the saving acts he did *in persona Christi* for them. “He told one patient who was badly infected and asked him to be careful: ‘Don’t get excited, son. Suppose the disease does get my body, God will give me another one on resurrection day. The main thing is to save your soul, isn’t it?’” (Jourdain, op. cit., 142).

19. Vatican II teaches: “Chastity ‘for the sake of the kingdom of heaven’ (Mt 19.12) should be regarded as an eminent gift of grace. . . . [I]t is a singular sign of heavenly goods and a most suitable means by which religious readily dedicate themselves to divine service and their apostolic works. In this way, they show forth to all Christ’s faithful that wonderful marriage, founded by God and to be fully manifested in the future age, by which the Church has Christ as her unique spouse” (PC 12). Male as well as female ascetics have at times been regarded as brides of Christ (see **2-C-1**, above). Moreover, insofar as clerics act not only *in persona Christi* but *in persona ecclesiae*, they represent both Jesus and the Church, and if they represent him as bridegroom, they represent her as his bride and as her children’s mother, as Paul sometimes makes clear by speaking as the *mother* of a Christian community he founded (see Gal 4.19, 1 Thes 2.7).

20. Still, vocations that include celibate chastity for the kingdom’s sake really are superior in important ways to other forms of evangelical life (see **2-D-2** and **2-E-9**, above).

creatures on earth that God willed for their own sakes, cannot fully find themselves except by sincere self-giving” (GS 24). So, those with both the gift for peaceful chastity and a vocation to close collaboration rightly seek self-fulfillment in giving themselves completely to Jesus and his Church. As Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before him (see Heb 12.2), so good close collaborators give themselves totally to him and his Church in order to become holy and forever be all that they can be.

Consequently, three loves—of Jesus, of those to be served, and of self—ground reasons for committing oneself to close collaboration and accepting celibate chastity. For some, the primary reason for responding to the call to give themselves totally was love for Jesus, and the desire to be like him and to enjoy close friendship with him. Others dedicated themselves to service primarily for the sake of those to whose salvation their collaboration, by God’s plan, will contribute. Still others responded to a vocation to close collaboration primarily for the sake of their own true self-fulfillment, their own holiness.

No matter which reason was primary in particular cases, every good close collaborator is like a holy married Christian whose genuine spousal love, self-love, and parental love are undivided—that is, they are inseparable motives for lifelong fidelity. Collaborators’ three loves—of Jesus, self, and those they are called to serve—inseparably motivate them to persevere in carrying out their vocations. Their love for Jesus impels them to cooperate with him as fully as they can in serving those he loves and to find self-fulfillment in doing so. Their love for those Jesus wishes to save with their help impels them to love him, who alone can save, to imitate him, and to find self-fulfillment in salvific cooperation and communion with him. Their authentic self-love impels them to give themselves totally to Jesus and those he wishes to save through their service.

It might be objected that other reasons have often been given for committing oneself to a vocation that includes celibate chastity: it is superior to marriage and is a surer way to holiness for those with the gift for it. Changing the rationale, the objector might argue, calls celibate chastity’s value into question and suggests that holy priests and religious of times past were deluded and wrongheaded.

To this objection, two things can be said.

First, the change in rationale must not be exaggerated. Since accepting and fulfilling one’s vocation is the way to holiness, those called to celibate chastity should accept it as part of their way to become holy, and vocations that include it really are superior in important respects to those that include marriage (see **2–D–2** and **2–E–9**, above).

Second, it is true that many theological attempts to explain and promote celibacy and virginity, including some endorsed in magisterial documents, were skewed by biases against sex and marriage, neo-Platonic notions of the relationship between this world and the kingdom, and failure to focus on Jesus’ *human* reasons for adopting a lifestyle that included forgoing marriage. Even so, guided by relevant New Testament passages, holy men and women of the past gave themselves totally to Jesus and his Church. Grounded in love of God, zeal for souls, and thirst for holiness, their reasons

for undertaking close collaboration were sounder than the defective theological accounts of it.

**3) A close collaborator's commitment strictly limits his or her other responsibilities.**

Disciples who live other forms of evangelical life naturally undertake multiple commitments, but a sound commitment to perpetual profession in a religious institute and/or to ordination and celibate chastity leave no time or resources for anything else. The self-enslavement of close collaborators precludes any other commitment that might distract them from their work with Jesus or generate tensions between their relationship with him as a human individual and relationships with other individuals or groups. Good close collaborators, therefore, avoid other commitments and form no other relationship that might generate additional, exigent responsibilities.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, they never subordinate commitment to Jesus and service to the kingdom to fulfilling natural responsibilities, such as those to their family of origin and homeland.

The responsibilities of people who undertake to provide services usually are specified, and thus limited, by custom, law, or the terms of a contract. But that is not so when the undertaking establishes a covenantal relationship. Thus, when a couple forms an authentic bond of marriage, the spouses must be ready to meet each other's unforeseen needs and those of their minor children. A genuine commitment to a profession, such as teaching or law, also generates responsibilities to students or clients that, although of a more limited kind, cannot be fully spelled out in advance.

Even so, an authentic professional commitment and genuine marital consent are mutually compatible. But because the self-enslavement characteristic of Jesus' close collaborators precludes any other commitment that would generate exigent responsibilities, it is a very grave mistake to suppose that a celibate diocesan cleric or professed religious has undertaken only one more state of life or profession leaving room, as marriage and secular professions do, for other commitments. Not even marital consent, much less commitment to a profession, is complete self-giving in the same way as an undertaking to be Jesus' close collaborator.

Moreover, the preoccupation of close collaborators with the things of the Lord generally requires them to limit their involvement in political matters, social and cultural movements, and even the affairs of their families of origin. They must imitate Jesus' whole lifestyle, not just his celibate chastity.

God's revelation in Jesus makes it clear that the common good of his incipient kingdom—his Church on earth—is immeasurably superior to the common good of any political society, and sometimes nations call on their citizens to set aside what otherwise would be exigent duties to their own families. Thus, the requirements of any Christian's personal vocation can require him or her to set aside what otherwise would be exigent duties to homeland or family.

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21. A friendship can be shaped entirely by mutual consensus and need not generate exigent responsibilities; so, good close collaborators can form and carry on genuine friendships (see 3-C-1, below).

Having dedicated themselves to sharing in Jesus' complete self-gift to the Church, good close collaborators never regard civic duties or duties to family of origin as on a par with their responsibilities as clerics of their diocese or members of their religious institute. Civic and family duties are subordinate to collaboration with Jesus and conditioned by it. Good close collaborators do not voluntarily accept civic roles such as military service or jury duty, but decline them if they rightly can.<sup>22</sup> And unlike virtuous unmarried Christians committed to service bearing on the things of the world, good close collaborators find themselves not more but less free than their married siblings, other things being equal, to spend time with their parents and other family members, or to care for them when they need help.

Like the Lord Jesus himself, his good close collaborators are compassionate toward people with authentic needs. Their compassion embraces the need of the hungry for food, the sick for care, the unemployed for work, the oppressed for liberation, and so forth. All the same, their efforts to meet those needs always are limited by their commitment to provide the gospel's guidance out of darkness and the shadow of death into saving truth and toward life everlasting.

Though Jesus could have met every human need and completely eliminated suffering from the world, he did not. He addressed a few instances of this-worldly needs—for example, he cured some sick people and fed some hungry people—only when that would serve as a sign of the heavenly kingdom's coming and provide a foretaste of it. Moreover, he did not meet this-worldly needs with the means generally used. He met them by perfectly carrying out his own unique mission, focused on the kingdom, so as to transform human minds, hearts, and ways of life.<sup>23</sup>

In this matter as in others, Jesus' good close collaborators, intending always and only to make available Jesus himself and services that he wishes to provide through them, are satisfied with imitating him rather than pursuing any other agenda. They work for someone's this-worldly welfare—for example, health, education, or freedom from various sorts of mistreatment—only when they believe that promoting and protecting it will somehow contribute to that person's and/or others' knowledge of Jesus and participation in the blessings God wishes everyone to receive through Jesus.<sup>24</sup> Even when pursuing this-worldly goods, their Christian love of neighbor bears consistent and powerful witness to the absolute importance of the things of the Lord and to the comparative insignificance of even the

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22. Of course, a priest can rightly serve as a military chaplain and a religious might serve as a military medic or nurse.

23. See Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 52, AAS 63 (1971) 523–24; Flannery, 1:703–4.

24. "Father Damien's people had souls to save. All the work he did to make living conditions better for them was for this purpose only" (Jourdain, op. cit., 151). Mother Teresa's *Rules* provided: "The sisters will use every tenderness and love for those who are leaving this world—so that the love of Jesus will attract them and make them make their peace with Him" (*Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light*, ed. Brian Kolodiejchuk, M.C. [New York: Doubleday, 2007], 347). The norm also is exemplified by founders and foundresses of institutes and societies dedicated to education and health care, for example, St. Angela Merici, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac, and St. John Baptist de La Salle (see 2–C–6 and 2–C–8, above); on health care, see also John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 83, AAS 88 (1996) 460–61, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XVI.



most important this-worldly affairs considered in themselves and apart from their potential contribution to the heavenly kingdom.

Insofar as good close collaborators are able to follow Jesus' example, they avoid tainting and obscuring their witness by the material cooperation in evildoing that is inevitable when this-worldly ends are pursued in the usual ways—that is, by operating within available social structures, which always are more or less unjust. Moreover, following Jesus' lead helps collaborators avoid taking sides in legitimate differences among the faithful about priorities among this-worldly ends and appropriate ways of pursuing them.<sup>25</sup> Thus, they maintain ecclesial communion with groups of the faithful who legitimately differ among themselves and are able to help such groups maintain communion with one another.

The 1971 session of the Synod of Bishops addressed clerics' political and other secular activities in its document, *The Ministerial Priesthood*, which makes it clear that such activities must be limited by clerics' commitment to live in the world "as witnesses and stewards of another life."

In order to determine in concrete circumstances whether secular activity is in accord with the priestly ministry, inquiry should be made whether and in what way those duties and activities serve the mission of the Church, those who have not yet received the gospel message and finally the Christian community. . . .

When activities of this sort, which ordinarily pertain to the laity, are as it were demanded by the priest's very mission to evangelize, they must be harmonized with his other ministerial activities, in those circumstances where they can be considered as necessary forms of true ministry (see PO 8).<sup>26</sup>

Although the synod did not offer examples of how priests' work of evangelizing can rightly lead them to get involved in secular affairs, the concept is clear: good clerics do that only insofar as it is a necessary or very helpful means to evangelization.

The Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes proposed similar norms with respect to involvement in secular affairs for members of religious institutes, cited the Synod of Bishops' document in support, and explained in a footnote that "the criterion [with respect to involvement in politics] given for priests, as already mentioned for other forms of involvement in secular structures . . . , guides the behavior of religious also, due to the close links of religious life with the hierarchical apostolate (CD 34) and the special relationship which binds it to the pastoral responsibility of the Church (LG 45–46)."<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, good close collaborators concentrate on the religious service to which they are committed. That does not mean that the Church is indifferent to human suffering in this world. She rightly confronts and strives to overcome the social injustices endemic even to democratic

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25. Of course, not all differences among the faithful are legitimate. When they are not, good close collaborators speak in specific terms and accept the inevitable bad reaction of those who reject unwelcome truths that pertain to Jesus' good news.

26. AAS 63 (1971) 912, Flannery, 2:685.

27. Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, "Religious and Human Promotion" (Plenaria of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, 25–28 April 1978), fn. 44, *OR*, 26 Jan. 1981, 12; cf. sections 11–19, *ibid.*, 10–11.

societies by the coordinated contributions of close collaborators and lay faithful. Ideally, the former exemplify Christian values and clearly articulate the Church's social teachings, so as to raise the latter's consciousness and foster the development of mature, lay leadership in every nation and in each of the particular churches. Only when the lay faithful understand the Church's social teachings and their own vocations, and have their own sound and able leaders, can they act in solidarity to carry out their proper apostolate in the sphere of secular affairs.

Close collaborators rightly associate with one another whenever that will help them carry out their commitment to Jesus and those he will benefit through their service. But good close collaborators never form or participate in associations whose purposes or activities would in any way impede them from nurturing their friendship with Jesus or fulfilling their responsibilities as clerics of their diocese or members of their religious institute.<sup>28</sup>

Sometimes, nevertheless, close collaborators must be directly involved in financial and other temporal affairs for the sake of spreading the gospel and supporting charitable works. At times, too, they can overcome obstacles to evangelization or avoid generating obstacles to it only by involving themselves in political, economic, cultural, and familial affairs in ways usually appropriate only for lay people.

For example, if a formerly democratic government becomes despotic and starts to interfere with the Christian education of children, lay leaders well formed regarding their political responsibilities should plan and initiate appropriate resistance, and the rest of the faithful, including close collaborators, should act in solidarity with them, each in accord with his or her personal vocation. But if the church in that place lacks able lay leaders or is so weakened by divisions and lukewarmness that action in solidarity is impossible, close collaborators may assume leadership despite their limited competence in political matters and the bad effects of involving themselves in secular affairs.

Then too, as a last resort when the common good is gravely threatened, a good close collaborator sometimes discerns the call to step into the breach, as Pope Leo the Great supposedly did by confronting Attila the Hun. Doing so might be justified by the interest of the Church, as a human community, in the common good of the larger society of which she is a part and/or by the power such an action has to embody and manifest love of neighbor, which helps convey and confirm the Christian message. Similarly, the witness-value of laying down one's life for another justified what St. Maximilian Kolbe did and probably also justified the actions of many other clerics and religious who risked their lives in trying to protect others' lives or other authentic and important, though lesser, this-worldly interests.

The family duties of close collaborators can be treated more briefly.

The gospel accounts tell of an occasion during Jesus' public ministry when his family came to see him. Rather than interrupt his work to welcome them, he used the occasion to teach the priority of relationships grounded in revelation and faith over natural human bonds (see Mt 12.46–50, Mk 3.31–35, Lk 8.19–21). On another occasion, he equally emphatically made the

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28. See *CIC*, c. 278, with respect to secular clerics; the norm applies *a fortiori* to religious, whose spirituality and activities are more fully shaped by their specific charisms.

point that a good close collaborator's lifestyle, like his own, will involve permanent homelessness and detachment from family of origin.

As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But he said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." (Lk 9.57–62)

Plainly, responsibilities toward home and family should be subordinated to one's commitment to Jesus, not vice versa.

Still, the unqualified commitment made by close collaborators to Jesus and the Church does not cancel the natural responsibility everyone has towards parents and other family members. That commitment itself requires them to fulfill their natural responsibility and should shape how they fulfill it. Regarding and treating everyone as a brother or sister in Jesus, good close collaborators, for instance, resist sentimental motives for participating in family holidays, celebrations, and the like. Instead, they relate to and serve members of their family in accord with their special commitment and responsibilities.

Lacking time and resources to dispose of as they please, they do not spend time or use other goods for their family of origin unless that is allowed by canon law, particular law, and the legitimate decisions of their supervisors. Moreover, just as many close collaborators in the past permanently left their families to serve as missionaries far from home, many today, while maintaining communication with their families, seldom see them.

Sometimes, however, parents or other family members urgently need help and only a close collaborator can provide it. If he or she can rightly do something to meet the need, doing nothing would falsely suggest that wholehearted love for Jesus and his Church negates natural responsibilities rather than embracing and perfecting them. At the same time, setting aside or even significantly interrupting his or her lifestyle or service to meet the need of someone naturally near and dear would falsely suggest that Jesus and his kingdom do not deserve primacy. In such cases, therefore, good close collaborators and good supervisors work together to find a way to meet the family member's urgent need without compromising the collaborator's commitment or misusing the charitable resources available to the diocese or religious institute.

#### **4) Good close collaborators' total self-giving shapes their service and life.**

Let us now consider six characteristics of good close collaborators' service and life that flow from the totality of their self-gift.

First, they are both conservative and progressive. They are determined to conserve all that God gave in Jesus for the whole human race, and to safeguard the souls and make careful use of the resources entrusted to them. Despite hardships, they persevere in undertakings that flow from their specific commitments and serve those whom Jesus wants served. But they

are progressive in accepting the Church's development of her doctrine and practice as well as in creating or adopting and implementing better plans for serving. They resist attachment to temporalities—buildings, equipment, and other mere means—and are quick to abandon them, as well as their own undertakings if these no longer contribute to, and have perhaps begun to detract from, the service Jesus desires.

Second, anxious to limit their responsibilities to a set of manageable tasks and to reserve some time for themselves, some close collaborators focus legalistically on the letter of rules and job descriptions while neglecting their spirit. As a result, while avoiding irresponsibility for which they could be blamed, they fail to serve well. Having undertaken complete self-giving, legalistic collaborators settle for self-serving minimalism. Desiring to please Jesus, by serving well, good close collaborators not only fulfill the letter but generously and energetically go beyond it, while also managing their workload and adequately caring for themselves—precisely to be able to continue serving well.

Third, Jesus' parable of the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to recover one (see Mt 18.12–14, Lk 15.3–7) might be misunderstood as a warrant for serving only those who lack faith or are alienated from the Church while neglecting practicing Catholics. By contrast, St. Paul's exhortation, "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal 6.10), might be used to justify a preferential option for the spiritually wealthy. Avoiding both mistakes, good close collaborators do as Paul says but benefit non-Catholics and fallen away Catholics more than they would by serving only them.

How can that be done? Giving themselves totally to Jesus, good close collaborators do two things. First, they intensely love well-functioning members of the Church, who live in friendship with Jesus; and so they seek earnestly to promote such members' perseverance in grace and constant growth in holiness. Second, they also share Jesus' great compassion for those alienated from him, and so strive to bring his mercy to them. The first group's growth in holiness bears fruit in authentic lay apostolate, which makes the Church more vibrant and attractive, and thereby increases her effectiveness in evangelizing and gathering in all who respond. The result is that good close collaborators, with the help of their many spiritual offspring among the laity, better serve non-Catholics and fallen away or lukewarm Catholics than do other collaborators who either concentrate on them or neglect them.

Fourth, in general, people—students, patients, clients, and customers—who interact well with those who provide services usually receive good service; people who alienate service providers often get short shrift. But troublesome and irritating people need—often more urgently—the benefits Jesus offers everyone. Good close collaborators therefore resist the temptation to discriminate against the troublesome and regard their difficult behavior as an opportunity to show them Jesus' mercy, help them meet him or grow closer to him, and so build up the communion of the incipient kingdom. Of course, to act in that way, those who collaborate well with Jesus must often accept suffering—at the very least impositions on their time and good nature—they might otherwise avoid. But they, like Paul, can

accept that as part of their vocation and rejoice in it (see 2 Cor 1.3–7, Col 1.24). Less faithful collaborators not only miss out on that joy but risk receiving severe punishment, as Jesus warned with his parable of the wise and faithful steward.<sup>29</sup>

Fifth, giving themselves completely to Jesus and imitating him, good close collaborators try to do what the Father wills, no more and no less. So, they consistently act on the truth that faithful service is essential and success is not (see 1–E–5, above). Aware that they are parties to a network of interpersonal relationships centered in the Lord Jesus, not contractors engaged to bring about certain specified results, they respect their limited role in God’s plan for developing divine-human communion.

Nevertheless, they do care deeply for the people they serve and strongly desire the benefits they hope to realize by serving well. It is right that they should. So, even good close collaborators can be tempted to focus on results and do what seems necessary to improve the numbers, fill the positions, balance the books. However, realizing how limited are both their understanding of God’s plan and their role in carrying it out, they resist temptations against fidelity and leave the outcome to the Holy Spirit.

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are equal, and each shall receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. (1 Cor 3.5–9)

St. Paul undoubtedly prayed for fresh ideas and exercised his ingenuity to develop effective ways of serving faithfully. Other good close collaborators do likewise. But, also like Paul, they seek their satisfaction not in measurable success but in pleasing the Lord by serving as energetically and well as they can.

Measurable success sometimes lends plausibility to deviant teachings and practices that for a time provide seemingly good results here and there, and with one group or another. False prophets and false teachers are likely to have their day (see 2 Pt 2.1–3), and the focus on success tends to generate doctrinal disputes and operational conflicts. By contrast, fidelity to the Lord Jesus deepens good close collaborators’ union with him and their communion with one another in him. Eventually, as the Holy Spirit gives the growth, their faithful words and deeds bear good and abundant fruit.

Finally, having given themselves completely to Jesus and the Church, good close collaborators never abandon their clerical and/or consecrated service and life. Rather, they go on using their gifts as fully as they can. To

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29. See Lk 12.42–48. Robert J. Karris, O.F.M., “The Gospel according to Luke,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice–Hall, 1990), 704–5, explains that in this context both the Greek words *doulos* (“servant,” “slave”) and *oikonomos* (“steward”) mean “one who gives service to the Christian community,” and soundly comments, “The punishments for unfaithful and negligent church officials are stark,” except that *church officials* is too narrow. Close collaborators who are not officials also serve the church and so are among those “to whom much is given” from whom, Jesus warns, “will much be required” (Lk 12.48b).

be sure, they take note of changes in their capacities and are ready to give up any office or other role of service when that would be better for those to be served. But they never willingly renounce service for a life of leisure, like someone who retires from burdensome work to be free to do as he or she pleases. Instead, they go on taking opportunities to contribute to the cause to which they have devoted their entire selves. Of course, in all these matters, they abide by established norms and by the legitimate judgments of their supervisors, with whom they candidly and regularly communicate about changes in their capacities already experienced or anticipated.

**5) Good close collaborators foster fidelity to their commitment.**

Prudent Christians expect to be tempted to be unfaithful to their vocational commitments and they strive to forestall such temptations. Good close collaborators therefore constantly foster their own and one another's fidelity to their total self-gift to Jesus and his Church.

Jesus' passion was draining. His cross was too heavy for him to bear. In committing themselves entirely to Jesus and his Church, close collaborators take up their crosses and at times will be drained. Still, good ones, from St. Paul to Blessed Damien, have made tremendous sacrifices with seeming ease and definite cheerfulness.

Though sustained by their faith, those from Abraham to John the Baptist whom God called for special service suffered great hardships and had only a dim view of the heavenly home God was preparing for them (see Heb 11.13–16, 39–40). By contrast, Jesus facilitates the special service to which he calls every one of his disciples:

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Mt 11.28–30)

Christians are never alone in serving God. They cooperate with Jesus, who has done, and continues to do, the more difficult part. He supports them with affectionate friendship and a clear prospect of the kingdom.

The secret of Paul and Damien was that they passionately loved Jesus, fixed their eyes, as he did, on the new earth and new heaven, and always bore in mind that those who preach to others can themselves fail to gain admission to the kingdom (see 1 Cor 9.27).

The fidelity of good close collaborators to their commitment is fostered mainly by things they do for other goods, which are intended for their own sakes. They do not regard their friendships with Jesus and with those they serve as mere means. They see Jesus in those they serve and see them in him.<sup>30</sup> Before ordination or final profession, Jesus had become the center of their lives, and he remains so always.<sup>31</sup> Captivated by his beauty, they cherished his companionship more than anyone else's and permanently bound themselves to him. They delight in communing with him, so much so that regular prayer is as much a necessity of their lives as eating and

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30. See John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 49, AAS 84 (1992) 745–46, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

31. See **2–D–2, above**; also see Boniface Ramsey, O.P., “Christocentric Celibacy,” *Review for Religious*, 43 (1984): 217–24.

sleeping. Whether or not they consider themselves espoused to Jesus, they dearly wish to be like him, always aim to please him, gladly share his lifestyle, joyfully collaborate with him, and easily develop appropriate affection toward those he serves through them.

Good close collaborators also bear in mind the other reasons that led them to make their commitment and how being faithful to it will greatly please Jesus and benefit others, both now and forever. They remind one another of these things, and when resisting temptation focus mainly on them rather than on less noble motives. While giving themselves generously in service, they know their limits, avoid rigidity but live an orderly life, and maintain balance in their lives. They form and enjoy a few close friendships, and strive for friendly relationships with associates and those they serve (see **3-C-1**, below).

Wishing to share Jesus' mind, they resist the secularist climate of opinion and test by faith everything they hear; they "destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2 Cor 10.5). When frustrations make fidelity seem pointless, they reawaken confidence by remembering that Jesus remains with them (see Mt 28.20, Acts 18.10) and that he has given them his Spirit, who can overcome every obstacle (see Jn 14.16–17).

To maintain thankfulness, good close collaborators count and recount the blessings God has already given them in Jesus, not least the instances in which their service has been fruitful, and the still greater blessings in prospect, especially unending peaceful and joyful fellowship with Jesus and all the blessed. They say with hope, "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tm 2.11–12a). Never, however, do they presumptuously take remaining in Jesus for granted: "If we deny him, he also will deny us" (2 Tm 2.12b). So, for the sake of others' salvation and their own, they regularly examine themselves, repent, and renew the struggle to fulfill their commitment more perfectly.

Good close collaborators prepare themselves to resist temptations against their commitment by denying themselves morally acceptable enjoyments—for example, by voluntarily fasting at times or permanently abstaining from some sort of generally available food or drink they especially like (see *CMP*, 776–80). And, seeing the ascetic benefit of whatever self-denial is appropriate for other reasons, they more easily and generously accept, for example, the discomfort of hard work and fatigue, the inconveniences of austerity, and so on.

All Jesus' disciples must be ready to follow him by taking up their crosses *every day* (Lk 9.23; cf. 1 Cor 15.31). Suffering often is harder than doing. So, good close collaborators also foster fidelity to their commitment by bearing in mind the reasons for accepting suffering and reminding one another of them in moments of discouragement.<sup>32</sup>

Every Christian vocation is not only the Father's plan of action, to be discerned and lived out; it includes all the afflictions he permits, to be

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32. For a treatment of evil and suffering, see **1-A-4** to **1-A-10**, above; for a treatment of the relationship between human action in this world and the heavenly kingdom, see **1-E-3** and **1-E-4**, above; also see John Paul II, *Salvifici doloris*—an apostolic letter on the Christian meaning of human suffering.

accepted with faith from his fatherly hand (see 2–A–3, above). We can trust our wise and loving Father to take good care of us. But we cannot now expect to comprehend his plan and see clearly why he permits bad things to happen to us and our loved ones (see Job 42.1–6, Rom 11.33–35). When the chosen instruments among God’s People of old faced death without having received what he promised, they nevertheless trusted him and assumed he would somehow fulfill their hopes (see 2 Mc 7, Heb 11.13–16). With the Father’s clear and full self-revelation in Jesus and with Jesus’ example, all Christians—not least his close collaborators—have stronger reasons for fidelity despite suffering: “Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross” (Heb 12.1–2; cf. 1 Pt 4.12–19).

Moreover, as St. Paul teaches, “In everything God works for good with those who love him” (Rom 8.28). Christians who live in God’s love can treat suffering as a blessing: “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom 5.3–5; cf. Jas 1.2–4). God allows Christians to suffer so that by persevering they will deepen their commitment and grow in hope. Good close collaborators expect a generous share of this discipline. Of course, when a new suffering begins, they do what is reasonable to deal with it and beg God for help. But if it persists, they do not complain and wallow in self-pity. They thank God and persevere, confident that the Lord’s assurance to Paul is for them too: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12.9).

God also allows close collaborators to suffer for their fidelity so that they will experience his comfort—that is, his effective support in dealing rightly with their suffering—and thus become able to support others who suffer, so that they too will persevere and be saved (see 2 Cor 1.3–6). Imprisoned and aware that he may well be killed, Paul thinks about how his suffering has benefited others:

What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ; and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear. (Phil 1.12–14)

In humanly hopeless situations—even when faithful efforts seem to end in failure—the perseverance of witnesses bears its fruit, and the victory of God will be complete and clear (see Rev 11.1–13). Jesus is the best example of that. He “learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Heb 5.8–9). As Jesus’ sufferings were the necessary condition for his resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit, what his collaborators suffer due to their fidelity is somehow necessary for the fruitfulness of their mission.

Health problems—physical and especially psychological ones—can increase temptations and make them harder to deal with. Good close collaborators therefore nurture their own fidelity and that of other



collaborators by making reasonable efforts to deal with their own health problems and help others deal with theirs. Preferring prevention to cure, they adopt and encourage a healthful way of life, including adequate physical exercise and sleep. They get regular checkups, promptly seek appropriate care, and press associates who obviously neglect their health to get help. They inform their supervisors when health problems are likely to have an adverse effect on their work or the work of associates who ignore or neglect their own problems.<sup>33</sup>

Sometimes close collaborators find it a growing burden to meet some or all of their special responsibilities: work and prayer become distasteful, their efforts seem hardly worthwhile. Unlike people suffering from depression, however, they continue to enjoy some other activities. They may make a retreat, take a vacation, or adjust their schedule to allow more leisure. But if the problem persists, it is likely to be identified as burnout.<sup>34</sup> This condition has both moral/spiritual and psychological aspects. Close collaborators are likely to avoid it if they focus on fidelity rather than success, nurture fidelity appropriately, maintain a healthful way of life, and deal with health problems as they emerge. But if the signs of burnout appear, they take them to spiritual direction while also seeking sound psychological counseling. Needless to say, they encourage associates with symptoms of burnout to do the same.<sup>35</sup>

#### **6) Good close collaborators firmly resist challenges to their commitment.**

Challenges to the commitment of close collaborators are likely and take various forms: adverse reactions on the part of those they try to serve, laxity among associates, threats by those with power to cause grave harm, demonic activities, and/or their own bad thoughts.

Sensitive to others' feelings and attentive to their opinions, good close collaborators notice how those they serve are responding, carefully discern the factors that motivate adverse reactions, and take them into account in order to foster the immediate relationship Jesus desires with those who receive his close collaborators' service. In reacting negatively, people sometimes are moved by inadequacies and defects that a good close collaborator will readily acknowledge and try to correct. But sometimes negative reactions are occasioned by appropriate efforts to share things that derive from Jesus and build up the Church. Then good close collaborators accept unpopularity, rejection, and even ill-treatment rather than betray their commitment by altering or giving up any part of what Jesus entrusted to his

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33. For example, an associate might be in denial despite clear symptoms of serious physical pathology, or unable to choose to deal with depression, or resistant to dealing with some condition that has both psychological and moral aspects, such as alcoholism; on psycho-moral problems, see **3-E-3**, below.

34. Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy*, 67–69, *EV*, 5:348–54, pp. 237–39; (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1974), 56–58, plainly alludes to burnout without using the word. The problem is considered only within a specific context and dismissed with spiritual advice—sound insofar as it goes but inadequate.

35. On burnout, see *DMQ*, 38–42.

Church. At the same time, they strive to foster more receptivity to everything that Jesus wishes them to convey.

The morale of a group of close collaborators can decline to such a degree that lukewarmness and laxity come to prevail in the group. Good close collaborators who belong to it continue fulfilling their individual responsibilities and avoid cooperating formally in deviations. They also prudently discern and fulfill their responsibilities with respect to their less faithful associates' behavior. They strive to maintain cordial relationships; but doing that often is difficult, even impossible, for those who must try to prevent members of the group from causing grave harm to innocent parties or the common good of the group or the Church. If supervisors tolerate serious deviations, the perseverance of good close collaborators is likely to be perceived by the group's majority as a reproach (see Wis 2.12–20). Then the sad result will be that those “who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived” (2 Tm 3.12–13).<sup>36</sup>

Sometimes close collaborators' fidelity is challenged by threats to themselves or to their institute or the Church. This need not involve a threat of martyrdom, which might well be easier to resist than the price that public authorities, the communications media, and even dissident groups within the Church exact from those who refuse to compromise the Church's teachings and/or the integrity of Catholic institutions and agencies. Good close collaborators bear in mind Jesus' warnings against compromise and hypocrisy:

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! (Lk 12.2–5).<sup>37</sup>

So, confronted with intimidation, good close collaborators are ready, as Jesus himself was, to pay any price rather than betray their commitment.

The New Testament makes it clear that Christians can expect their fidelity to be challenged by demons: “Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking some one to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith” (1 Pt 5.8–9; cf. Eph 6.11–12). Jesus himself warned the Twelve that Satan would test them (see Lk 22.31), and many holy close collaborators down to our day have reported battling with demons. When close collaborators foster fidelity to their commitment, however, they really do take up the “whole armor of God” (see Eph 6.13–17). In this way, they always are prepared for demonic challenges and, being alert to discern them, respond with prayer “in the Spirit” (see Eph 6.18).

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36. See 3–E–4, below, for a treatment of how good close collaborators cooperate despite profound conflicts between groups of clerics in the same diocese or religious in the same institute.

37. Unfortunately, those warnings were not heeded by some tempted by the threat of lawsuits to lie, even under oath, in an effort to cover up wrongdoing and to fail to provide pastoral service owed in strict justice to youths who had been seduced.

They also are consoled by Jesus' prayer that those he sends into the world be protected from the Evil One (see Jn 17.15).

Christians' own bad thoughts also tempt them to be unfaithful, and the sorts of bad thoughts that occur only to close collaborators pose special challenges for them.

Familiarity with Jesus can tempt them to imagine at times that they may grant themselves exceptions to the standards that apply to other Christians. Good close collaborators foresee and prevent that temptation by recalling that "Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Lk 12.48) and "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 7.21).

Like dedicated members of the armed services of a nation at war, who are interested not only in doing their part but in everything necessary for victory, including others' contributions to the war effort, close collaborators are interested not only in doing their part in the Church's mission but in that mission as a whole and in the coming of the kingdom. Thus, they tend to think about how well other close collaborators are doing their part. Such thoughts can be good—for example, if and insofar as they contribute to fulfilling a responsibility for what others are doing. But they are bad if they serve no good purpose; then, they are at best a distraction. They can lead to discouragement that weakens one's own motivation, to lowering one's standards and becoming more vulnerable to temptation, and to judging others' inner guilt.<sup>38</sup> If judgments that supervisors are not performing well serve no good purpose, bad thoughts about them can lead to belittling authority, cooperating only when strictly required, disobeying legitimate decisions, rebelling openly, and even usurping authority by imposing one's views on people one ought to serve.

Whenever good close collaborators find themselves thinking about how well others are doing their duty, they ask themselves whether and how that is their responsibility: "How, if at all, is this my concern?" Often there is a responsibility: to commend someone who is doing well, to encourage those who are struggling, to admonish an associate who seems to be sinning, to call problems to the attention of a supervisor, to pray for supervisors who seem to be negligent, to strive to mitigate harm to those who have been ill-served, and so on. But insofar as good close collaborators judge that their thoughts about others' performance will serve no useful purpose, they set them aside, reminding themselves that the Father entrusted the Church's mission as a whole and the kingdom's coming to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who ask each disciple to focus only upon his or her limited responsibilities. Jesus taught Peter that lesson after investing him with his high office (see Jn 21.20–22); good close collaborators take the point to heart.

Close collaborators often enjoy activities that all or most good Christians engage in but which are neither religious nor essential to their service—things like spending time with friends and relatives, playing games, sightseeing, cultural pursuits, and so on. Such activities of close collaborators can be good insofar as they maintain and build up appropriate

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38. Judging others' inner guilt is what Jesus' "Judge not" forbids; see Mt 7.1–2, Lk 6.37–38; cf. Rom 14.10; GS 28; *S.t.*, 2–2, q. 60, a. 2, ad 1.

relationships, promote physical or psychological health, provide materials for use in service, facilitate suitable religious activities, and so forth. But they often tempt people to excess. When close collaborators find themselves thinking: “Having given up so much, I am entitled to this innocent enjoyment,” they can be sure this justification would not come to mind if there were a good reason to choose the prospective activity. The thought is bad; it rationalizes self-indulgence.

Instead of rationalizing, good close collaborators discern how the activities in question belong to God’s plan for their lives and engage in them only insofar as they are part of that plan. These elements of their lives are always in harmony with their service and often tightly integrated with it, as were Jesus’ eating and drinking with his ministry. Good close collaborators are not interested in this-worldly satisfactions as such but in heavenly blessings as compensation for all they have given up. Precisely because they follow God’s plan and avoid excess, they experience the good things of this life as foretastes of better things to come and more satisfying than the gratifications of the self-indulgent.

Close collaborators not uncommonly experience loneliness, encounter seemingly insoluble difficulties with associates or supervisors, are frustrated by the obduracy of people they attempt to serve, and feel out of touch with Jesus. Then they may recall the good things they gave up, imagine what might have been, and wish they had withdrawn before ordination and/or final vows. That bad thought is not light matter. Willingly entertaining it is the *looking back* that makes one unworthy of the kingdom.<sup>39</sup> To be sure, lack of sufficient reflection or full consent or both often mitigates guilt; yet the wish saps enthusiasm and weakens the commitment, which is the first step toward its abandonment.

Since good close collaborators are always in a warm relationship with Jesus, detached from success, and ready to accept suffering for the kingdom’s sake, they generally prevent the bad thought by wryly brushing aside what might have been: “I’ve made my commitment; Jesus and those he wishes to benefit through my service are central for me.” But if they do have the bad thought, they reject it: “I must forget about what might have been and press on to what is to be” (see Phil 3.8–16). Acutely aware that it cannot be objectively right to renege on a total gift of self to Jesus and his Church, such people look upon an associate’s doing so as an occasion, not for celebration, but for gentle and subdued farewells.<sup>40</sup>

While good close collaborators never renege on their total self-gift, some do leave the diocese or institute to which they first committed themselves in order to enter another, form an entirely new institute, or undertake a different sort of consecrated life. But they only undertake such a

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39. See Lk 9.62. John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 15, AAS 93 (2001) 276, OR, 10 Jan. 2001, IV, remarks: “In the cause of the Kingdom there is no time for looking back, even less for settling into laziness.”

40. Appropriate help should be given to departing associates, and longstanding relationships should not be broken off brusquely. But those who indiscreetly celebrate such an event bear false witness about the sacredness of vocational commitments and create or contribute to an occasion of serious sin for others who are vulnerable to temptations against fidelity.

change if convinced that God is calling them to make it.<sup>41</sup> Many saints have discerned such a calling and responded. Their example makes it clear that their commitment to and membership in particular dioceses or institutes is a stable but not always unalterable way of carrying out their fundamental commitment, namely, their self-gift to Jesus and his Church.<sup>42</sup>

### **B: Essential Features of Close Collaborators' Spirituality**

#### **1) Each good close collaborator enjoys a unique relationship with God.**

In many times and places and perhaps all, at least a few people have been very interested in the human condition and the origins and make up of reality. Had God revealed himself merely to satisfy their curiosity, the revelation we have could hardly be regarded as successful. It answers some questions—for example, about death, sin, and suffering—but leaves many others unanswered and raises some new ones. Moreover, while some very gifted people are receptive to God's revelation, simple people are usually more ready to welcome it (see 1 Cor 1.17–27).

Vatican I explained the point of divine revelation by teaching that it not only confirms and completes what unaided reason can know about divine realities but is absolutely necessary inasmuch as God has given human beings a “supernatural end: sharing in divine goods that completely transcend the understanding of the human mind” (DS 3005/1786; cf. 3026–28/1806–8). Vatican II presupposes that teaching, which pertains to faith, and further clarifies the purpose of divine revelation:

It pleased God in his goodness and wisdom to reveal himself and make known the mystery of his will (see Eph 1.9), by which through Christ, the Word made flesh, human beings have access to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and are made sharers of the divine nature (see Eph 2.18, 2 Pt 1.4). By this revelation, then, the invisible God (see Col 1.15, 1 Tm 1.17), out of his overflowing love, speaks to human beings as his friends (see Ex 33.11, Jn 15.14–15) and keeps company with them (see Bar 3.38), so as to offer them fellowship with himself and receive them into it. (DV 2)

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41. Making such a change also is governed by ecclesial norms—see, for example, *CIC*, cc. 267–68 and cc. 684–93.

42. The Church's law envisages the possible invalidity of ordination (see *CIC*, c. 290, 1°; c. 1026; cc. 1708–12; *CCEO*, c. 394, 1°; cc. 1385–87) and of perpetual religious profession (see *CIC*, c. 656, c. 658; *CCEO*, c. 464, c. 532). If someone who has had the status of a close collaborator loses it because the nullity of his or her ordination and/or profession is established, the attempt to make the total self-gift did not succeed. Validity should be presumed, however, and close collaborators should keep their commitments as long as the presumption stands. But if a cleric has reason to doubt the validity of his ordination and is no longer morally certain he can validly do *in persona Christi* those things only the ordained can do, he has a grave obligation to refrain from them and to tell his proper ordinary about his doubt. Again, perpetually professed religious can ask to be separated from their institute and dispensed from their vows (*CIC*, cc. 691–93), and such petitions sometimes are granted; celibate clerics are sometimes allowed to give up the clerical state, and they may also be released from the obligation of celibacy (*CIC*, cc. 290–92). It seems to me that some—but very few—who really have made the fundamental commitment of a close collaborator and been faithful to it are called by God to take such a step. If some people's vocations do unfold in that way, God is returning their total self-gift because he has something else in mind for them; they are not renegeing on their commitment.

Commenting on this passage, Joseph Ratzinger says that it gives “a far greater emphasis to the personal and theocentric starting-point when compared with Vatican I: it is God himself, the person of God, from whom revelation proceeds and to whom it returns, and thus revelation necessarily reaches—also with the person who receives it—into the personal center of man, it touches him in the depth of his being, not only his individual faculties, in his will and understanding. . . . From this there follows an understanding of revelation that is seen basically as dialogue.”<sup>43</sup>

Divine revelation is therefore quite different from many other sorts of communication, including scholarly publications, news reports, and advertisements for goods or services. It is somewhat like a series of personal communications addressed by one adult to another in order to begin a relationship with a view to intimate friendship, marriage, or some other free, mutually beneficial, ongoing cooperation. But even such communications differ greatly from God the creator’s revelation to his human creatures. He communicates solely to offer them gifts, including a share in his own nature and intimate fellowship with himself. Moreover, unlike the mutual independence of human persons in communicating with one another, forming relationships, and cooperating, God gives people their hearing of his message, their free choice to accept it, their gratitude for his gifts, and their ongoing cooperation in their relationship with him.<sup>44</sup> God’s revelation forms human persons in their relationship and cooperation with him, but their response to revelation does not form God; and while human beings never are mysterious to God, he always remains mysterious to them.

Although God revealed himself directly to individuals such as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, divine revelation prior to Jesus established and carried on covenantal relationships with naturally formed, providentially prepared human communities. God called only a few of their members to play unique roles in them and to enjoy distinctive, personal relationships with himself. Still, due to their different God-given capacities and free choices, each member of those covenantal communities undoubtedly received revelation somewhat differently from others, responded diversely with personal faith, and developed a unique relationship with God.

Divine revelation in and through Jesus is directly addressed to every human being and calls them all into a single, universal, covenantal community—the Church that Jesus founded—which is the incipient, everlasting kingdom (see **1–D–2** and **1–E–3**, above). When those who are prepared to repent, believe in Jesus, and follow him are baptized, they share the Church’s faith in Jesus and are united with him. In virtue of their oneness with Jesus, they are not only united with one another but participate in the divine nature, and are united with the Father in the Holy Spirit.

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43. Joseph Ratzinger, “Revelation Itself,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 3:171.

44. Cooperating with God is very different from cooperating with anyone else. God, who creates everything good other than himself, creates good human free choices and the actions that carry them out. So, everything that contributes to human persons’ justification and sanctification—absolutely everything salvific—is God’s entirely gratuitous gift; and God’s gifts *include* the repentance and free cooperation necessary for one’s justification as well as the meritorious good works necessary for salvation (see **1–A–3** and **1–E–3**, above).

However, God reveals not only to offer all human beings covenantal communion but also to offer each individual who enters into that communion an intimate personal relationship with himself. If individuals received nothing more than what all members of the Church together receive, hold, and hand on, nobody would enjoy what God offers each of Jesus' disciples—a personal relationship. God reveals himself completely in Jesus, but nobody knows Jesus without personally knowing him—without a personal relationship. The uniqueness of that relationship also is pure grace, a gift received as a personal revelation. Thus, as a child of God, each and every Christian is called by the Father and enabled by the Spirit to enjoy a distinctive, personal relationship with each of the divine persons and to play his or her unique role in the Church (see **2-A-2 and 2-A-3**, above). Consequently, each Christian, while sharing in the one faith of the Church, not only receives God's revelation in and through Jesus somewhat differently, and responds to it diversely with personal faith, but also directly receives a personal revelation.

It is important to understand, however, that, like so-called private revelations (see *CCC*, 67), the personal revelation each Christian receives does not add to God's definitive revelation in and through Jesus, but enables him or her to live it out. And unlike so-called private revelations, personal revelation generally does not come by way of a vision, locution, or other extraordinary experience. Rather, it is received by sharing in the Church's faith, being grateful for that wonderful gift, appropriating it as fully as possible, and reflecting in light of it on the facts of one's life, particular situation, and unique experiences. Divine providence is all-embracing, and those data are meaningful; if one is a faithful Christian, one can discern their meaning, listen to God, and respond to him. For that reason, all Christians must engage in personal prayer and other spiritual practices so as to carry on their personal relationships with the divine persons, and to discern, accept, and faithfully fulfill their personal vocations.

Like a human associate who loves us, God is pleased when we focus on our relationship with him and strive to deepen it; he is pleased, too, when we strive to discern our part in his plan and carry it out. But God also does what no human associate can do: he gives us our very being, our ability to enter into a relationship with him, our doing so, and all the blessings that flow from that. God gets nothing for himself from our greater intimacy and cooperation with him. He always benefits us, and wants to make us better and happier forever. It is always in our own interest to welcome God's offers of greater intimacy and more perfect cooperation.

None of what is said here about personal revelation and the individual's unique relationship with God excludes or in any way disparages analogous divine gifts to particular groups, including ongoing ones such as religious institutes. While each of the Twelve enjoyed a unique relationship with Jesus, the Twelve together also shared in a unique relationship with him. Whenever God reveals himself to two or more individuals and calls them to cooperate, he forms unique relationships with each of them and includes in those relationships each one's share in their common relationship with him. Good close collaborators safeguard, nurture, and faithfully develop both their individual and their shared relationships with God.

## 2) Good close collaborators welcome God's word and allow it to form them.

Jesus tells his disciples that they must profoundly change. They must learn from him (see Mt 11.29) and imitate his way of relating to his heavenly Father. They must become childlike, a virtue whose significance becomes clear in diverse contexts.

In Mark, immediately after a passage about marriage and divorce, the disciples try to prevent people from bringing children to Jesus (Mk 10.13). After rebuking the disciples, he uses the children as a model: "To such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it" (Mk 10.14–15). In Luke, the parallel passage follows immediately after the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (see Lk 18.9–17). In Matthew, the disciples ask: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Mt 18.1) and Jesus answers: "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18.3–4).

This concern about who is greatest in the kingdom provokes Jesus to warn the disciples that they will not enter it *at all* unless they change. The question shows they lack something essential that little children have. But what? Part of Jesus' answer is explicit in "whoever humbles himself." Like little children, the humble realize that, by themselves, they can do nothing; they depend totally on God (see *CMP*, 634–36). "Jesus is recommending not childishness but a child-like trust in a loving Father, a trust which awaits everything and grabs at nothing."<sup>45</sup> In Mark and Luke, the point is that disciples must be childlike in receiving the kingdom: "Without saying so explicitly, Jesus is thus extolling the openness and sheer receptivity of these tiny human beings."<sup>46</sup> In sum, unless the disciples begin to trust their heavenly Father completely and realize their absolute dependence on him for all they are, have, need, and are to do, they will never be gratefully trusting and open enough to receive his gift of the kingdom and participate in it.

Complete trust means listening to God, believing him absolutely, relying unreservedly on his wisdom and love, accepting without question whatever he says, judging everything accordingly, setting aside any thought at odds with what he reveals, and regarding others' contrary opinions as mistaken. The psalmist expresses such complete trust with the image of a nursing baby: "I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother's breast" (Ps 131.1–2).

The Second Letter of Peter catechizes the faithful about how to grow to Christian maturity. They have been "born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Pt 1.23), "the good news which was preached to you" (1 Pt 1.25). Now they are exhorted: "Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk [Greek: *to logikon adolon gala* = the guileless milk of the word], that by it you may

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45. John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1980), 201.

46. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1193.



grow up to salvation” (1 Pt 2.2). That spiritual milk is the gospel,<sup>47</sup> which is guileless by contrast with the guile and deceit of alternatives in conflict with faithful Christians’ “obedience to the truth” (1 Pt 1.22).<sup>48</sup> Having been evangelized and baptized, Jesus’ disciples are to trust God completely and allow the gospel to form them through and through, so that they will “grow up to salvation”—become all they are called to be and enter into the kingdom.

Children absorb and are formed by the culture in which they are raised, including its worldview, language, and values, among which are unjust structures and compromises with evil. Converts from paganism and from the various forms of Judaism that had resisted Jesus plainly needed to become again like children, so as to absorb the distinctive elements of the heavenly kingdom’s culture and purge anything at odds with it. But even cradle Catholics brought up by devout parents need to become again like children, for they too have suffered some degree of deformation along the way. Not even the best parents are perfect Christians; not even the best children are perfectly docile to good parents. Peers and teachers, the mass media, and other cultural influences may adulterate sound parental formation; and every Christian must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in forming himself or herself to deal with the challenges peculiar to his or her unique life. Consequently, the Church in her liturgies and faithful Christians individually always have sought nourishment directly from God’s teaching, contained in the inspired books of the Bible. That is the original and basic meaning of *lectio divina*.<sup>49</sup>

In putting to the test what each listener thinks and plans, Scripture’s divine lessons have the power not only to instruct but to form and transform those who listen with faith: “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning [Greek: *kritikos* = able to judge] the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb 4.12). Scripture is, as it were, the heavenly Father’s letter, calling his children home:

If you understand that the Bible is this “letter of God,” which speaks to your heart, then you will approach it with the trepidation and the desire with which one who is in love reads the Words of the beloved. Thus God, who is Father and Mother in love, will speak just to you, and the faithful, intelligent, humble, and prayerful listening to what he says to you will slowly begin to satiate your need for light, your thirst for love. Learning to

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47. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., “The First Epistle to Peter,” in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. 2, *The New Testament and Topical Articles*, ed. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., and Raymond E. Brown, S.S. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 365: “*pure spiritual milk*: The unadulterated food proper to man’s *logos*, i.e., the Christian gospel, gives nourishment and contains nothing that hinders Christian growth.”

48. See John H. Elliott, *1 Peter*, Anchor Bible, 37B (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 400. Elliott explains and cogently defends “the guileless milk of the word” as a sound translation of the key phrase (399–401).

49. Armand Veilleux, O.C.S.O., “*Lectio Divina* as School of Prayer among the Fathers of the Desert,” <http://users.skynet.be/bs775533/Armand/wri/lectio-eng.htm>, accessed 29 Jan. 2008: “. . . each time we find the expression *lectio divina* among the Latin writers prior to the Middle Ages, this expression signifies Holy Scripture itself, and not a human activity on Holy Scripture.”

listen to the voice that speaks to you in sacred Scripture is to learn to love: The Word of God is the good news against solitude! For this reason listening to the Scriptures is a listening that liberates and saves.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, God's word transforms the faithful and renews their minds only if they are attentive, willing, and at all times—not just while participating in the liturgy or privately reading Scripture texts—ready to listen to whatever God has to say to them. When hearing the liturgical readings or reading Scripture, such listeners seek enlightenment about all their concerns, and even when not hearing or reading Scripture, they mull over what they have heard and read, so as to assimilate it completely and obtain all the nourishment they can draw from it.

Even so, there is a certain risk associated with the practice of *lectio divina*.

The danger is that, very often, although sometimes imperceptibly, *lectio* is transformed into an exercise—one exercise among others, even if it is considered the most important of all. The faithful monk makes a half-hour or an hour and even more of *lectio* each day, and moves on to his spiritual reading, his studies and his other activities. He adopts a gratuitous attitude of listening to God during this half-hour, and often gives himself up to other activities during the rest of the day with the same frenzy, the same spirit of competition, the same distraction, as if he had not chosen a life of continual prayer and constant seeking of the presence of God.

. . . this attitude is in contradiction of the very nature of *lectio divina*. What is the essence of *lectio*, as described by its best exponents, is the interior attitude. Now, this attitude is not something that can be put on for half an hour or one hour of the day. One has it all the time or not at all. It impregnates our whole day, or the exercise of it is a pointless game.<sup>51</sup>

Rather than being merely one spiritual exercise among others, authentic *lectio divina* gives rise to a childlike way of living in God's presence and always listening to what he has to say about one's thoughts and possible actions.<sup>52</sup>

*Lectio divina*, rightly understood, is not only for monks. Vatican II directed everyone, including close collaborators, to read Scripture gladly and prayerfully; it warned clerics against failing to listen to God's word and being empty preachers of it; and it strongly exhorted all the faithful, but especially religious, to read Scripture regularly so as to experience "the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus" (Phil 3.8) (see DV 25; PC 6). The Council said of presbyters something equally true of everyone who undertakes an evangelical life: "Under the light of a faith nourished by *lectio divina*, they can carefully search out the signs of God's will and impulses of his grace in the varied happenings of life, and so each day become more docile to his mission, which they have taken up in the Holy Spirit" (PO 18).

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50. Bruno Forte, Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto, pastoral letter, "Listen to His Words, Let His Heart Speak to Yours," <http://www.zenit.org/article-18756?l=english> (27 Jan. 2007), accessed on 29 Jan. 2008.

51. Veilleux, loc. cit.

52. Used judiciously, a treatment with practical guidelines can help beginners; see, for example, M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O., *Lectio Divina: Renewing the Ancient Practice of Praying the Scriptures* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

In *Pastores dabo vobis*, *Vita consecrata*, and *Pastores gregis*, John Paul II developed the Council's teaching regarding close collaborators' practice of *lectio divina*. All three documents include points relevant to all close collaborators.

Essential for their spiritual formation is "prayerful and meditated reading of the word of God (*lectio divina*), a humble and loving listening of him who speaks." Such listening enables close collaborators to grasp their vocation, because the unifying meaning of each Christian's very existence resides in "being the terminus of God's word which calls man and the beginning of man's word which answers God."<sup>53</sup> Familiarity with Scripture also promotes conversion: "In the realm of meditation and *lectio*, the heart which has already received the word opens itself to the contemplation of God's work and, consequently, to a conversion of thoughts and life to him, accompanied by a heartfelt request for his forgiveness and grace."<sup>54</sup> As sin is overcome, the mind is converted: Faith becomes the standard "for judging and evaluating persons and things, events and problems."<sup>55</sup> By *lectio divina*, therefore, close collaborators "acquire a kind of supernatural intuition, which allows them to avoid being conformed to the mentality of this world, but rather to be renewed in their own mind, in order to discern God's will about what is good, perfect and pleasing to him (see Rom 12.2)."<sup>56</sup>

Vocation and conversion lead to holiness and service. "There can be no primacy of holiness without attentive listening to the Word of God, which is the guide and nourishment of all holiness."<sup>57</sup> *Lectio divina* "brings us into contact with God himself, God speaking to man. It brings us into contact with Christ, the Word of God, the Truth, who is at the same time both the Way and the Life (see Jn 14.6)."<sup>58</sup> Listening to God's word and assimilating it "gives rise to a personal relationship with the living God and with his saving and sanctifying will."<sup>59</sup> That personal relationship, which includes prayer responding to the word, is essential for a close collaborator's service, for he or she "belongs to God and makes people think about God." People expect to find in any close collaborator not just someone "who welcomes them, who listens to them gladly and shows a real interest in them, but also and above all a man [or a woman] who will help them to turn to God, to rise up to him."<sup>60</sup> Moreover, "Before becoming one who hands on the word," a close collaborator "must be a hearer of the word. He [or she] should live 'within' the word and allow himself [or herself] to be protected and nourished by it, as if by a mother's womb."<sup>61</sup>

Written long ago in cultures very different from our own, many Scripture passages at first seem alien, and one may be tempted to ignore them and focus on those that are more accessible and gratifying. Nevertheless: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching,

53. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 47, AAS 84 (1992) 740–41, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

54. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, 15, AAS 96 (2004) 847, OR, 22 Oct. 2003, V.

55. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 47, AAS 84 (1992) 740–41, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

56. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 94, AAS 88 (1996) 470, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII.

57. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, 15, AAS 96 (2004) 847, OR, 22 Oct. 2003, V.

58. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 47, AAS 84 (1992) 740–41, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

59. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 94, AAS 88 (1996) 469, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII.

60. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 47, AAS 84 (1992) 740–41, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

61. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, 15, AAS 96 (2004) 847, OR, 22 Oct. 2003, V.

for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3.16–17). The Holy Spirit is the principal author of the entire bible, and he means it for people of every time and place. He is present to any reader who wishes to receive the message he intends for him or her, and he is always ready to help (see **1–B–8**, above).

Good close collaborators also make judicious use of available scholarly resources. While Scripture scholarship is not *lectio divina*, nobody can really listen to God’s word without doing what he or she reasonably can to grasp the text’s literal meaning—that is, to find out precisely what the human authors of the biblical books wished to convey. Along with seeking the Holy Spirit’s help, someone who is not a Scripture scholar must use the works of scholars who approach the text with linguistic skill and historical knowledge together with genuine faith and constant prayer. Having taken advantage of such scholars’ help, good close collaborators go on with their *lectio divina* by striving to appropriate all of the “truth which God wanted put into the sacred writings for the sake of our salvation” (DV 11).<sup>62</sup>

The appropriation of saving truth transforms good close collaborators’ faith, nurtures their gratitude and hope, and enables them to accept and do God’s will more and more perfectly. It is one thing to believe that the kingdom is not of this world, another to be free of secular optimism and personal ambition; one thing to believe that God will provide, another to be as free of anxiety as Jesus teaches his disciples to be (see Mt 6.19–34). Unlike the humble Tax Collector, the Pharisee failed to recognize his ongoing need for forgiveness even while realizing that his righteousness was God’s gift and thanking him for it (see Lk 18.9–14). Unlike the grateful leper, the other nine lepers failed to appreciate Jesus’ saving love as they should have done (see Lk 17.11–19). By authentic *lectio divina*, good close collaborators become acquainted with their divine teacher, and the truths of faith not only inform their intellect and will but their imagination, subconscious mind, and feelings. For example, although they, like everyone else, suffer when even a holy loved one dies, they not only believe in resurrection and hope for it but enjoy a deep sense of Jesus’ bodily reality and great confidence that their loved one will share in that reality. The funeral liturgy’s hopefulness mitigates their grief rather than leaving it unaffected or aggravating it.

The appropriation of saving truth also draws good close collaborators more fully into the Church’s covenantal communion with God in Jesus. God’s revelation is held and handed on by the Church not only in her constant and very firm beliefs and teachings but in her special practices, among which the Eucharist is central, and in her very structure and common life. With respect to these matters, Scripture contains not only truths but other things, including commands (e.g., “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”), performative formulations (e.g., “This is my body”), and empowerments (e.g., “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven”). By appropriating all such aspects of Scripture’s richness in *lectio divina*, good close collaborators come to appreciate God’s gifts better, participate more

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62. See David Stanley, S.J., “A Suggested Approach to *Lectio Divina*,” *American Benedictine Review*, 23 (1972): 439–55.

perfectly in the Church's practices, better adapt themselves to her God-given structure, and contribute more fully to her common life.

Scripture also mediates the personal revelation each Christian receives. It does this, for instance, by recounting many people's actual relationships with God, including their feelings and other relevant, concrete realities. Using imagination as well as reason in meditating on Scripture, good close collaborators put themselves in the place of the various characters and learn from all of them, good and bad. This enhances their ability to recognize and accept the unique relationships God offers each disciple of Christ.

For all these reasons, good close collaborators engage in *lectio divina* in such a way that they always keep God's word in mind, bring it to bear in their thinking and planning, and respond to it. Thus they fulfill the precept to pray constantly (see Rom 12.12, Eph 6.18, 1 Thes 5.17). From the beginning, their listening to God includes an awareness of him as really present in and with them, making himself personally known and drawing them into more intimate friendship; and this contemplative aspect of prayer grows as they live the word they hear and become more conformed to Christ present in them, their hope of glory.<sup>63</sup>

In his teaching on *lectio divina*, John Paul II makes an important point: "Although the whole of sacred Scripture is 'profitable for teaching' (2 Tm 3.16)," and for nourishing spiritual life, "the writings of the New Testament deserve special veneration, especially the gospels." Good close collaborators therefore "meditate regularly on the gospel texts and the New Testament writings which describe the words and example of Christ and Mary and the *apostolica vivendi forma*."<sup>64</sup> Such meditation is an important element of their friendship with Jesus, as Benedict XVI makes clear in remarks which, although addressed to priests, are equally relevant to others:

I no longer call you servants but friends. This is the profound meaning of being a priest: becoming the friend of Jesus Christ. For this friendship we must daily recommit ourselves.

Friendship means sharing in thought and will. We must put into practice this communion of thought with Jesus, as St. Paul tells us in his Letter to the Philippians (see 2.2–5). And this communion of thought is not a purely intellectual thing, but a sharing of sentiments and will, hence, also of actions. This means that we should know Jesus in an increasingly personal way, listening to him, living together with him, staying with him.

Listening to him—in *lectio divina*, that is, reading Sacred Scripture in a non-academic but spiritual way; thus, we learn to encounter Jesus present, who speaks to us. We must reason and reflect, before him and with him, on his words and actions. The reading of Sacred Scripture is prayer, it must be prayer—it must emerge from prayer and lead to prayer.<sup>65</sup>

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63. See Col 1.27; for an excellent analysis of the contemplative aspect of the prayer involved in *lectio divina*, see Louis Bouyer, Cong. Orat., *Introduction to Spirituality*, trans. Mary Perkins Ryan (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1961), 45–55, 68–82.

64. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 94, AAS 88 (1996) 469, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII.

65. Homily at Chrism Mass, AAS 98 (2006) 383–84, OR, 19 Apr. 2006, 3; for a fuller development of the same thought, but without mention of *lectio divina*, see John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 16–28, AAS 93 (2001) 276–85, OR, 10 Jan. 2001, IV–VI. Around the time I was eleven years old, I thought that Jesus is human only outwardly and entirely divine inwardly—without human thoughts, experiences, and feelings. I soon learned better

As the Twelve and the women who ministered to them and to Jesus grew closer to him by accompanying him, talking with him, and cooperating with him, good close collaborators grow in Jesus' friendship by prayerfully reading the gospels, imaginatively identifying with him and his companions, sharing in the discipleship of the latter, and carrying on their mission. Such meditation helps one more and more to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 13.14) and in doing so to put on a human nature renewed by his death and resurrection—a "new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4.24).

### **3) Good close collaborators carefully discern how to implement their commitment.**

In carrying on their personal relationship with God and striving to do his will, close collaborators need to know what his will is. That often is made clear enough by Christian moral norms and definite responsibilities flowing from previous sound commitments. Sometimes, though, a close collaborator must discern which of two or more morally acceptable possibilities will be pleasing to God and perfect.

Discernment was treated (in **2–A–5**, above). Here, I presuppose that treatment and add only a few considerations pertinent to close collaborators' discernment in carrying out their fundamental vocational commitment.

What needs discerning is what God has in mind. Having an agenda of one's own ensures discernment's failure. Like everything else that contributes to justification and sanctification, sound discernment is God's gift. Good close collaborators therefore ask for this grace and stand ready to accept gratefully the Holy Spirit's answer, no matter what it might be.

Shortly before his death, Jesus makes these things clear to his disciples as they go from Bethany to Jerusalem and back (see Mk 11.12–26). Although figs are not in season, he curses a fig tree for failing to satisfy his hunger. Then he drives the money changers out of the temple because they, and by implication the priests responsible for how things are being done at the temple, are not fulfilling God's injunction that it be a house of prayer for all the nations—though only Jesus' Church could and would fulfill that injunction. His action provokes the chief priests and scribes to find a way of destroying him. Finally, when Peter observes that the fig tree has withered, Jesus responds by exhorting the disciples to have faith in God, and to pray with both faith and forgiveness of anyone with whom they have a score to settle.

Those fixated on their own agendas resemble the fig tree that failed to satisfy Jesus. In killing him, nevertheless, the authorities unwittingly occasioned his resurrection, the sending of the Spirit, and the beginning of a new age, in which God's kingdom will be available, and everyone will be invited to enter it. In this kingdom, compliance with the old law will be neither sufficient nor in all respects even necessary. Jesus teaches his disciples to transcend the religious formalism of the chief priests and

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but had little sense of Jesus' humanity. When I was nearly fifty and preparing to write the first volume of *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, however, I spent a few weeks doing nothing but reading the four gospels. Then I fully realized, for the first time, what it means to say Jesus is like us in everything but sin. While always aware that he is God, I began to experience, in a new way, friendship with Jesus as man. Even the little I have of such friendship helps me grasp its significance to good close collaborators.

scribes. He proposes to put himself and his perfect sacrifice in place of the old law's temple and unsatisfactory mediation.<sup>66</sup> When about to establish the new covenant, he tells his disciples to have faith, to pray as he does, and to act in solidarity with him. Good close collaborators therefore realize that correct outward performance is not all God wants of them. He wants them to discern soundly so that in carrying out their commitment to serve Jesus and his Church they will put their faith into action with trust in grace, sincere forgiveness of others, and repentance for their sins.

If clerics and religious fail to do that, the outward behavior required by their commitment—even participation in the liturgy and dialogue with others to overcome conflicts and cooperate well—can become mere formalism. Having given themselves completely to Jesus and his Church for service, good close collaborators singlemindedly seek to discern how God wishes them to implement their commitment—not only what to do but why and how to do it.

Discernment is among options for choice but people usually are not limited to the options that happen to come to mind. Often, they can identify more options by reflecting on their capacities for action and the opportunities to use those capacities to protect or pursue goods in ways to which they have committed themselves. Good close collaborators develop their options by bringing their faith and specific commitments to bear in reflecting on various situational factors, and especially on two sets of these: their own gifts and resources and others' needs for their services.<sup>67</sup> Since situational factors are not abstract and unchanging but concrete and variable, one's accurate reading of a situation as it existed in the past can become outdated and irrelevant. Good close collaborators regularly take a fresh look at the situation and consider whether what they are doing now is still carrying out God's plan for their lives.

That is why Vatican II, engaged in seeking God's plan for the life and work of the Church universal at that time, spoke of her duty to examine the signs of the times in the gospel's light.<sup>68</sup> The signs are the present miseries, needs, and desires of the world's people, to whom Jesus continues to send his Church. Such data had to be interpreted in order to discover God's plan, so that his Church could discern and do his will. Vatican II did that work of interpretation, and in doing it gained a more profound and better integrated understanding of the gospel itself. This in turn helped the Council do something else John XXIII had called for, namely, articulate many truths of faith in fresh ways so that the unchanging and integral message of the gospel

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66. See N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1996), 334–35.

67. Occasionally, as in identifying a suitable confessor or spiritual director, good close collaborators reflect on their own needs and others' gifts. But for simplicity's sake, I focus on the more common issues that require discernment.

68. Jesus used "signs of the times" to refer to the signs that he had already provided of the kingdom's arrival; by comparing them with the clarity of the natural signs of changing weather, he showed the unreasonableness of those demanding that he provide a sign from heaven (see Mt 16.1–4). Vatican II (see UR 4; AA 14; PO 9; GS 4, 11, 44) used the phrase in an accommodated sense to refer to contemporary sociocultural data that should be taken into account; see M.–D. Chenu, O.P., "Les signes des temps," *Nouvelle revue théologique*, 87 (1965): 29–39; *LCL*, 58–60, 255–56.

would be more understandable to those who were open to it (see **1–B–7**, above). Thus, while the gospel illuminated the signs of the times, the Council’s consideration of those signs in the gospel’s light contributed to an authentic development of doctrine.

Like the good bishops who participated in Vatican II, other good close collaborators carefully examine situational factors and find fresh options for their diocese or religious institute as a whole, for some part of it, or for themselves personally. John Paul II explains how to interpret the signs of the times:

For a believer the interpretation of the historical situation finds its principle for understanding and its criterion for making practical choices in a new and unique reality, that is, in a *gospel discernment*. This interpretation is a work which is done in the light and strength provided by the true and living gospel, which is Jesus Christ, and in virtue of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In such a way, gospel discernment gathers from the historical situation, from its events and circumstances, not just a simple “fact” to be precisely recorded yet capable of leaving a person indifferent or passive, but a “task,” a challenge to responsible freedom, both of the individual person and of the community. It is a “challenge” which is linked to a “call” which God causes to sound in the historical situation itself. . . .

This gospel discernment is based on trust in the love of Jesus Christ, who always and tirelessly cares for his Church (see Eph 5.29), he the Lord and Master, the key, the center and the purpose of the whole of man’s history [fn. omitted]. This discernment is nourished by the light and strength of the Holy Spirit who evokes everywhere and in all circumstances obedience to the faith, the joyous courage of following Jesus and the gift of wisdom, which judges all things and is judged by no one (see 1 Cor 2.15). It rests on the fidelity of the Father to his promises.<sup>69</sup>

Thus, while good close collaborators discover God’s call in situational factors by practicing gospel discernment, that also contributes to their intimacy with Jesus and their appropriation of the gospel’s truth, so that it becomes ever clearer, more lively, and more firmly fixed in their minds.

Sound discernment is both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a human act. When St. Paul writes: “Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying” (1 Thes 5.19–20), he is not suggesting that the Spirit’s action precludes human efforts to discern. Rather, those injunctions introduce his call for discernment: “Test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thes 5.21–22). Before discerning, good close collaborators always pray for the light of the Holy Spirit. And they constantly strive to dispose themselves to discern well, especially by following Paul’s directive: “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove [Greek: *dokimazein* = discern] what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12.2).

This means that good close collaborators never stop striving to understand the gospel better. They take advantage of opportunities to receive catechesis—for example, by carefully reading new magisterial

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69. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 10, AAS 84 (1992) 672–73, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, III; also see *Vita consecrata*, 73 and 94, AAS 88 (1996) 448–49 and 469–70; *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XIV and XVIII.



documents. In order to rid themselves of opinions implicitly inconsistent with faith, they study theological works that explain and defend the truths of faith. Rather than trusting theologians, though, they accept from each of them only what they understand for themselves and find helpful in faithfully fulfilling their commitment to Jesus and his Church. As they listen to God's word with Catholic faith, their minds are renewed with the outlook and standards that pertain to divine revelation, the deposit that the Church firmly holds and constantly hands on (see **1-B-2** and **1-B-3**, above). Thanks to this renewing, they regularly call into question and often find wanting the assumptions of worldly wisdom, contemporary culture, public opinion, and unsound theology.

Since they are not conformed to this world, good close collaborators generally find it rather easy to exclude from consideration all morally unacceptable options. Aware nevertheless that they still are imperfect, they prepare to discern by reawakening their personal friendship with Jesus so as to stir up the feelings that are integrated with and support their commitment to serve him and his Church. Then they identify the option Jesus prefers—the one that belongs to his Father's plan—accept it and carry it out to the best of their ability.

If they encounter unexpected obstacles—if, indeed, they even find it impossible to carry out what they discerned—they do not suppose that their discernment must have been faulty. Of course, reflection may make it clear that self-will prevented authentic discernment. But God sometimes does call people to try to do something and then allows them to fail: Jesus did the Father's will in *trying* to gather Jerusalem's children (see Mt 23.37, Lk 13.34). Therefore, having done their best to know God's will, good close collaborators are confident that he enabled them to know it, and they accept unexpected obstacles and even the impossibility of doing what they were called to attempt with a lively awareness, similar to St. Paul's, of divine incomprehensibility: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom 11.33).

One often-cited criterion for discernment is: By their fruits you will know them. That criterion often is misused—for example, as a premise for arguing that the popularity of a pastoral program shows its soundness or that the spiritual benefits some people receive at the site of an alleged apparition shows its authenticity. However, Jesus proposes the criterion in warning against false prophets, blind spiritual guides, and those whose moral failings disqualify them from being moral critics (see Mt 7.15–20, Lk 6.39–45). He clarifies the criterion's meaning thus: "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (Lk 6.45). Good close collaborators use the criterion as Jesus intended—to identify reliable and unreliable people by the quality of their lives—and not to evaluate things by good or bad results which, not flowing directly from the thing to be evaluated, may well be mainly or even entirely due to something else. Much less do they use it to evaluate things by their popularity or anything else good only in some respect, not unqualifiedly.

#### 4) Daily Eucharist is central in the lives of good close collaborators.

Although I used a missal to follow the Mass as a child, I hardly understood it. At Mass one Sunday I gazed at the crucifix suspended over the altar and wondered during the consecration why we keep repeating what Jesus said and did at the Last Supper. Yes, he told the Twelve, “Do this in memory of me,” but why? He said we cannot have life after we die unless we receive him. But why not? Getting to heaven and seeing God are all that matter, and that means not dying in mortal sin. So, why can’t we forget about Jesus and his body, and concentrate on God and avoiding mortal sin?

The problem was that I understood neither Jesus nor mediation nor what a covenant is. Thus I did not understand “Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant” (Heb 12.24) and could not understand the Mass as Jesus’ ongoing mediation of the covenant he established during the Last Supper. But it is essential to understand these things, beginning with covenant, in order to see why the Eucharist is central in our lives.

After God rescued the Israelites from Egypt, he said to Moses on Mount Sinai:

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Ex 19.4–6)

God then told Moses what he expected of the Israelites in this covenantal relationship, and Moses conveyed God’s proposal to the people. They consented to it by saying: “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do” (Ex 24.3). But Moses did not stop at that. He had young men offer sacrifices, threw half of the blood against the altar (which represented God), had the people repeat their commitment, and threw the other half of the blood on them (see Ex 24.4–8), saying: “Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words” (Ex 24.8). With that ritual, the people confirmed their commitment, and their bond with God was sealed and enlivened by the life-force in the blood. Finally, Moses, Aaron, two of Aaron’s sons, and seventy elders went up the mountain, saw God, and ate and drank in his sight (see Ex 24.9–11). With the covenant, God had made the Israelites his special people; their leaders gained hitherto unavailable access to him; and, representing this now-priestly people, those leaders consumed part of the sacrifice that ratified the covenant.

In a wedding ceremony, a couple consent to be husband and wife. Unlike most other relationships formed by the consent of individuals, however, marriage is a “covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life” (*CIC*, c. 1055, §1). Consent alone is not sufficient to make the marital relationship fully real. The couple must consummate their marriage by giving themselves to each other in marital intercourse.<sup>70</sup> The consent of bride and groom establishes a

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<sup>70</sup> If a couple is permanently unable to consummate their marriage, it is null; their consent, even if sincere and wholehearted, is ineffective (see *CIC*, c. 1084, §1). If they

bond, a reality in the moral order. But the consent is to enter into one-flesh communion, and insofar as *marriage* refers to the latter, it begins only when the couple do that, thus sealing their marital covenant. Husband and wife are not two in one flesh until they engage in marital intercourse, so even though their consent in marrying is *to form* a permanent and exclusive union, the reality that has these properties—marriage as unbreakable covenantal communion—is fully constituted only with the first act of marital intercourse.<sup>71</sup>

Jesus' new covenant has some features of both the Sinai covenant and the marriage covenant, but it also differs from both, since it constitutes the universal, unending, and perfect relationship between God and humankind. The new covenant does not unite the two parties by anything extrinsic to them or by their actions alone, but by Jesus, the one person who is both God and man.

By Jesus' teaching and by his life, death, and resurrection, the Father reveals himself completely and offers his definitive covenant, not to a particular group of people, but to every human being (see DV 4). All who repent and make the baptismal commitment of faith enter into the new and everlasting covenantal community, which is the one Church of Christ (see Mt 28.19, CCC, 1267–68). But the union of God and human beings constituted by baptism goes far beyond the moral bond formed by God's promises and their commitment of faith. The Holy Spirit not only forgives the sins of the baptized but gives them new birth as God's children (or adopts them into his family), so that they really share in the divine nature (see Jn 1.12–13, 3.5; Rom 8.12–17; Gal 4.4–6; 2 Pt 1.4; CCC, 1263, 1265).

In Jesus, the Father not only reveals himself definitively but makes himself readily available to human beings. Unlike Moses, who sealed the Sinai covenant with the blood of animals, Jesus sealed the new covenant with a far better sacrifice: his perfect obedience (see Rom 5.17–19, Heb 10.5–10) and his bodily self in the Eucharist.

Obedying the Father, Jesus returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and in doing so freely accepted death (see 1–C–5, above). Human free choices are self-determining; even after they have been carried out, they continue to shape one's character and relationships unless changed by other, incompatible choices (see CMP, 50–52). Because Jesus lives forever and always remains faithful, his sacrifice of perfect obedience never ends, and he is always able to save those who believe in him (see Heb 7.25). Thus,

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presumably could consummate their marriage but have not done so, the pope can dissolve it *even if it is sacramental* (see CIC, c. 1142).

71. John Paul II, General Audience (5 Jan. 1983), 2, *Inseg.* 6.1 (1983) 42, *OR*, 3–10 Jan. 1983, 7, teaches that marital consent is a sacramental sign by reason of what it signifies, and then explains: "However, this sacramental word is, *per se*, merely the sign of the coming into being of marriage. And the coming into being of marriage is distinguished from its consummation to the extent that without this consummation the marriage is not yet constituted in its full reality. The fact that a marriage is juridically contracted but not consummated (*ratum—non consummatum*) corresponds to the fact that it has not been fully constituted as a marriage. Indeed the very words 'I take you as my wife—my husband' refer not only to a determinate reality, but they can be fulfilled only by means of conjugal intercourse. This reality (conjugal intercourse) has moreover been determined from the very beginning by institution of the Creator: 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh' (Gn 2.24)."

Jesus' human obedience to the Father constitutes an absolutely unbreakable moral bond between humankind and God.<sup>72</sup>

Jesus also explains that he has come from heaven—that is, from the Father—as bread: “It was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven. . . . For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh” (Jn 6.32–33, 51).

At the Last Supper, Jesus simultaneously did two things for those who would be baptized into his covenantal community. He made his perfect self-sacrifice available to them, so that they could join in it and offer themselves along with him; he also made his bodily self available to them, so that they could become intimately united with him. In becoming humanly one with Jesus in these two ways, members of his covenantal community are united with God—that is, with the Word incarnate, and so also with the Father and the Spirit. At the same time, their bodily union with Jesus makes them his members, and, by living together as such, they can be fully united with one another (see 1 Cor 6.15, 10.16–17, 12.27). Thus, the Eucharist brings about the communion of the Church and her union with Jesus, of which marriage is a sign (see Eph 5.25–32).

Moses was only a go-between: he talked first with God, then with the people, doing what he could to bring them together. But the communion the Sinai covenant established was fragile. Unlike Moses, Jesus, being both God and man, brings God and humankind together in himself. He is perfectly united with the Father and with the Spirit, and he enables human persons to become united with him and makes it easy for them to abide in him. Thus, the unity Jesus brings about in the Eucharist “is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union.”<sup>73</sup>

Moreover, Jesus establishes and preserves covenantal communion that is constant and indestructible. As God he is unchanging, while as man he lives forever and is always faithful. And he always makes both his human action and his flesh and blood present for his members to share in. Mortal human beings enter into the covenantal communion, and those who abide in Jesus never die; the communion begun in the Church becomes eternal life in the kingdom. As St. Paul explains (see 1 Cor 11.24–26), the Eucharist is to be done in memory of Jesus, making his saving act present here and now for us to participate in, until he comes again in glory. The Eucharist anticipates heaven: it is a “pledge of the glory to come” (CCC, 1402–5).

As marital intercourse consummates the union established by the spouses' consent, so the Eucharist consummates the union established by God's promises and the baptismal commitment of faith. It enables the

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72. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 9, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, III: “In the mystery of Christ's obedience unto death, even death on a Cross (see Phil 2.8), the new and eternal covenant was brought about. In his crucified flesh, God's freedom and our human freedom met definitively in an inviolable, eternally valid pact.”

73. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 34, AAS 95 (2003) 456, OR, 23 Apr. 2003, VI, quoting with approval Nicolas Cabasilas, *Life in Christ*, IV, 10: *SCh* 355, 270.

Church's members to begin to participate even now in the heavenly wedding feast:

Liturgy is an "action" of the *whole Christ (Christus totus)*. Those who even now celebrate it without signs are already in the heavenly liturgy, where celebration is wholly communion and feast. . . .

It is in this eternal liturgy that the Spirit and the Church enable us to participate whenever we celebrate the mystery of salvation in the sacraments. (CCC, 1136 and 1139)

The Eucharist also focuses and magnifies faithful Christians' hope for the kingdom. When bride and groom first engage in marital intercourse, they fully experience themselves as two-in-one flesh. But the Eucharist is a foretaste of a fuller experience of union still to come. Only in heaven will faithful Christians fully experience their intimate union through and in Jesus with the Father in the Holy Spirit; and only there will they experience union, through and in Jesus, with each and every one of the other blessed. Meanwhile, by participating well in the Eucharist, wayfarers join with Jesus in praising and thanking the Father, and are able to unite the rational worship of their Christian lives with his perfect sacrifice. The Eucharist also provides the spiritual nourishment they need to persevere in their struggle.

Benedict XVI touches on several of the preceding considerations in a beautiful summary toward the end of his apostolic exhortation on the Eucharist:

Jesus' gift of himself in the sacrament which is the memorial of his passion tells us that the success of our lives is found in our participation in the Trinitarian life offered to us truly and definitively in him. The celebration and worship of the Eucharist enable us to draw near to God's love and to persevere in that love until we are united with the Lord whom we love. The offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers and our solidarity with all men and women are essential aspects of that *logiké latreía*, spiritual worship, holy and pleasing to God (see Rom 12.1), which transforms every aspect of our human existence, to the glory of God.<sup>74</sup>

For all these reasons, the Eucharist should be the center of the life of everyone who shares in the integral and living faith of the Catholic Church.

There are further, specific reasons why this is especially true of close collaborators. Vatican II taught that the eucharistic sacrifice is the center and root of presbyters' lives because it is the main source of pastoral love, whose exercise unifies those lives (see PO 14).<sup>75</sup> John Paul II taught that the Eucharist is the center of consecrated life as well:

How can those who are called, through the profession of the evangelical counsels, to choose Christ as the only meaning of their lives, not desire to establish an ever more profound communion with him by sharing daily in the Sacrament which makes him present, in the sacrifice which actualizes the gift of his love on Golgotha, the banquet which nourishes and sustains God's

74. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 94, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, XVII.

75. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 31, AAS 95 (2003) 454–55, OR, 23 Apr. 2003, V–VI, reaffirmed this point and the Council's recommendation (see PO 13) that presbyters celebrate Mass every day, even if the faithful cannot be present; see also *CIC*, c. 904; *CCEO*, c. 378; John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 48, AAS 84 (1992) 742–45, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII.

pilgrim people? By its very nature the Eucharist is at the center of the consecrated life, both for individuals and for communities. It is the daily viaticum and source of the spiritual life for the individual and for the Institute. By means of the Eucharist all consecrated persons are called to live Christ's Paschal Mystery, uniting themselves to him by offering their own lives to the Father through the Holy Spirit.<sup>76</sup>

Cherishing their union with God in the Eucharist, good close collaborators, regard it as the center of their lives and the nucleus of each day. They omit celebrating or participating in it only when that is impossible or precluded by some other responsibility.<sup>77</sup>

I shall treat later the responsibilities of presbyters and bishops insofar as they act *in persona Christi* (in 6-?-?, below). But they also always act *in propria persona*, sharing responsibilities common to the faithful with respect to their participation in the Eucharist and other sacraments; and they often act *in persona ecclesiae*, sharing relevant responsibilities of all close collaborators. The following treatment of the responsibilities of participants in the Eucharist therefore applies not only to nonordained close collaborators but to bishops and presbyters, who also participate in the Eucharist when they preside.

Some people attend Mass, even daily, as passive and distracted observers of a performance they hardly understand. But good close collaborators bear in mind that, by means of the celebrant acting in Jesus' person, Jesus himself "presides over the assembly, speaks after the readings, receives the offerings, and says the Eucharistic Prayer" (CCC, 1348); eager to cooperate with him, they strive to participate consciously, actively, and fully.

To participate *consciously*, they study and meditate on the eucharistic prayers and all the common elements of the Mass.<sup>78</sup> Insofar as appropriate, they prepare for the day's liturgy by reflecting on everything proper to it, not least the readings; during the liturgy they meditatively attend to the relationships between these proper elements and the invariant heart of the celebration.

Their *active* participation in the Eucharist "is first of all interior, in that they inwardly participate in that which they outwardly hear, do, and say during the Liturgy."<sup>79</sup> Inward participation is the fruit of ongoing formation, in which the faithful cooperate with the Holy Spirit, so that they not only understand the rites and relevant truths of faith but in the Eucharist enjoy

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76. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 95, AAS 88 (1996) 470-71, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII.

77. Also see *Pastores gregis*, 16, AAS 96 (2004) 848, *OR*, 22 Oct. 2003, V-VI.

78. Besides Church documents, including Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *Introduction to the Order of the Mass*, Pastoral Liturgy Series, 1 (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), many sound works may be used to nurture better participation in the liturgy of the Eucharist; I have found helpful Josef A. Jungmann, S.J., *The Mass: An Historical, Theological, and Pastoral Survey*, trans. Julian Fernandes, S.J., ed. Mary Ellen Evans (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1976); Charles Belmonte, *Understanding the Mass: Its Relevance to Daily Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Scepter, 1997).

79. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, *op. cit.*, 26, p. 21; for a review of magisterial texts grounding the meaning of "active participation," see Martin Edwards, "The Active Participation of the Faithful According to the Recent Magisterium," in CIEL UK, *Ministerial and Common Priesthood in Eucharistic Celebration* (London: Saint Austin, 1999), 117-31.

true intimacy with Jesus and become holier disciples and better servants.<sup>80</sup> Good close collaborators, including supervisors, not only take advantage of opportunities for such formation but seek by personal prayer to obtain its benefits for themselves from the Holy Spirit.

Active participation that is interior and transforming becomes *full* participation when a participant worthily receives Communion and does whatever else is appropriate for him or her during the liturgical celebration. In a document implementing Vatican II's teaching, the Congregation of Rites explains:

All who gather for the Eucharist constitute that holy people which, together with the ministers, plays its part in the sacred action. It is indeed the priest alone, who, acting in the person of Christ, consecrates the bread and wine, but the role of the faithful in the Eucharist is to recall the passion, resurrection and glorification of the Lord, to give thanks to God, and to offer the immaculate victim not only through the hands of the priest, but also together with him; and finally, by receiving the Body of the Lord, to perfect that communion with God and among themselves which should be the product of participation in the sacrifice of the Mass. For the faithful achieve a more perfect participation in the Mass when, with proper dispositions, they receive the Body of the Lord sacramentally in the Mass itself, in obedience to his words, 'take and eat' . . .

All these things should be explained to the faithful, so that they may take an active part in the celebration of the Mass both by their personal devotion and by joining in the external rites . . ."<sup>81</sup>

Those who receive Communion worthily can participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist as actively and fully as the celebrant, for "active participation is not per se equivalent to the exercise of a specific ministry."<sup>82</sup>

Just as unfaithful spouses are not entitled to marital intercourse, close collaborators who are unfaithful to Jesus by committing mortal sins are not entitled to eucharistic Communion. Like an unfaithful spouse, the close collaborator who shares in the act of love without repenting and being reconciled adds injury to injury; he or she is "guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11.27).<sup>83</sup>

Liturgical celebrations very often are more or less seriously defective. The celebrant or chief concelebrant may mumble or hurry, put on a performance that draws undue attention to himself, give an unprepared or

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80. See Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 64, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, XI–XII, on mystagogical catechesis.

81. Congregation for Rites, "Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery," 12, AAS 59 (1967) 548–49, Flannery, 1:110–111 (fns. omitted).

82. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 53, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, X. In the context, *specific ministry* refers to every service provided in the liturgy by a particular individual or group, including the celebrant or chief concelebrant, deacon, lector, cantor, organist, choir, and acolyte or altar server.

83. Someone conscious of being in mortal sin but unable to receive the sacrament of penance may receive Communion if, but only if, three conditions are met: there is a grave reason (for example, not doing so would be failing to meet a grave obligation or would amount to publicly admitting a secret and shameful sin); he or she has contrition for the sin, including a firm purpose of amendment and the intention to seek forgiveness in the sacrament of penance as soon as possible; and, before receiving, the person prays for the grace required to make the contrition perfect (see *CIC*, c. 916; *LCL*, 204–5).

unsound homily, and/or mutilate the liturgy with arbitrary changes. The music may be entertaining rather than prayerful, poorly performed, and/or include hymns whose wording is doctrinally unsound or inane. And so on. But since even the more serious defects usually do not invalidate the Eucharist, good close collaborators strive to ignore them, focus on Jesus' presence and action, and enjoy being with him. Loving him as they do, they are happy to listen to his teaching, as Mary of Bethany did (see Lk 10.39); to join him in giving thanks to the Father, and in offering himself and offering themselves with him; and to receive him, be received by him, and share with him the joy of abiding in each other.<sup>84</sup>

Good close collaborators also are happy to carry out all the behavior that liturgical norms assign to them as reverently and as well as they can, whether they exercise a specific liturgical ministry or not. And when the liturgical celebration ends, their Eucharist continues, for they adore the Father by doing his will, live their lives in Jesus by cooperating with him, and forge their fellowship with the Church's other members and potential members by serving them.<sup>85</sup>

Although good close collaborators participate in the Eucharist daily, that never becomes banal and boring for them. Thanks to their understanding of what they are doing, their gratitude to Jesus, their love for him, and their experience of intimacy with him, they remain permanently in awe at the gifts they receive and the salvific process in which they are involved. They participate joyfully in the Eucharist and play their parts, whatever those may be, with unstudied but palpable reverence that contributes greatly to the witness they bear—to the intrinsic goodness of the Eucharist, to all the truths of faith that give it its meaning, and, above all, to Jesus' real presence in it as priest, as victim, and as the Church's bridegroom giving himself bodily for and to his bride.

That rich and complex witness tends to edify all who notice it and fosters in them the fruitfulness of what Jesus is doing in the Eucharist. By the same token, a close collaborator's lack of reverence—or, even worse, irreverence—tends to impede that fruitfulness for many people. Therefore, since close collaborators serve others mainly by fostering in them the fruitfulness of Jesus' salvific acts, providing that witness is one of a close collaborator's most important responsibilities. And because good close collaborators' pastoral love impels them to fulfill all their responsibilities,

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84. With respect to Communion, John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 22, AAS 95 (2003) 448, *OR*, 23 Apr. 2003, IV, teaches: "We can say not only that *each of us receives Christ*, but also that *Christ receives each of us*. He enters into friendship with us: 'You are my friends' (Jn 15.14). Indeed, it is because of him that we have life: 'He who eats me will live because of me' (Jn 6.57). Eucharistic communion brings about in a sublime way the mutual 'abiding' of Christ and each of his followers: 'Abide in me, and I in you' (Jn 15.4)."

85. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 71, AAS 99 (2007) ??, *OR*, 21 Mar. 2007, XIII, teaches: "There is nothing authentically human—our thoughts and affections, our words and deeds—that does not find in the sacrament of the Eucharist the form it needs to be lived to the full. Here we can see the full human import of the radical newness brought by Christ in the Eucharist: the worship of God in our lives cannot be relegated to something private and individual, but tends by its nature to permeate every aspect of our existence. Worship pleasing to God thus becomes a new way of living our whole life, each particular moment of which is lifted up, since it is lived as part of a relationship with Christ and as an offering to God."



the witness of reverent, daily participation in the Eucharist is an important aspect of its centrality in their lives.<sup>86</sup>

Whenever good close collaborators are involved in planning, arranging, and celebrating a liturgy of the Eucharist, they seek to foster its fruitfulness for everyone who participates. They therefore do several things which, unfortunately, are often not done. First, insofar as necessary and possible they catechize those who will participate and then consult them in order to identify potential obstacles to fruitfulness and ways of dealing with them (see **3–G–4**, below). Second, they evaluate legitimate and available liturgical options by the standard of pastoral love, not personal preference. Third, since they do not regard the exercise of specific ministries as opportunities to play a more prominent part in the liturgy but as services to Jesus and other participants, they do their best, when several individuals or groups might exercise a ministry, to see to it that it is done by the one most likely to provide good service.<sup>87</sup> Fourth, when exercising a specific liturgical ministry themselves, they do not seek to impress others but try to provide their service as reverently, skillfully, and unobtrusively as possible. Fifth, by example and when appropriate by words, they encourage others who exercise specific ministries to prepare well and fulfill their responsibility in a way that fosters the fruitfulness Jesus desires.

Despite due care, good close collaborators occasionally make liturgical mistakes. If a mistake may invalidate a liturgical act or is easily remedied, they remedy it. To avoid bad example, they mention and apologize for their mistakes unless there is a good reason not to.

Occasionally, emergencies and unusual situations make it morally impossible for celebrants or other participants in the Eucharist to comply perfectly with liturgical norms, yet there are adequate reasons to begin or proceed with the celebration. In such a case, good close collaborators make it clear that the changes they make are not meant to replace the liturgy authorized by the Church but to carry it out as well as possible under the circumstances.<sup>88</sup>

Some close collaborators unjustifiably choose to set aside liturgical norms. They may be indulging their own comfort or convenience. They may be trying to boost attendance by making the liturgy more appealing or to placate individuals or groups by allowing or even encouraging some to act

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86. The Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *Instruction concerning Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery*, 17, AAS 72 (1980) 338, OR, 9 June 1980, 11, recommends that the faithful not “omit to make proper thanksgiving after Communion. They may do this during the celebration with a period of silence, with a hymn, psalm or other song of praise, or also after the celebration, if possible by staying behind to pray for a suitable time.” A good close collaborator not only does that but carefully avoids behavior that would distract others from doing it.

87. For example, they follow the norm set down by Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 45, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, IX: “Together with the Synod, I ask that the Liturgy of the Word always be carefully prepared and celebrated. Consequently, I urge that every effort be made to ensure that the liturgical proclamation of the Word of God is entrusted to well-prepared readers.”

88. Those who legitimately set aside liturgical norms exercise epikeia: they judge the norm inapplicable because the authority prescribing it did not mean it to apply in such a situation. Invoking epikeia to justify abuses, as some do, adds scandalous dishonesty and/or rationalization to the wrong of the abuse itself.

inappropriately—for example, to do what is reserved to others or to engage in nonliturgical performances or make statements. They may be trying to improve translations, correct supposed mistakes, make things clearer, eliminate so-called sexism, avoid offending non-Catholics who want to participate fully, practice ecumenism, emphasize that *this* liturgy involves *us here and now*, simplify the liturgy by eliminating things regarded as unnecessary or unhelpful, or enhance it by adding or substituting texts, songs, or gestures taken to be more relevant, helpful, or appealing.

Regardless of motives, however, all such violations are among the abuses that deeply saddened John Paul II:

It must be lamented that, especially in the years following the post-conciliar liturgical reform, as a result of a misguided sense of creativity and adaptation there have been a number of *abuses* which have been a source of suffering for many. A certain reaction against “formalism” has led some, especially in certain regions, to consider the “forms” chosen by the Church’s great liturgical tradition and her Magisterium as non-binding and to introduce unauthorized innovations which are often completely inappropriate.<sup>89</sup>

To end such abuses, John Paul had a detailed instruction prepared and ordered every Catholic to abide by it.<sup>90</sup>

Good close collaborators abide by that instruction and seek to understand fully and conform precisely to all liturgical norms, especially those regarding the Eucharist. Good supervisors provide good example in this matter, as in others; they also clarify the moral obligation all Catholics have to conform to liturgical norms and do what they can to promote their observance.

Good close collaborators and good supervisors have cogent reasons for behaving as they do in these matters. Among them are the following.

Some liturgical abuses invalidate sacraments and/or embody or imply deviations from Catholic faith, and even less serious abuses usually omit or obscure something of the expression of faith.<sup>91</sup> Carefully conforming to liturgical norms also expresses and engenders the great care and delicate reverence with which Jesus’ great gift of himself in the Eucharist should be

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89. John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 52, AAS 95 (2003) 468, *OR*, 23 Apr. 2003, IX.

90. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, AAS 96 (2004) 549–601, *OR*, 28 Apr. 2004, I–XV. This document includes a statement that makes clear its magisterial and juridical authority: “This Instruction, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was approved by the same Pontiff on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, 19 March 2004, and he ordered it to be published and to be observed immediately by all concerned” AAS 601, *OR*, XI.

91. For instance, the common “Happy are *we* who are called to *this* supper” obscures the truth that those who participate in the Eucharist thereby participate in the ongoing supper of the Lamb, which includes but transcends its particular celebrations. Similarly, replacing “protect us from all anxiety” with “protect us from useless worry” obscures the prayer’s reference to the Eucharist’s fulfillment, namely, the “coming of our Savior,” for which, as the prayer goes on to say, “we wait in joyful hope.” In relation to this hope, useful worry is no more possible than reasonable doubt against faith or justifiable hatred of a neighbor.

received by his Church and all her members.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, a celebration of the Eucharist is authentic liturgy only insofar as “it is carried out in the name of the Church by persons legitimately designated and through acts approved by the authority of the Church.”<sup>93</sup> Each and every liturgical abuse interrupts Jesus’ liturgical action—opens a gap in his sublime tapestry or stitches to it a scrap of foreign material—and falsely offers as Catholic liturgy what is, at best, sectarian devotion.<sup>94</sup>

Besides, good close collaborators regard themselves and other close collaborators as servants of Jesus and his Church. Having undertaken to act *in persona Christi* and/or *in persona ecclesiae*, they are determined to do that, and they realize that unjustifiably setting aside or carelessly deviating from liturgical norms is incompatible with it. They also realize that every abuse in a liturgical celebration more or less gravely violates the strict right of each Catholic to participate in authentic liturgy and inevitably engenders divisions in the Church, thus thwarting Jesus’ intention to build up and sustain ecclesial communion by his liturgical action.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, liturgical abuses suggest that the liturgy is not sacred, and thus tend to undermine faith, increase irreverence, and lead to disobedience to the Church’s norms regarding other matters.

In many places, those responsible for music regularly smother the liturgy with hymns and sometimes include in it special performances that, even if skillful and esthetically pleasing, impede active and conscious participation by turning the congregation into an audience. By contrast, good close collaborators and good supervisors regard liturgical music “as an

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92. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 40, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, IX, makes this point: “Attentiveness and fidelity to the specific structure of the rite express both a recognition of the nature of Eucharist as a gift and, on the part of the minister, a docile openness to receiving this ineffable gift.”

93. *CIC*, c. 834, §2. Frederick R. McManus helpfully comments: “The second element of the distinction in canon 834, §2 is more useful as a canonical means to identify and determine liturgical actions, namely, that these be ‘approved by the authority of the Church.’ The usual but not exclusive means of approbation is by way of inclusion of rites in official liturgical books, as determined in canon 838, §§2 and 3. Thus it is possible to define as liturgical, in the sense of this canon, any rite which appears in an approved liturgical book and to define as non-liturgical or extra-liturgical all other prayers and devotional practices” (“Introductory Canons [cc. 834–839],” in John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* [New York: Paulist, 2000], 1006). Consequently, just as citizens fail to vote in an election insofar as they deviate from the behavior required by law to constitute voting, so Catholics stop doing the liturgy whenever they deviate from the words and gestures set out in the approved liturgical books; they return to doing the liturgy when they again conform to what the books prescribe.

94. See *LCL*, 145, for the argument that such falsification is a sort of superstition.

95. Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, “Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*,” 12, AAS 96 (2004) 553, OR, 28 Apr. 2004, II, declares that “it is the right of all of Christ’s faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes, according to her stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms. Likewise, the Catholic people have the right that the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass should be celebrated for them in an integral manner, according to the entire doctrine of the Church’s Magisterium. Finally, it is the Catholic community’s right that the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist should be carried out for it in such a manner that it truly stands out as a sacrament of unity, to the exclusion of all blemishes and actions that might engender divisions and factions in the Church.”

art placed at the service of communal prayer”<sup>96</sup>—as an aid to authentic participation by everyone present. While seeing to it that liturgical musicians are technically competent, they do not accept the idea that technical competence justifies performances that distract attention from the liturgy.

When choosing and/or guiding others’ choices of liturgical music, good close collaborators conform to Benedict XVI’s norms:

Certainly as far as the liturgy is concerned, we cannot say that one song is as good as another. Generic improvisation or the introduction of musical genres which fail to respect the meaning of the liturgy should be avoided. As an element of the liturgy, song should be well integrated into the overall celebration. Consequently, everything—texts, music, execution—ought to correspond to the meaning of the mystery being celebrated, the structure of the rite and the liturgical seasons.<sup>97</sup>

They also subordinate hymns to liturgical texts: “The selection of liturgical music begins with the liturgical texts themselves. Priority is given to singing the constitutive parts of the Mass in preference to hymns.”<sup>98</sup> If hymns are used, their words conform entirely and unambiguously to all relevant truths of faith. Settings of parts of the Mass that alter the liturgical texts are excluded “except insofar as this may be foreseen in the duly approved editions of the liturgical books themselves.”<sup>99</sup>

Finally, good close collaborators and good supervisors never praise and thank musicians and choir members for their good work during the liturgy, but only afterwards, usually by a personal note or statement of gratitude in a bulletin or newsletter.<sup>100</sup>

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96. Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, op. cit., 40, p. 28.

97. Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 42, AAS 99 (2007) ??, OR, 21 Mar. 2007, IX; omitted fn. 128 quotes the Synod’s *propositio* 25: “Like every artistic expression, singing must be closely adapted to the liturgy and contribute effectively to its aim; in other words, it must express faith, prayer, wonder and love of Jesus present in the Eucharist.”

98. Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, op. cit., 46, p. 31, which cites Congregation of Rites, “Instruction *Musicam Sacram*,” 7, 29, AAS 59 (1967) 302, 308–9, Flannery, 1:82, 87. Because the latter document was approved and ordered published by Paul VI, it remains in force except insofar as subsequent authorized changes in the liturgy made some of its provisions irrelevant. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Notitiae*, 5 (1969): 406, responded to a query as to whether a 1958 instruction that allowed “religious songs of the people” to be sung by the congregation during low Masses still applied: “That rule has been superseded. What must be sung is the Mass, its Ordinary and Proper, not ‘something,’ no matter how consistent, that is imposed on the Mass. Because the liturgical service is one, it has only one countenance, one motif, one voice, the voice of the Church. To continue to *replace the texts of the Mass being celebrated* with motets that are reverent and devout, yet out of keeping with the Mass of the day (for example, the *Lauda Sion* on a saint’s feast) amounts to continuing an unacceptable ambiguity: it is to cheat the people. Liturgical song involves not mere melody, but words, texts, thought, and the sentiments that the poetry and music contain. Thus texts must be those of the Mass, not others, and singing means singing the Mass not just singing during Mass.”

99. Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy, op. cit., 40, pp. 28–29.

100. Exercising a particular ministry is one way among others of actively participating in the liturgy, and providing appropriate liturgical music is a ministry. Those who participate well do so primarily to worship God and to enjoy the benefits of Jesus’ salvific acts and help others receive them. Therefore, it is inappropriate to call attention during a liturgy to how ministries have been performed, and thanking participants who are exercising a ministry calls

### 5) Good close collaborators joyfully pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

Jesus prayed regularly as he carried out his mission, and he told his disciples “always to pray and not lose heart” (Lk 18.1). Christians from the beginning not only celebrated the Eucharist but regularly prayed together: “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2.42).<sup>101</sup> As a collection of prayers for Jewish liturgy, the Psalter surely was used by Jesus, and it became his Church’s first and lasting prayer book.<sup>102</sup>

“This kind of common prayer gradually took shape in the form of an ordered round of Hours. This Liturgy of the Hours or Divine Office, enriched by readings, is principally a prayer of praise and petition. In fact, it is the prayer of the Church with Christ and to Christ.”<sup>103</sup> Over the centuries, nevertheless, the Liturgy of the Hours became more elaborate and less accessible to the laity; it came to seem less the prayer of the Church than an obligation of clerics and some nonclerical religious. However, the liturgical reform mandated by Vatican II facilitated participation by the whole People of God.<sup>104</sup>

As prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours is special. It is the Church’s prayer with Christ, who is present as the Church’s head to lead her whenever she prays (see SC 7): “The excellence of Christian prayer lies in this, that it shares in the very love of the only-begotten Son for the Father and in that prayer which the Son put into words in his earthly life and which still continues unceasingly in the name of the whole human race and for its salvation, throughout the universal Church and in all its members.”<sup>105</sup>

As liturgy, too, this prayer is special. It sanctifies the whole cycle of the day and night with the praise of God (see SC 83). As regular conversation and mutual signs of affection of spouses extend their one-flesh communion in marital intercourse throughout their lives, so the Liturgy of the Hours extends throughout the day communion with Jesus as well as the praise and thanksgiving that center in the Eucharist (see PO 5). Jesus, who always intercedes for us (see Rom 8.34, Heb 7.25), makes present to us here his unceasing heavenly intercession, so that we may join him in it (see SC 83), just as we join him in his self-sacrifice in the Eucharist.

Paul VI explains why the Liturgy of the Hours bears abundant fruit for those who participate well in it:

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attention to how they are performing. It also often elicits the congregation’s applause, which nurtures the performers-audience relationship and thus impedes authentic worship.

101. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles*, Anchor Bible, 31 (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 271, says that *prayers* here may refer to the Jewish temple prayers or to other specific prayers, but: “In any case, ‘prayers’ seems to mean prayers offered by Christians in community.”

102. See M. Sharon Burns, R.S.M., “The Beginnings of Christian Liturgy in Judaism,” *Service Internationale de Documentation Judéo-Chrétienne*, 17:1 (1984): 11–13.

103. Congregation for Divine Worship, “General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours,” 2, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 1, *Advent Season, Christmas Season* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1975), 22.

104. See Dominic F. Scotto, T.O.R., *The Liturgy of the Hours: Its History and Its Importance as the Communal Prayer of the Church after the Liturgical Reform of Vatican II* (Petersham, Mass.: St. Bede’s, 1987).

105. Congregation for Divine Worship, op. cit., 7, p. 26.

Since the life of Christ in his Mystical Body perfects and elevates also the personal life of each member of the faithful, any opposition between the prayer of the Church and personal prayer must be rejected; in fact their mutual relations must be strengthened and increased. Meditation must find a continual nourishment in the readings, in the psalms . . . When the prayer of the Office becomes real personal prayer, then the bonds that unite Liturgy and the whole Christian life are manifested more clearly. The whole life of the faithful, during the single hours of the day and the night, constitutes a “leitourgia,” as it were, with which they offer themselves in a service of love to God and to men, adhering to the action of Christ, who, by staying among us and offering himself, sanctified the lives of all men.<sup>106</sup>

The revision of the Liturgy of the Hours after Vatican II made participation easier by spreading the Psalter over four weeks, thus reducing the time required to pray the Hours.

Nevertheless, some close collaborators still regard the Liturgy of the Hours as an onerous duty from which they readily excuse themselves. Even when they do pray the Hours, they recite the words quickly and with little attention. To save time, they prefer to avoid communal celebrations, and they may do all the day’s Hours at once in order to get them out of the way and have time for other activities.

By contrast, what good close collaborators do *in persona ecclesiae* in praying the Hours is, at the same time, authentic, personal prayer. Loving Jesus and wishing to imitate him, they delight in praying with him. Loving the Church and always wishing to serve her, they joyfully “share in the highest honor of Christ’s bride when they stand before God’s throne performing the divine praises in the name of Mother Church” (SC 85). Loving especially the particular group of people they are called to serve, they gladly pray the Liturgy of the Hours *for* them—that is, on their behalf and for their benefit, both representing those they serve and promoting their salvation. Finally, loving themselves, they are grateful for the discipline the Liturgy of the Hours provides, the many opportunities it affords to pray with others, and, above all, for its contribution to their friendship with Jesus.

For all these reasons, good close collaborators are reluctant to skip any of the Hours, and they seek to pray them well: “Mind and voice must be in harmony in a celebration that is worthy, attentive and devout if this prayer is to be made their own by those taking part in it, and be a source of devotion, a means of gaining God’s manifold grace, a deepening of personal prayer and an incentive to the work of the apostolate.”<sup>107</sup> To sanctify the whole day and for their own spiritual good, they try to do each hour at the time of day appropriate for it: Morning Prayer in the morning, Evening Prayer in the evening, and so on (see SC 94).

Seeking spiritual nourishment from the readings at Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours, and often using these materials as a starting point for personal prayer, good close collaborators try to understand them well; especially they study the psalms and say them meditatively (see SC 90). Benedict XVI encourages that *lectio divina*: “If our Eucharistic celebration and the Liturgy of the Hours are to remain meaningful, we need to devote

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106. Paul VI, *Laudis canticum*, AAS 63 (1971) 533, OR, 8 July 1971, 5.

107. Congregation for Divine Worship, op. cit., 19, p. 33.

ourselves constantly anew to the spiritual reading of sacred Scripture; not only to be able to decipher and explain words from the distant past, but to discover the word of comfort that the Lord is now speaking to me, the Lord who challenges me by this word.”<sup>108</sup>

For religious, the general canonical obligation of close collaborators to carry out the Liturgy of the Hours is specified by the constitutions of their institutes (see *CIC*, c. 1174, §1). For bishops, presbyters, and deacons who expect to be presbyters, that duty is specified by “the proper and approved liturgical books” (*CIC*, c. 276, §2, 3<sup>o</sup>). The relevant book first explains that the Church gives these ministers the responsibility “to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in order that, at least in their persons, the duty of the whole community may be carried out regularly and reliably, and the prayer of Christ continue unceasingly in the Church.”<sup>109</sup> It then states the specific duty:

Hence bishops and priests and other sacred ministers, who have received from the Church the mandate of celebrating the Liturgy of the Hours . . . should recite the full sequence of Hours each day, as far as possible at the appropriate times.

They should, first and foremost, attach due importance to those Hours that are, as it were, the hinge of the Liturgy of the Hours, that is, Morning and Evening Prayer, which should not be omitted except for a serious reason.

They should faithfully recite the Office of Readings, which is above all a liturgical celebration of the word of God. In this way they fulfill daily a duty that is peculiarly their own, that is, of receiving the word of God into their lives, so that they may become more perfect as disciples of the Lord and experience more deeply the unfathomable riches of Christ.

In order to sanctify the whole day more perfectly, they will have also at heart the recitation of the Daytime Hour and Night Prayer, to round off the whole “Work of God” and to commend themselves to God before retiring.<sup>110</sup>

Although this passage begins by speaking of the obligation to recite the full sequence of the Hours, it goes on to make distinctions. Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are not to “be omitted except for a serious reason”; the Office of Readings fulfills a duty to receive the word of God so as to become better disciples; and Daytime Prayer and Night Prayer will also be treasured “to round off the whole ‘Work of God’.” Some who have received the mandate to recite all the Hours focus legalistically on the distinctions, limit their obligation to Morning and Evening Prayer, and often find some supposedly serious reason to omit even them.

To be sure, like the Sunday Mass obligation of every Catholic, the obligation of good close collaborators with respect to the Liturgy of the Hours is not absolute. Other responsibilities can take precedence. The distinctions are helpful indications about what to forgo when they judge that they should not do all the Hours. When time is short, rather than hurriedly recite all of them, they may omit some so as to pray the rest devoutly—for example, rather than miss Morning or Evening Prayer, they may do it later

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108. Benedict XVI, Homily at Vespers with Religious and Seminarians in Altötting, Bavaria (11 Sept. 2006), *AAS* 98 (2006) 721–22, *OR*, 20 Sept. 2006, 4.

109. Congregation for Divine Worship, *op. cit.*, 28, p. 37.

110. *Ibid.*, 29, p. 38.

than usual and omit Daytime Prayer or Compline. But they do not miss Hours to take advantage of an opportunity for some pleasant pastime or by failing to make plans for doing them. On vacation, they are not only faithful to the Hours but grateful for the leisure to relish them.

Vatican II empowered supervisors called “ordinaries,” in particular cases and for a good reason, to dispense subjects from the obligation of reciting the Liturgy of the Hours or to replace it with some other, appropriate duty (see SC 97). The Holy See extended that power to other major superiors.<sup>111</sup> Good supervisors use this power with restraint, and good close collaborators pray the Hours if they can even when dispensed from doing so.

Good close collaborators prefer a communal celebration whenever the situation is suitable. When feasible, especially on Sundays and feast days, they celebrate the principal Hours—at least Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer—in their cathedral, parish church, or oratory, and encourage the participation of the lay faithful. When that is not feasible, those who live and/or work together celebrate at least some of the Hours together even if not bound to it.<sup>112</sup>

#### **6) Good close collaborators confess frequently and seek spiritual direction.**

During and shortly after Vatican II, fear of hell and use of the sacrament of penance declined suddenly and precipitously among many Catholics, including many close collaborators. Aware, however, that when someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” he replied: “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able” (Lk 13.23–24), good close collaborators bore in mind that hell remains a real possibility (see **1–E–6**). Continuing to work out their salvation with a modicum of fear and trembling, they use the sacrament of penance regularly.

Furthermore, although living in God’s love is compatible with venial sin, venial sin is not compatible with loving God with one’s whole mind, heart, soul, and strength. Jesus calls all his disciples to pursue this perfection (see LG 40–42), and so the struggle against venial sin is essential for Christians, not optional. Thus, historically, Christians seriously striving for holiness eventually found it helpful to frequent the sacrament of penance. When that practice was attacked during the Reformation, the Council of Trent taught definitively that it is an appropriate and helpful practice of devout persons (see DS 1680/899, 1707/917).

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111. Congregation of Rites, *Inter oecumenici*, 79, AAS 56 (1964) 896, Flannery, 1:55.

112. See Congregation for Divine Worship, *op. cit.*, 20–27 (“Celebration in Common”), pp. 34–36; cf. SC 100. In teaching that the laity should be helped to appreciate the riches of Scripture, Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis*, 45, AAS 99 (2007) ??, *OR*, 21 Mar. 2007, IX, says efforts should “be made to encourage those forms of prayer confirmed by tradition, such as the Liturgy of the Hours, especially Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, and vigil celebrations. By praying the Psalms, the Scripture readings and the readings drawn from the great tradition which are included in the Divine Office, we can come to a deeper experience of the Christ-event and the economy of salvation, which in turn can enrich our understanding and participation in the celebration of the Eucharist.”



While noting that venial sins can be forgiven in other ways, Pius XII strongly commends frequent confession and characterizes it as an authentic development in Tradition of Catholic sacramental practice:

To ensure more rapid progress day by day in the path of virtue, We will that the pious practice of frequent confession, which was introduced into the Church by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, should be earnestly advocated. By it genuine self-knowledge is increased, Christian humility grows, bad habits are corrected, spiritual neglect and tepidity are resisted, the conscience is purified, the will strengthened, a salutary self-control is attained, and grace is increased in virtue of the Sacrament itself.<sup>113</sup>

Pius calls opinions which tend to discourage frequent confession “most dangerous to the spiritual life.”<sup>114</sup> In an exhortation to clerics—but in this matter equally relevant to others—John XXIII recalls Pius XII’s teaching on frequent confession and says parenthetically that this pious practice is “necessary to the attainment of sanctity.”<sup>115</sup>

The context of Pius XII’s teaching on devotional confession is a warning against quietism, which leaves everything to God’s action and nothing to ours. Grace is primary but the faithful “should strive earnestly to reach the heights of Christian perfection and at the same time to the best of their power should stimulate others to attain the same goal—all this the heavenly Spirit does not will to effect unless they contribute their daily share of zealous activity.”<sup>116</sup> As a divinely given mode of cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the sacrament of penance enables us to strive for perfection while making it clear that everything we achieve, and not least our striving itself, is entirely the fruit of God’s grace.<sup>117</sup>

There are additional reasons why frequent confession has the many benefits Pius XII points out. Sacramental penance is a different and richer act than anything else one might do to deal with venial sin. Here, one consciously and directly cooperates with Jesus, experiences his mercy, and promises to love him more perfectly.<sup>118</sup> One also explicitly acknowledges one’s shortcomings as a Church member, accepts the Church’s discipline, and receives her help in dealing with one’s defects.<sup>119</sup> “Above all it should

113. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, AAS 35 (1943) 235; PE, 225:88.

114. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, AAS 39 (1947) 585; PE, 233:177.

115. John XXIII, *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, AAS 51 (1959) 574–75; PE, 264:95–96.

116. See Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, AAS 35 (1943) 234–35; PE, 225:87.

117. Perhaps in order to exclude quietism, some faithful Christians say: “Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you.” That saying is mistakenly attributed to St. Ignatius; see Joseph de Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine: A Historical Study*, trans. William J. Young, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University, 1964), 148, fn. 55). Although it can be understood in a true sense and is quoted approvingly in CCC, 2834, it can be dangerously misleading, for the first “as if” falsely suggests that everything good really does not depend on God. In fact, however, everything salvific is a divine gift, and absolutely everything good, including any creatures’ doing good and causing good, depends on God’s creative love (see 1–A–3, above). Apart from him, no creature can do anything but bring about a negation that mutilates good, a privation that makes a free choice sinful.

118. See John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, AAS 71 (1979) 314–15; PE, 278:83; *Dives in misericordia*, AAS 72 (1980) 1219–20; PE, 279:132.

119. See Bernard Leeming, S.J., *Principles of Sacramental Theology* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1956), 363–66.

be emphasized that the grace proper to the sacramental celebration has a great remedial power and helps to remove the very roots of sin.”<sup>120</sup> Then too, frequently and clearly describing one’s shortcomings to one’s confessor is likely to help one be more focused and persistent in striving to overcome them. Regularly meeting with him can also be the occasion of spiritual direction about those shortcomings and other matters.

Vatican II reminded presbyters that they should make a daily examination of conscience and frequent use of the sacrament of penance, and subsequent canonical legislation reflected this teaching.<sup>121</sup> The canon law in force at the time of Vatican II directed superiors to do their best to see that religious receive the sacrament of penance at least once a week.<sup>122</sup> Taking frequent confession by religious for granted, Vatican II directed superiors to respect the due liberty of their subjects with regard to the sacrament and spiritual direction (see PC 14). Accordingly, in 1970 the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes issued a decree replacing existing law: “Religious, desiring closer union with God, should endeavor to receive the sacrament of penance frequently, that is twice a month. Superiors, on their part, should encourage them in this effort and should make it possible for members to go to confession at least every two weeks and even oftener, if they wish to do so.”<sup>123</sup> Subsequent canonical legislation maintained that decree.<sup>124</sup>

In exhorting ministers of the sacrament of penance “also to be its beneficiaries, becoming themselves witnesses of God’s mercy towards sinners,” John Paul II teaches:

The priest’s spiritual and pastoral life, like that of his brothers and sisters, lay and religious, depends, for its quality and fervor, on the frequent and conscientious personal practice of the Sacrament of Penance. The priest’s celebration of the Eucharist and administration of the other sacraments, his pastoral zeal, his relationship with the faithful, his communion with his brother priests, his collaboration with his bishop, his life of prayer—in a word, the whole of his priestly existence, suffers an inexorable decline if by negligence or for some other reason he fails to receive the Sacrament of Penance at regular intervals and in a spirit of genuine faith and devotion. If a priest were no longer to go to confession or properly confess his sins, his

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120. John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et poenitentia*, 32, AAS 77 (1985) 269, OR, 17 Dec. 1984, 13.

121. See PO 18, including the Council’s reference in fn. 54 to the 1917 *CIC*, c. 125, as to what the Church enjoins (“ecclesia . . . iubet”); also see the exhortation to approach the sacrament of penance frequently in 1983 *CIC*, c. 276, §2, 5°; and the directive to examine conscience daily and confess frequently in *CCEO*, c. 369, §1.

122. See 1917 *CIC*, c. 595, §1, 3°.

123. Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, *Dum canonicarum legum*, 3, AAS 63 (1971) 318, Flannery 1:677.

124. 1983 *CIC*, c. 664: “Religious are to strive after conversion of the soul toward God, to examine their conscience, even daily, and to approach the sacrament of penance frequently.” The Pontifical Commission for the Revision of Canon Law, *Communicationes*, 13 (1981): 180–81, unanimously approved that formulation after the draft’s “Sacrament of Reconciliation” was changed to “Sacrament of Penance” and the *relator* explained that the Congregation for Religious in *Dum canonicarum legum* had already established that “frequently” means every two weeks. Also see *CCEO*, c. 474, §1; c. 538, §3.

*priestly being* and his *priestly action* would feel its effects very soon, and this would also be noticed by the community of which he was the pastor.<sup>125</sup>

John Paul similarly exhorts religious to use the sacrament frequently so as to fulfill their “commitment to continual conversion and necessary purification” in their quest for holiness:

By their frequent encounter with God’s mercy, they purify and renew their hearts, and through the humble recognition of their sins achieve openness in their relationship with him. The joyful experience of sacramental forgiveness, on the journey shared with one’s brothers and sisters, makes the heart eager to learn and encourages growth in faithfulness.<sup>126</sup>

Still, many close collaborators confess seldom if at all.

Good close collaborators desire to love God with their whole being and to love all those they are called to serve as Jesus has loved them. They realize that many actions morally acceptable for other Christians are sinful for them, and many things light matter for others are grave matter for them. They know they are sinning, at least venially, whenever they fail to do the Father’s will in some respect or do not accept the evils he permits them to suffer with the docility and gratitude he deserves. As their love for God and appreciation of his goodness grow, self-deception and cultural as well as personal rationalization fall away, and the awareness of previously unknown faults grows. They examine their consciences regularly, at least daily; usually as part of their prayer before retiring, they tell Jesus how they have been doing, admit any respects in which they have let him down, and ask for help to do better.

Rather than immediately defending themselves when others question or criticize their conduct, good close collaborators habitually pray first for the light of the Holy Spirit and strive to identify any defect in themselves that merited reproach. In this way, they often find at least the need for some small change that will reduce their imperfection, improve the image of Jesus reflected in them, and thus increase the likelihood that their service will be fruitful.

In examining their consciences, all Christians should be helped and consoled by St. John’s words:

Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. By this we shall know that we are of the truth, and reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. (1 Jn 3.18–22)

Jesus’ good close collaborators can be sure that they belong to him, that they are “of the truth.” Yet, having examined their consciences and found nothing more to repent, they may be uneasy, perhaps due to scrupulosity or the absence of some sort of reassuring experience that they unrealistically expect. The best advice is to leave such uneasy feelings to God, who will

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125. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 26, AAS 84 (1992) 699, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, VII; where the portion indented here is quoted from *Reconciliatio et poenitentia*, 31, AAS 77 (1985) 265–266, OR, 17 Dec. 1984, 12.

126. *Vita consecrata*, 95, AAS 88 (1996) 471, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII.

deal with them appropriately. If one belongs to Jesus and has done one's best to examine one's conscience and found it entirely clear, one should be confident of God's love and his readiness to answer one's prayers.

Because confessing their sins to Jesus and receiving his personal forgiveness is an essential moment in good close collaborators' constant, intimate communication with Jesus, they are grateful for the sacrament of penance and would approach it frequently even if canon law were silent and the popes had never given any other reason for the practice. They regularly confess every other week or oftener, unless there is a serious reason for delaying. Although they do not commit mortal sins, they may commit sins in grave matter that would be mortal except for lack of a sinful choice or of advertence, at the time of choosing, to the gravity of the matter.<sup>127</sup> If they commit such sins, they always confess them, as well as any deliberate venial sins. Those two kinds of venial sins greatly impede progress toward perfect love, and the sacrament's grace and a confessor's advice may be helpful in dealing with them. They do not try to deal directly all at once with all their nondeliberate venial sins—which many people dismiss (too lightly) as “imperfections.” Instead, they deal with them only gradually, at any particular time confessing certain ones that then seem more serious.

Close collaborators' more serious sins, even if venial due to subjective factors, seriously damage the image of Jesus that others should be able to see in them. Often, too, those sins gravely harm their associates and/or those they should serve—for example, by betraying trust, giving bad example, depriving them of due service, or provoking a sinful response. Those harmed are likely to be perplexed, even resentful, and such feelings may impede cooperation or the fruitfulness of Jesus' acts. Anyone who wrongly contributes to a gravely unjust state of affairs should make restitution (see *LCL*, 444–58). Good relationships are vital for effective service, and the main point of restitution is to foster interpersonal harmony between wrongdoers and those wronged. Good close collaborators go the extra mile to heal any relationship damaged by their wrongdoing.

Some close collaborators, in situations calling for restitution, have followed unsound advice from lawyers, experts in public relations, and/or psychological consultants. Sound advice can be helpful and serves good purposes. But when restitution is appropriate, good close collaborators candidly admit precisely what they have done to the person or persons they have wronged and sincerely say they are sorry. Before asking for forgiveness, they first ask what, if anything, they can do to make up for their wrongdoing. Only then do they try to elicit the wronged party's merciful response.

Many documents of the magisterium recommend spiritual direction for close collaborators. Some (a few are mentioned above) associate it with confession. Pius XII strongly commends spiritual direction:

Still another recommendation is in place here: that in undertaking and advancing in the spiritual life you do not trust to yourselves, but with docile simplicity you seek and accept the help of someone who, with wise moderation, can guide your soul, point out to you the dangers, suggest

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<sup>127</sup>. See *CMP*, 417–18 (on two types of venial sins of weakness) and 411–13 (on sufficient reflection).

suitable remedies, and in every internal and external difficulty can guide you in the right way towards an ever greater perfection, according to the example of the saints and the teachings of Christian asceticism. Without this prudent guide for one's conscience, it is ordinarily very difficult to be duly responsive to the impulses of the Holy Spirit and of the grace of God.<sup>128</sup>

While that exhortation is addressed to presbyters, it is equally relevant to other close collaborators.

Spiritual direction has a long and complex history, and there are diverse accounts of its precise benefits and how they are to be brought about.<sup>129</sup> Still, some generalizations are possible.

All good confessors help penitents identify sins, repent them, and avoid occasions of committing them. But the special concern of spiritual directors, as Pius XII's exhortation indicates, is to help those being directed grow in holiness by recognizing and responding appropriately to the impulses of the Holy Spirit and divine grace. Sound direction presupposes the faith of the Church, including all her moral teaching, and spiritual directors rightly remind directees of those truths when they think that will be helpful. But spiritual direction focuses especially on each directee's unique personal relationship with God and strives to foster its growth.

While spiritual directors need some psychological insight and may help those they direct deal with some psychological problems, they are not engaged in psychotherapy or psychological counseling. Direction, focused on holiness, deals primarily and directly with conscious experiences and free choices. Like the relationships between confessors and their penitents and psychotherapists or psychological counselors and those who seek their help, the relationship between a spiritual director and his or her directees is confidential, and the immediate object is the proper good of the client rather than a wider, common good. So, while directees need to be docile, spiritual directors as such do not *supervise* those they help.<sup>130</sup>

Christians become holy by discerning, undertaking, and faithfully fulfilling all the elements of their unique, personal vocations, which include patiently accepting, as from the Father's hand, whatever suffering they must

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128. Pius XII, *Menti nostrae*, 63, AAS 42 (1950) 674, *Catholic Mind*, 49 (Jan. 1951): 48; see also John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 81, AAS 84 (1992) 799–800, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XXII.

129. See the group of articles under, "Direction spirituelle," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, vol. 3 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1957), 1008–1202. Since St. Ignatius and his companions first used his *The Spiritual Exercises* (see 2–C–6, above), it probably has been the most influential work on Catholic spiritual direction as well as on spiritual retreats. But there are other approaches; see, for example, Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1960); Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., *Spiritual Direction in the Dominican Tradition* (New York: Paulist, 1995); Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., *With Open Heart: Spiritual Direction in the Alphonsian Tradition* (Liguori, Mo.: Liguori, 2003).

130. In the past, some devout women made a vow of obedience to their spiritual directors—priests or bishops—as if they were supervisors; see, for example, Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University, 1993), 262–64. In some cases, the parties cooperated for a common good, such as founding a new institute. In a few, psychological illness prevented the woman from discerning God's plan for her. Apart from such exceptional cases, directors who undertake to be *supervisors* of a directee wrongly assume that they can discern on his or her behalf. But that is impossible. Genuine discernment requires immediate awareness of one's own feelings and other experiences.

endure (see LG 41; 2–A, above). Sound spiritual directors help their directees discern new elements of their vocations as they emerge, recommit themselves to their unfolding vocations, fulfill all their commitments and other responsibilities as energetically and completely as they can, gratefully rejoice in blessings, and patiently suffer the evils that befall them.

Since personal revelation grounds personal friendships with Jesus and awareness of unique vocations, sound spiritual direction must help close collaborators hear and respond to the Holy Spirit's personal communication to them. And since listening to the Spirit's personal revelation and responding to it is personal prayer, direction must help those directed engage in personal prayer. The help can take many forms, such as noting the indications of relevant feelings in a directee's account of his or her experiences, calling attention to those feelings, and, by gentle questioning, helping the directee to grasp their significance and deal with them appropriately.

Like good coaches of individual athletes, good spiritual directors become well acquainted with and admire the gifts of those they serve, teach them to thank God for those gifts, and warmly praise and encourage everything good in their use of them. Also like coaches, however, they especially foster improvement by identifying particular things that prevent directees' minds, hearts, souls, and strength from being entirely at one with their love and sound commitments. Even a good director whose own gifts and progress are less than those of a directee can foster improvement in the latter by admitting his or her limitations, proposing as a model a saint with a problem similar to the directee's, and appealing to elements of the individual's character and personality that will encourage him or her to emulate the model.

To be truly helpful, directors need to be well acquainted with their directees' interior lives, not only their sins but many other things relevant to growth in holiness—for example, temptations, feelings during religious activities, doubts of faith, and strong and continuing emotions or moods. Good close collaborators who are blessed with a suitable spiritual director tell him or her whatever they think relevant and candidly respond to questions. Since face-to-face conversation is extremely helpful, they try to find a director with whom they can meet often and easily. But once a fruitful relationship has been established, they may continue with a good director using other means of communication if it becomes impossible to meet regularly.

Fruitful spiritual direction presupposes intimate awareness of a directee's past conversions and present defects. Thus good close collaborators generally identify a suitable priest, in whom they can easily confide, to serve as both their spiritual director and regular confessor. But some other holy and able person, who cannot serve as confessor, also may be a good director. Moreover, if need arises, a directee does well sometimes to seek help from someone more expert than his or her director in particular matters—e.g., analysis of a difficult moral question, problems that have legal or psychological aspects.

If they cannot find an appropriate spiritual director, good close collaborators confess frequently to the best available confessor. Instead of

keeping to themselves things they would discuss with a spiritual director, they discuss them, and perhaps pray about them, with one or more holy and wise persons. They pay careful attention to the relevant moral and spiritual guidance in Church documents, particular law, and their supervisors' instructions. They also become thoroughly familiar with the lives and writings of saints who can serve as appropriate models. Rather than thinking their progress is blocked by not being able to find a spiritual director, they are confident that God provides everyone who longs for holiness with adequate means and opportunities to grow in it.

Jesus sometimes went off alone for more or less extended periods of prayer, and many Christians have imitated that practice. Canon law requires all close collaborators to make annual *spiritual* or *sacred* retreats, but leaves the details to particular law.<sup>131</sup> While there are different ways of making a genuine retreat, the specific purpose of a retreat is not served when other activities, however legitimate, replace prolonged prayer. For example, people are not making a true retreat if they use the time to renew old friendships, work on problems in community life, or obtain updating in theology or in ways of providing services. While such activities may be linked to a retreat by scheduling them immediately before or after, during the retreat itself they are unacceptable distractions. A retreat is a time for practices conducive to prayer: fasting or eating and drinking simply and moderately, abstaining from entertainment, and avoiding communication, insofar as that is morally and practically possible, with everybody but the retreat master or one's spiritual director.

### **7) Good close collaborators engage in other prayer and spiritual practices.**

At the beginning of the third millennium, John Paul II gave all the Church's members general guidelines for doing their part in her mission. He made a point that is especially important for close collaborators:

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. God of course asks us really to cooperate with his grace, and therefore invites us to invest all our resources of intelligence and energy in serving the cause of the Kingdom. But it is fatal to forget that "without Christ we can do nothing" (see 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, is it any wonder that pastoral plans come to nothing and leave us with a disheartening sense of frustration? We then share the experience of the disciples in the gospel story of the miraculous catch of fish: "We have toiled all night and caught nothing" (Lk 5.5).<sup>132</sup>

While good close collaborators know that their good choices and actions, those of the people they serve, and the communion built up in and by those choices and actions are materials for the kingdom, they also realize that

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<sup>131</sup>. See *CIC*, c. 276, §2, 4<sup>o</sup>; c. 533, §2; c. 663, §5; *CCEO*, c. 369, §2; c. 473, §2, 3<sup>o</sup>; c. 538, §2.

<sup>132</sup>. John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 38, AAS 93 (2001) 293, *OR*, 10 Jan. 2001, VII.

everything good is God's gift and only he makes their work fruitful. They regard prayer, especially prayer of thanksgiving and petition, as the primary and constant responsibility of their service.

While Vatican II's teaching and legislation increased many people's interest in Scripture and in the renewed liturgy of the Eucharist, the Council and its aftermath also were the occasion for misunderstandings and deviations that led to widespread neglect of other forms of prayer, devotions, the gaining of indulgences, and optional liturgical practices—for example, asking for and giving blessings. The liturgy and constant *lectio divina* are necessary practices but they are not sufficient. As already explained, other personal prayer and spiritual practices are needed to carry on a personal relationship with the divine persons, and to discern, accept, and faithfully fulfill one's personal vocation.<sup>133</sup>

Saints' writings and their example make available many methods of prayer and various devotions—an ample storehouse from which faithful Catholics can safely draw; in doing so, they can select, adapt, and combine elements from different sources. Indulgences and optional liturgical practices are always available. As a good close collaborator receives God's personal revelation and gifts, he or she considers various forms of personal prayer and other spiritual practices, tries some, and adopts a set of those that seem conducive to maintaining and deepening intimacy with the divine persons.<sup>134</sup>

Good close collaborators never carelessly omit their regular spiritual practices or substitute pleasanter activities at times of aridity. Since the purpose of the practices is intimacy with the divine persons, however, no particular set of them is sacrosanct. It is reasonable sometimes to try new things and occasionally—especially during or after a major spiritual crisis or change in one's life—to replace one or more old spiritual practices with another or others more appropriate under the new conditions.

No two good close collaborators have exactly the same optional spiritual practices. Still, some elements are always included.

Prayer for the Holy Spirit's help has already been mentioned in discussing discernment, ongoing formation for active participation in the Eucharist, and examination of conscience. People who realize that they can

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133. Vatican II itself makes it clear that liturgical prayer is not enough (see SC 12).

134. Vatican II, PO 18; and *CIC*, c. 276, §2, 5°, urge clerics to engage in mental prayer; John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 38, AAS 88 (1996) 411–12, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, VII, teaches that holiness requires listening to God, which in turn requires faithfulness to both liturgical and personal prayer, including definite periods of time devoted to mental prayer and contemplation. Does it follow that every good close collaborator is called to follow the path mapped by St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila? No. On the one hand, growth in love does tend “toward ever more intimate union with Christ” which “is called ‘mystical’ because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments . . . and, in him, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity.” But on the other hand, “God calls us all to this intimate union with him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all” (*CCC* 2014; see 2–A–8, above). Still, as Teresa of Avila makes clear, those who receive the special graces and mystical signs of authentically Christian mystical experience thereby enjoy great intimacy with Jesus as man; for relevant quotations from and references to Teresa's writings, see Paul Mommaers, *The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 59–94.



neither pray well (see Rom 8.26–27) nor do any other good without the Holy Spirit's help are open to all his gifts, regularly ask for them and, never taking any for granted, give thanks for those they receive.

Recognizing, too, that every good they enjoy and everything good they do is the Father's gift and confident that he will continue to bless them, good close collaborators do not take his goodness for granted, but regularly count their blessings and thank him. Like humble, small children, they also obey Jesus. They ask the Father, in Jesus' name, for everything they and those they serve need, and commend those needs to others' prayers.<sup>135</sup> But since the Father knows what is needed better than they do themselves, they do not expect their every prayer to be granted just as they put it. Nevertheless, they "ask in faith, with no doubting" (Jas 1.6; cf. Mt 17.15–21, 21.21–22). In asking persistently for indispensable gifts, such as the Holy Spirit, they confidently expect to receive them (see Lk 11.9–13). And if at times they sense that their trust is weak—for example, when praying for the grace to resist a serious temptation—they pray: "I believe, help my unbelief!" (Mk 9.24).

Besides participating devoutly in the Eucharist and using *lectio divina* to nurture their human friendship with Jesus, good close collaborators regularly speak to him informally. They often take advantage of opportunities to carry out the Liturgy of the Hours in his Eucharistic presence, and they regard as sacrosanct the part of each day that they spend in one or more periods of prayer, not least of adoration.<sup>136</sup> During these times of prayer, they recall that they are in the Lord's presence, set aside irrelevant concerns, listen for whatever he might wish to communicate, and begin to respond as best they can.

Anyone whose intimate friend has a beloved and loving mother naturally loves her as well. So, devoted to Jesus and desiring to be like him, his good close collaborators are also devoted to Mary. Affection for her is inseparable from intimacy with him, which it intensifies, just as, in saying the rosary, their prayers to her enrich their loving contemplation of Jesus and are inseparable from it.<sup>137</sup>

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135. If we suppose that we can comprehend the sense in which God is all-knowing and unchanging, then prayers of petition and thanks will seem pointless. But we do not know what God is in himself. Rather, he has made himself known to us as our Father, who wishes us to behave as his very dear children. For a treatment of the qualities of such prayer, of seemingly unanswered prayers, and of how the Christian's entire life of prayer depends on the Holy Spirit, see *CMP*, 708–14.

136. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 95, AAS 88 (1996) 471, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XVIII: "Frequent and prolonged adoration of Christ present in the Eucharist enables us in some way to relive Peter's experience of the Transfiguration: 'It is well that we are here'"; *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 25, AAS 95 (2003) 450, *OR*, 17–23 Apr. 2003, V: "It is the responsibility of pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic adoration, and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species"; *Pastores gregis*, 16, AAS 96 (2004) 848, *OR*, 22 Oct. 2003, VI: "The bishop's love of the Holy Eucharist is also expressed when in the course of the day he devotes a fair part of his time to adoration before the tabernacle."

137. See John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 5, 9–17, AAS 95 (2003) 8–9, 10–17; *OR*, 23 Oct. 2002, II–III.

People do not receive everything God wishes to give them as isolated individuals. Jesus told his disciples: “If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:19–20). The optional spiritual practices of good close collaborators therefore always include prayers and devotions in various groups, where the members have common intentions or share their personal intentions with one another or do both.

When particular law or being present at some gathering requires participating in extra-liturgical, communal prayers and devotions, a good close collaborator does so with attention and devotion, so as to make the most of the occasion.

Sometimes it is appropriate to invite individuals or groups served by a close collaborator to participate in extra-liturgical prayers and devotions; but a good close collaborator extending such an invitation never proposes or promotes anything on the basis of his or her personal preferences. Seeking to understand and appreciate many sorts of prayer and devotion, and their potential for meeting different people’s needs, he or she will choose practices likely to contribute to the spiritual health and growth of those invited.

### **C: Spiritual Friendships and Celibate Chastity for the Kingdom’s Sake**

#### **1) Good close collaborators have chaste, spiritual friendships.**

I use *spiritual friendship* to refer to any friendship that is an element of a Christian’s personal vocation. Because it belongs to God’s plan for one’s life, such a friendship involves only what is consistent with the obedience of faith and the responsibilities flowing from other commitments pertaining to one’s personal vocation.

Jesus is a spiritual friend of all good close collaborators. The more perfectly they fulfill their personal vocations, the more perfect their friendship with him becomes. But like children in a large and good family who have sound views of their relationships with their parents, they all realize that, although Jesus loves each of them as a unique person, none of them can be to him what he is to all of them, namely, their most cherished companion. Insofar as he is the incarnate Word, Jesus’ closest relationship is with the one he addresses as *Abba*; insofar as he is our Lord, it is with the Church as a whole, his Bride.

As the most cherished companion of all good close collaborators, Jesus stands alone at the center of their lives, hearts, minds, and feelings. Like good siblings who are not jealous of one another’s relationships with their parents, they do not resent one another’s friendships with Jesus but rejoice in their common relationship with him, which is their primary bond and the wellspring of their friendships with one another. Their gratitude to Jesus, the love they feel for him, their cooperation with him, and their need to cooperate with one another are reasons to befriend one another. Still, since their relationship with Jesus does not provide all the joyful feelings that come from the perceptible presence of loved ones, they

are likely to suffer from a measure of loneliness that can be eliminated only by other spiritual friendships.<sup>138</sup>

Some spiritual friendships are intimate—that is, they are of the closest sort between two human persons.<sup>139</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx (c. 1110–67), a Cistercian monk and abbot, wrote a treatise in dialogue form, *Spiritual Friendship*,<sup>140</sup> dealing exclusively with intimate friendships, in which he tried to “set down for myself [and no doubt for his brothers] the rules of a pure and holy affection.”<sup>141</sup> It is one of the best Christian treatments of the matter.

Today, the word *intimacy* often has sexual connotations. Some people assume that friendship cannot exist without genital contact. In fact, however, genital contact outside marriage always obstructs intimate friendship rather than nurturing it (see *LCL*, 652–53). Marital intercourse contributes to intimate friendship by nurturing affection, yet some married couples—even faithful ones who learn to live together peacefully—never experience it. Yet heterosexual adolescents typically have at least one friend of their own sex who seems to understand them well and in whom they often confide, and those friendships are intimate.

For Aelred, an essential element of intimate friendship is the mutual exchange of confidences: “Only they are friends to whom we are not afraid to entrust our hearts and everything that is in them—to those, in turn, who are bound to us by the same law of faith and security.”<sup>142</sup> Such friendship should not be desired “for any reason extrinsic to itself, but from the worthiness of its own nature, and the feeling of the human heart, so that it offers no advantage or reward other than itself.”<sup>143</sup>

Although both spiritual and adolescent friendships can be intimate, they usually differ greatly. Adolescent friendships generally serve mainly to meet the friends’ psychological needs—to loosen their ties with their families, define and assert their identities, enjoy understanding and uncritical support

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138. Still, good close collaborators’ need for companionship is mainly met by their intimate friendship with Jesus. Anyone “who has chosen to belong completely to Christ will find, above all, in intimacy with him and in his grace, the power of spirit necessary to banish sadness and regret and to triumph over discouragement” (Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 59, *AAS* 59 [1967] 680–81, *PE*, 276:59). Moreover, some vocations include voluntarily undertaking extraordinary solitude, and almost everyone must or should sometimes spend days or even weeks alone. But few close collaborators are called to be hermits.

139. As has been explained, good close collaborators’ friendship with Jesus is closer than any between two human persons; yet it lacks some aspects of mutuality characteristic of intimate friendship. In a way, it is more like the friendship between good parents and their immature children.

140. *Aelred of Rievaulx’s “Spiritual Friendship,”* trans. Mark F. Williams (Scranton, Penn.; University of Scranton, 1994). In an appendix (91–103), Williams argues cogently that there is no evidence to support allegations that Aelred was “gay.”

141. *Ibid.*, 28; Williams shows (16) that the work probably was completed after 1157.

142. *Ibid.*, 34; Aelred later (75–76) cites Jn 15.15 to support his view that this sort of intimacy differentiates “spiritual friendship” from other friendly relationships: “We embrace many with every sort of affection whom we still do not admit to the inner secrets of our friendship, which after all consists mostly in the revelation of all our inmost secrets and counsels. And so the Lord says in the Gospel, ‘Now I will not call you servants, but friends’; and adding the reason why the disciples were considered worthy of the name of friend he said, ‘Because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father.’”

143. *Ibid.*, 37.

in adventurous and sometimes unruly behaviors (“us against the world”), obtain affirmation and salve consciences, and so on. By contrast, the foundation of spiritual friendship, as Aelred makes clear, is love of God; “by this foundation we should measure all those things which either love or affection prompts, all those things which either the heart secretly suggests or some friend openly urges.”<sup>144</sup> Spiritual friendship also presupposes a relationship with Jesus. Since all the good qualities of friendship are united in him, we should begin with him and befriend only those he chooses for us; “And so one friend clings to another in the spirit of Christ, and thus makes with him ‘one heart and one spirit’ [fn. omitted],” so that the two ascend together “through the paths of love to the friendship of Christ.”<sup>145</sup>

Aelred uses a thought experiment to show the importance of friendship. Imagine you were the sole survivor in the world, with everything in it at your disposal. You could not enjoy life without a companion, a true and intimate friend, and you would be still happier if you had many such friends. Aelred then projects a communion of friendship as the object of our hope for happiness in heaven. It begins with God, “pouring forth such great friendship and love between himself and his creation,” and flowers among the blessed, loving one another as they love themselves:

And through this friendship each one rejoices in the happiness of another as much as in his own; and so the happiness of individuals is the happiness of all, and the universality of the happiness of all becomes the happiness of individuals. In the state of happiness there is no concealment of thoughts, no dissimulation of affection. This is what true and eternal friendship is: it takes shape here, in this world, and is perfected in the next; here it is the property of the few who are good; there, where all are good, it is the property of all.<sup>146</sup>

This view of heavenly happiness is at odds with St. Thomas’s thesis that “the company of friends is not essential to beatitude, since the human person has the whole plenitude of his or her perfection in God” (*S.t.*, 1–2, q. 4, a. 8, c.). But it has been vindicated by Vatican II’s teaching about the relationship between the realization by good Christians of human goods in this world and what they may hope to find again in the new earth and new heaven (see GS 38–39; cf. 1–E–3, above).<sup>147</sup>

Supplementing Aelred’s reflections with ideas gleaned from recent writings, I propose the following description of intimate friendship. Like good married couples who, in having children, seek nothing for themselves but the goodness of being good parents, good Christians seek nothing for themselves in becoming intimate friends but the goodness of being good spiritual friends. Each friend admires the other’s good qualities and desires his or her true good. They share many beliefs, values, and tastes; and insofar as they differ, each respects the other’s good faith, conscience, and

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144. *Ibid.*, 58.

145. *Ibid.*, 46.

146. *Ibid.*, 74.

147. Also, *CCC*, after teaching about the beatific vision (in 1023), immediately goes on: “This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity—this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angels and all the blessed—is called ‘heaven.’ Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness” (1024).

preferences, while limiting his or her expectations of cooperation accordingly. They have mutual warm affection, empathy, and trust. They are grateful for each other's kindness and quick to forgive faults. They readily give each other understanding, psychological support, and practical help. They enjoy doing things together, share their secrets and keep them, defend each other's reputations, exchange disinterested advice about self-improvement and other matters, and take such advice seriously. They strive to reciprocate each other's gifts and kindnesses, but do not keep precise accounts. When separated, they miss each other; if one dies, the other grieves.<sup>148</sup>

When intimate friends like this respond to God's calling to do and undergo difficult things together—to strive nobly and suffer patiently together—their intimacy is perfected. Thus the communion of good Christian spouses who are intimate friends grows until one dies. Similarly, two good close collaborators who live and/or work together and are called to be intimate friends enjoy great and growing communion. Moreover, since their spiritual friendship is perfectly harmonious with their commitment giving themselves totally to Jesus and his Church, intimacy increases the fruitfulness of their service. But unlike most happily married couples, such intimate friends often are called to give up each other's company while both still live and go their separate ways.<sup>149</sup> In doing that and accepting the suffering it entails, they manifest the authentic spirituality of their intimate friendship and increase their love for Jesus and his Church.

Some close collaborators spend so much time with so many friends that they neglect other responsibilities. While, as Aelred says, having many intimate friends would be ideal, good close collaborators show that their intimate friendships are authentically spiritual—that is, are elements of their vocation—precisely by carrying on only one or a few of them at any given time. They constantly nurture their friendship with Jesus and spend most of their time in the service he calls them to provide, so that the time available for nurturing other friendships is limited; indeed, they avoid deepening many friendly relationships that otherwise could become good, more or less intimate friendships. Like Aelred, they look forward to the age to come, when intimate friendship will be not only the “property” but the constant occupation of all.

Seminaries and religious institutes traditionally forbade “particular friendships.” Obviously they were right to do so when the expression was a euphemism for erotic relationships. But even when the forbidden friendships were not unchaste or an occasion of sins against chastity, it was right to forbid them if they were not spiritual—that is, not elements of the personal vocations of those involved and so not consonant with their responsibilities as close collaborators or candidates in formation. For example, chaste but

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148. Reflecting on the preceding description, some good close collaborators might wonder whether they have ever had an intimate friend. However, the different qualities that constitute intimate friendship are present in diverse degrees in many good relationships. So, spiritual friendships can be more or less intimate.

149. A good close collaborator also can have an intimate spiritual friendship with a devout layperson or even with a nonbeliever, but such friendships more often are with fellow close collaborators.

cliquish relationships were rightly forbidden because they were divisive and would damage solidarity and camaraderie.

Even so, excessive caution or unsound theological reasoning may sometimes have been obstacles to intimate friendships that were truly spiritual.<sup>150</sup> Be that as it may, recent Church teaching recognizes the intrinsic value of such friendship. Human beings need one another to live and flourish, and marriage is the primary form of interpersonal communion (see GS 12). But the unmarried also can enjoy authentic communion in chaste relationships:

The virtue of chastity blossoms in *friendship*. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends [fn. Jn 15.15], who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

Chastity is expressed notably in *friendship with one's neighbor*. Whether it develops between persons of the same or opposite sex, friendship represents a great good for all. It leads to spiritual communion. (CCC, 2347)

Spiritual communion surely includes intimacy, and the self-disclosure that constitutes intimacy was practiced by Jesus with his first followers. In the passage cited in the preceding quotation, he explains: "I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15.15). His relationship with the Father likewise is undoubtedly intimate; a few verses before the one cited he tells the Twelve: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you" and asks them to "abide in my love" (Jn 15.9).

There have been intimate spiritual friendships between saints, for example, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, Francis de Sales and Jeanne Frances de Chantal. Such spiritual friends' affection can be warm and intense, as is evident in letters written by Blessed Jordan of Saxony, St. Dominic's successor as Master General of the Dominicans, to Blessed Diana d'Andalò, foundress of one of the earliest Dominican convents:

Beloved, I can write to you only very hurriedly; yet I had to try to write you something, however brief, in the hope of giving you if I can a little joy. You are so deeply engraven on my heart that the more I realize how truly you love me from the depths of your soul, the more incapable I am of forgetting you and the more constantly you are in my thoughts; for your love of me moves me deeply and makes my love for you burn more strongly.<sup>151</sup>

O Diana, how unhappy this present condition of things which we must suffer: that we cannot love each other without pain and anxiety! You weep

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150. See, for example, John Baptist de La Salle, *Rule and Foundational Documents*, trans. Augustine Loes, F.S.C. and Ronald Isetti (Landover, Md.: Lasallian Publications, 2002), 58 (ch. 13, [1]): "The Brothers will have a cordial affection for one another but not give any sign or token of particular affection for anyone, through respect for our Lord, whom they ought to honor equally in all as being animated by him and living by his Spirit." De La Salle's reasoning usually is sound but here it is not; it is clear from many saints' intimate friendships that respecting our Lord and honoring him as one should are compatible with having and manifesting particular affection for certain associates.

151. Gerald Vann, O.P., *To Heaven with Diana! A Study of Jordan of Saxony and Diana d'Andalò with a Translation of the Letters of Jordan* (New York: Pantheon, 1960), 104.

and are in bitter grief because it is not given you to see me continually; and I equally grieve that it is so rarely given me to be with you.<sup>152</sup>

Still, good close collaborators' intimate spiritual friendships are differentiated from romantic relationships by simultaneously having five characteristics, exemplified by and verified in Jordan's letters to Diana.

First, their love for each other is grounded in their love of Jesus; he alone is the most cherished companion of them both. Jordan beautifully articulates this priority:

. . . my beloved, be in all things confident and gay; and what is lacking to you because I cannot be with you, make up for in the company of a better friend, your Bridegroom Jesus Christ whom you may have more constantly with you in spirit and in truth, and who speaks to you more sweetly and to better purpose, than Jordan. And if sometimes he seems to turn his face away from you and become a stranger to you, you must see this not as a punishment but as a grace. He is the bond whereby we are bound together; in him my spirit is fast knit with your spirit; in him you are always without ceasing present to me wherever I may wander: he who is your Bridegroom, Jesus Christ God's Son, to whom is honour and empire everlasting, Amen. Fare well in the Lord; and greet my daughters for me.<sup>153</sup>

Second, read as a whole, these letters make it clear that their friendship is promoting rather than impeding their service and prayer. Third, Jordan uses as a model for the friendship a relationship that excludes romance and genital contact: he regards Diana as both his daughter and Jesus' spouse: "I will be to you a father, and you shall be to me a daughter and the bride of Christ Jesus; and I will pray to the Lord for you that he may guard and keep you."<sup>154</sup> Fourth, while the two profoundly miss each other, nothing in the letters suggests that they desire to be together for the sake of bodily contact.<sup>155</sup> Fifth, Jordan and Diana are not jealous as they would be if they made lovers' claims on each other; far from being exclusive, their love regularly includes others—for example, Jordan includes Diana's sisters in his concern and considers himself "the Bridegroom's friend" in the betrothal to Christ not only of Diana but of her sisters.<sup>156</sup>

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152. *Ibid.*, 138.

153. *Ibid.*, 109–10, notes omitted. Also, immediately after his declaration of love in the letter that begins, "Beloved, I can write to you only very hurriedly," Jordan goes on: "I must end this letter abruptly; but may he who is the supreme Consoler and Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, possess and comfort your heart; and may he grant us to be with one another for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (104). Again, when Diana's convent is fully set up, she considers her life's work complete, and Jordan responds to a letter expressing her longing "to be dissolved and be with Christ" by warning her against "scrupulous searchings of conscience or immoderate bodily disciplines" (98).

154. *Ibid.*, 69; Jordan often uses *Bridegroom* to refer to Jesus; besides the passages quoted above and below, see 63, 70, 73, 91.

155. Diana was not alone in drawing Jordan's warm affection. Vann points out that he was sweet-natured (15) and includes two letters, *not to Diana*, that manifest his warm affection for a deceased male friend and for the nun he is addressing: "I weep, I weep for my sweetest friend, my dearest brother, my most beloved son, Henry, the prior of Cologne. He, dearest sister . . ." (146); "I would be instructed, and indeed compelled, by love itself to write more to you of love, but now in truth I cannot, for our beloved has gone from us, has gone far away from us" (149).

156. *Ibid.*, 84, 115.

Besides being good in themselves, intimate spiritual friendships are beneficial for the less close but genuinely friendly relationships of good close collaborators with those they serve and with all their associates.<sup>157</sup>

Friendliness toward those served is useful to manifest Jesus and his love, and so to build up ecclesial communion. Good formation programs therefore seek to nurture the qualities that constitute such friendliness.<sup>158</sup> Unfortunately, not everyone is a Jordan of Saxony, Angela Merici, or Philip Neri; some close collaborators are neither sweet natured nor tender hearted, and their efforts to be affable may seem strained. But the ongoing experience of friendship with Jesus and their more or less intimate spiritual friendships with others will, over time, nurture feelings and patterns of behavior that generate a more spontaneous affability and enable them to welcome those they serve with some genuine warmth. When the latter experience real affection, they become more open to the blessings Jesus wishes to bestow; and thus good close collaborators' intimate friendships contribute to the fruitfulness of their service.

They also contribute to it less directly by improving their relationships with one another and with the lay people who are their colleagues or are the beneficiaries of their service.<sup>159</sup> However, those friendly relationships also are valuable in themselves, and they intrinsically strengthen the communion in Jesus they enjoy together as his living members and as his collaborators. Moreover, friendly relationships often provide some benefits of intimate friendship, not least mitigating loneliness and increasing mutual support in fidelity to Jesus and those to be served.<sup>160</sup>

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157. Paul M. Connor, O.P., *Celibate Love* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1979), 46–47, takes substantially the same position, but explains it somewhat differently than I shall.

158. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 43, AAS 84 (1992) 733, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XII, lists those qualities: “Of special importance is the capacity to relate to others. This is truly fundamental for a person who is called to be responsible for a community and to be a ‘man of communion.’ This demands that the priest not be arrogant, or quarrelsome, but affable, hospitable, sincere in his words and heart, prudent and discreet, generous and ready to serve, capable of opening himself to clear and brotherly relationships and of encouraging the same in others, and quick to understand, forgive and console [fn. omitted] (cf. 1 Tm 3:1–5; Ti 1:7–9).”

159. With respect to religious life, Vatican II exhorts: “Let all, especially superiors, remember that chastity is maintained more securely when true brotherly or sisterly love flourishes in the common life of the community” (PC 12). While many religious and some diocesan clerics reside together, many do not. Still, common commitments to common goods constitute real communities among close collaborators who do not live together—for example, the clerics of a diocese, including their bishop or bishops; and the members of a worldwide religious institute and of each of its provinces, including their superiors. Some members of such large communities may never work together and may not even know one another. But brotherly or sisterly love that guards chastity can flourish even among acquaintances who dwell apart. And the esprit de corps of such communities, which depends on friendly relationships among those who do work together, contributes greatly to their work’s fruitfulness.

160. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 74, AAS 84 (1992) 791, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XXI, quotes a proposition of the Synod Fathers recommending as “means to overcome the negative effects of loneliness which the priest can sometimes experience” a variety of friendly relationships: “active participation in the diocesan presbyterate, regular contact with the bishop and with the other priests, mutual cooperation, common life or fraternal dealings between priests, as also friendship and good relations with the lay faithful who are active in parish life.” No doubt that is a reason why Vatican II, CD 30, strongly



Not only do the intimate friendships of good close collaborators pertain to their vocations, but so also do their friendly relationships in general—with those they serve and their associates. As spiritual friendships, these relationships also are carried on in complete harmony with their special friendship with Jesus. The relationships among members of a good Christian family provide the model: “Do not rebuke an older man but exhort him as you would a father; treat younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity” (1 Tm 5.1–2).<sup>161</sup>

Like good parents of a large family who inevitably feel closer to some of their children than to others, good close collaborators find some of those they serve more likable than others. But they still treat all of them fairly, do their best to meet each one’s needs, discern and affirm each one’s gifts, at times give each their undivided attention, and never make invidious comparisons. Similarly, differences in feelings toward other close collaborators do not prevent them from regarding all as brothers and sisters in Jesus, cooperating well with any of them in providing service, and treating kindly those who otherwise would be outsiders.

## 2) Rationalizations of sins against chastity are to be set aside.

Traditional standards of sexual morality are no longer commonly accepted in formerly Christian but now largely secularized societies. Regularly satisfying one’s sexual urge is widely assumed to be as natural as regularly eating to satisfy hunger. Pornography is rampant, and masturbation is generally regarded as a healthful practice. In this cultural climate, close collaborators are likely to be tempted by one rationalization or another to make exceptions to the norms of sexual morality that the Catholic Church has constantly and very firmly taught through the centuries and has recently reaffirmed—norms that apply not only to persons who have promised celibacy or vowed chastity but to everyone.<sup>162</sup>

The most common rationalization probably is that perfect continence is an unreasonable ideal: every normal adolescent and adult sometimes experiences sexual arousal and has impure thoughts, and the incidence of masturbation among animals and small children shows it to be a natural function. Continence, however, is not concerned with nonvoluntary

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recommends community life for priests and *CIC*, c. 517, §1, authorizes bishops to establish team ministries.

161. John Paul II, “Letter to Priests” (Holy Thursday), 4–5, *AAS* 87 (1995) 797–98, *OR*, 12 Apr. 1995, 6–7, develops this point very well, with respect to both clerics and religious women: “In Christ, men and women are brothers and sisters, independently of any bonds of family relationship.” With respect to clerics: A priest is to exercise an “authentic *spiritual fatherhood*, which gains him ‘sons’ and ‘daughters’ in the Lord (see 1 Thes 2.11, Gal 4.19).” If he develops the right attitude toward women “he will see his ministry met by a *sense of great trust* precisely on the part of women whom he regards, in the variety of their ages and life situations, as sisters and mothers.” With respect to religious women: “The figure of woman as sister has considerable importance in our Christian civilization, in which countless women have become *sisters to everyone*, thanks to their exemplary attitude towards their neighbour, especially to those most in need. . . . When a woman remains single, in her ‘gift of self as sister’ by means of apostolic commitment or generous dedication to neighbor, she develops a particular *spiritual motherhood*.”

162. See *LCL*, 648–57; Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.Cap., Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., and William E. May, *Catholic Sexual Ethics: A Summary, Explanation, and Defense*, 2nd ed. (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, 1998), 168–98.

experiences and behavior, but with freely chosen acts. With regard to such acts, the Council of Trent, quoting St. Augustine, definitively teaches: “‘God does not command the impossible; but in commanding he cautions you both to do what you can and to pray for what you cannot,’ and he helps you so that you can do it.”<sup>163</sup>

Among Catholics, the most widespread rationalization for setting aside received norms of sexual morality is that many theologians and some supervisors dissent from them. Some dissent frankly by maintaining that actions and thoughts traditionally believed to be gravely wrong are in fact morally acceptable. Others dissent less straightforwardly by holding that sins against chastity need not change the so-called fundamental option of Christians who generally strive to be faithful, so that such sins are usually only venial. Still others who claim to hold received norms actually dissent by treating them as ideals to be adapted to the capacities of different individuals, who need only realize them gradually as they grow—each at his or her own pace—toward psychological and spiritual maturity.

Three things can be said of such dissent. First, the Holy See has responded to it by reaffirming Catholic teachings on sexual morality and also has reaffirmed the seriousness of such sins: “According to Christian tradition and the Church’s doctrine, and as right reason acknowledges, sexual morality encompasses such important human values that every violation of it is objectively grave.”<sup>164</sup> Second, when rightly understood as referring to intentional sexual acts by the unmarried and to sexual sins by the married that violate the good of marriage, both their objective gravity and the norms of sexual morality themselves have been infallibly taught.<sup>165</sup> Third, John Paul II examined the theological opinions dissenting from received moral teachings, found them wanting, and cogently answered them.<sup>166</sup>

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163. DS 1536/804; see also DS 1568/828; Pius XII, *Sacra virginitas*, III, AAS 46 (1954) 181–82, *PE*, 248:51. Vatican II also rejects as false teachings the propositions that complete continence is impossible or that it harms human development or maturity (see PC 12, cf. PO 16).

164. See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona humana*, 10, AAS 68 (1976) 89, Flannery, 2:494 (the translation is amended to conform to the Latin: “secundum christianam traditionem Ecclesiaeque doctrinam”).

165. See *LCL*, 657–61, for the argument that the universal, constant, and most firm teaching of these propositions by the popes, together with the bishops in communion with them spread around the world, met the conditions Vatican II states in LG 25 for infallible teaching by the ordinary magisterium, and that the Council of Trent definitively taught three of the central norms of Catholic sexual morality.

166. With respect to straightforward dissent and accounts of fundamental option that affect gravity of matter, see John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, esp. 4, 59, 65–70, 81–82, 109–13; AAS 85 (1993) 1135–37, 1180–81, 1184–89, 1198–99, 1218–22; *OR*, 6 Oct. 1993, I–II, IX, X–XI, XII–XIII, XVII. John Paul also firmly rejects the erroneous conception that the moral norms the Church has constantly and very firmly taught are only ideals: “*Only in the mystery of Christ’s Redemption do we discover the ‘concrete’ possibilities of man.* ‘It would be a very serious error to conclude . . . that the Church’s teaching is essentially only an “ideal” which must then be adapted, proportioned, graduated to the so-called concrete possibilities of man, according to a “balancing of the goods in question.’ But what are the “concrete possibilities of man?” And of which man are we speaking? Of man *dominated* by lust or of man *redeemed* by Christ? This is what is at stake: the *reality* of Christ’s redemption. *Christ has redeemed us!* This means that he has given us the possibility of

Nevertheless, some close collaborators have tried to rationalize masturbation. They claim that, while not ideal, it is not really evil, and can serve as a harmless outlet for those who are not yet fully mature.<sup>167</sup> The claim is inconsistent not only with received Catholic teaching but with a sound understanding of the human and Christian goods at stake.<sup>168</sup>

Like a choice to use recreational drugs, a choice to masturbate is a choice to use one's body to provide pleasure and/or relief for one's conscious self, on which one focuses and with which one identifies. But to treat one's body as an instrument apart from oneself objectifies and depersonalizes it. Thus, masturbation violates what John Paul II calls the body's nuptial meaning—one's capacity as a bodily person to make oneself available to and for others. This capacity is no less essential for a close collaborator's love of Jesus and those he or she serves than it is for spouses' love of each other and their children.

Furthermore, sexually gratifying oneself nurtures emotional self-absorption, which is at odds with the emotional focus on Jesus that is essential for close collaborators. Moreover, abusing one's own body abuses Christ, since all Christians' bodies are his members (see 1 Cor 6.15), and is a sacrilege for those whose bodies are consecrated by a commitment to celibate chastity. And since masturbators generally use fantasy partners as sex objects, their acts, morally speaking, are not merely masturbation but fornication, sodomy, or adultery in the heart.<sup>169</sup> St. Paul makes clear the gravity of all such sins and motivates resistance to them by those who are tempted by recalling the prospect of judgment and the already-received gift of the Spirit: "The Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we solemnly forewarned you. For God has not called us for uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you" (1 Thes 4.6–8).

Sexually using others' bodies, even if only in fantasy, also tends to depersonalize everyone's body and to damage all one's interpersonal relationships. Then too, not fully identifying with one's body but only with oneself as a conscious subject tends to give rise to a false "interiority" that has more to do with questionable spiritual experiences than with authentic communion with God. The result can be an undermining of faith. Christians who depersonalize the body and focus on spiritual experiences sooner or later begin to feel that many central truths of faith are implausible. What

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realizing the *entire* truth of our being; he has set our freedom free from the *domination* of concupiscence" (ibid., 103, AAS 1214, OR, XVI; the internal quotation is from John Paul II, "Address to Participants in a Course on Responsible Parenthood" [1 March 1984], 4, *Insegnamenti*, 7:1 [1984] 583; OR, 2 Apr. 1984, 7).

167. For example, see Donald Goergen, O.P., *The Sexual Celibate* (New York: Seabury, 1974), 196–204. Goergen assumes (202) but does not even try to prove that masturbation sometimes "is constructive and contributes to our physical, emotional and spiritual life." He declares: "Masturbation is not completely appropriate for the celibate; neither is it sinful" (203).

168. For a fuller development of the following arguments, see *LCL*, 649–51, 661–68.

169. Many people make no effort to control their thoughts, for they assume that sins of thought are morally insignificant and only outward behavior is important. The Pharisees made the same mistake, and Jesus severely criticized it (see Mt 15.1–20, Mk 7.1–23). Of course, even if the matter is grave, one commits a mortal sin of thought only if the subjective conditions are met; for a general treatment of sins of thought, see *CMP*, 369–76.

difference would it make if Jesus' *corpse* were still buried in Palestine? Why make an issue of whether his presence in the Eucharist is *bodily*? Why hope for *bodily* resurrection? Indeed, once the body is depersonalized, it hardly seems credible that the Word was made flesh and that the object of our faith is what the apostles heard and saw and *touched* with their hands.

Good close collaborators therefore recognize that the human body, with its sexual differentiation and functioning, not only is a natural good to be respected because it is part of God's creation but a sacred good to be revered because he designed it for revealing himself to us as Father of the incarnate Word and our Father: he shows us his love by Jesus' death and resurrection, joins us to himself and one another in the Eucharist and Church, and will gather us, risen and glorious, into his everlasting kingdom.

### **3) Almost all good close collaborators are peacefully chaste.**

Jesus and Paul make it clear that celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake is not for everyone but only those to whom the charism is given (see Mt 19.11; 1 Cor 7.1–2, 8–9). God does not call people to close collaboration without giving them this charism. If those without a vocation to close collaboration imprudently undertake the responsibilities of such a life, they risk disaster for themselves and grave harm to the Church and those entrusted to them for service. Therefore, good candidates must be morally certain that they have the charism for celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, while good close collaborators cherish that gift and guard it.

As Jesus' and Paul's teachings (see **2–B–3** and **2–B–4**, above) make clear, the charism involves two things: (1) a calling to give oneself totally, as Jesus did to his salvific mission and Paul did to evangelizing the Gentiles; and (2) being peacefully chaste, that is, not only sexually continent but able to deal decisively with erotic desires so as not to be troubled or distracted by persistent temptations. What "being peacefully chaste" means can be explained further in two respects.

First, *erotic desire* need not be understood as bearing exclusively on activities and objects that tend to provide sexual pleasure. Understood in its fullness, the objects of erotic desire also include being in a romantic relationship—one in which two people are "in love" with each other—and parenting children of one's own. Nobody is peacefully chaste who is seriously troubled or distracted by desires to escape the loneliness that can be overcome only by a romantic relationship and/or the emptiness that can be filled only by having and raising a child or children of one's own.

Second, the meaning of not to be seriously troubled or distracted by erotic desires becomes clearer by considering the analogous case of those not troubled or distracted by desires to eat and drink.

Like hunger and thirst, the sexual urge is in itself a bodily state, not a desire. When not satisfied, all three bodily states cause varying degrees of discomfort. Desires to satisfy them are tendencies toward behaviors bearing on definite activities and objects.

When temperate people choose to fast for cogent reasons, the reasons are grounded in goods to which they are committed, and they also strongly desire the concrete instances of those goods that they expect to foster or protect by fasting. Thus, the discomfort of being hungry does not by itself cause them to desire to break their fast. Rather, that desire arises only when

the possibility of eating is brought to mind by another's suggestion or something else. Having chosen to fast, a temperate person considers the desire and chooses not to satisfy it. The discomfort of hunger is still there, but the unsatisfied desire does not cause anxiety or again make that same possibility a live option until the cogent reason for fasting ceases to exist. For instance, when good close collaborators choose to fast and pray for a day, they need consider and reject only once each possibility of eating that someone or something brings to mind. They are not distracted by persistent thoughts about possible ways of satisfying their desire to eat.

By contrast, when others who are not temperate try to fast, the reasons for their choice either are not well and clearly grounded in goods to which they are committed, or the choice is not supported by strong desires integrated with the reasons, or both. So, the discomfort of hunger of itself generates a desire to find something to eat. Intemperate dieters' hearts are restless to find a snack. After considering and rejecting ways of satisfying hunger, not only do they continue to experience discomfort, but the same possibilities of eating become live options again, and they have the distressing and distracting experience of their unruly desires challenging their reasons for fasting.

It is much the same with chastity. Close collaborators who are not peacefully chaste experience not only the sexual urge and/or the loneliness or emptiness related to it but also a desire to find relief. On some level at least, they are always more or less on the lookout for tempting possibilities, and if they consider and reject one, unruly erotic desire can be counted on to bring it up again. Even if they strive to be continent, they experience distressing, distracting, persistent temptations.

By contrast, almost all good close collaborators are peacefully chaste. The sexual urge and their experience of emptiness and loneliness do not by themselves generate desires to find ways of relieving them. As a possibility of doing so is brought to mind, it elicits desire and becomes an option for choice, but once it is understood and rejected, it does not again become an option.<sup>170</sup> A peacefully chaste priest, for example, is not at all on the lookout for tempting possibilities: he does not see modest women as potential sexual partners, and the possibility of encountering unexpected pornography makes surfing on the internet less appealing, not more. When an attractive woman seems to be making herself sexually available, he is aware of his erotic desire and what he might do; but he declines to pursue the possibility, and the desire does not persist or recur.<sup>171</sup>

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170. The distinction between people who are peacefully chaste and those who are not is based on St. Thomas's distinction between people who are truly temperate and those who are merely "continent" (see *S.t.*, 2–2, qq. 141, 143, 151; and q. 155, a. 1). The truly temperate not only judge rightly but their emotions are submissive, so that they easily choose reasonably and act rightly; the merely continent also judge rightly, but bad desires that strongly persist in them make it a struggle to choose reasonably and act rightly.

171. In contemporary, affluent societies, many people dress immodestly and many businesses exploit sexuality by pornography in advertising. Even chaste Christians—especially if they are healthy, young men—frequently experience erotic desire and must choose to look away and stop thinking about doing what an immodest dress or pornographic ad suggests. Having to make that choice a hundred times a day would not point to a lack of peaceful chastity, but making the choice once, looking away, and then

Of course, not all close collaborators are peacefully chaste. Some never were, but more or less culpably, or perhaps ignorantly, they undertook celibate chastity. Others were good candidates, who made their commitment only after becoming morally certain that they had the gift of peaceful chastity, but who then seemed to lose it some time after ordination or final profession. Even if they once desired to be peacefully chaste, some members of both groups no longer do. But some who lack the gift earnestly desire it. What about them?

To begin with, they should recognize that their desire for peaceful chastity is itself a gift, thank God for it, and ask him for the further gift that the desire will be fulfilled. While persistently praying and asking others to intercede for them, they also must do what they can to dispose themselves to receive what they desire. That involves several things.

If they have committed grave sins, they must repent of all of them and make good use of the sacrament of penance, with contrition that includes firmly resolving to sin no more (see *LCL*, 199–208). Having often yielded to temptations against chastity, some may doubt that they can stop sinning without the gift of peaceful chastity for which they are praying. They should bear in mind that God always offers every Christian sufficient grace to avoid all mortal sins.<sup>172</sup>

Carrying out a genuine purpose of amendment includes all the steps required to avoid sinning: doing penance, keeping relevant truths in mind, avoiding needless occasions of sin and modifying unavoidable ones, and dealing promptly with temptations (see *LCL*, 216–26). The relevant truths include the reasons why engaging in any deliberate sexual activity or fantasy would be a mortal sin and, for a close collaborator, sacrilegious (see *LCL*, 657–68). Some special mistakes to avoid and steps to take in dealing with sexual sins should also be taken into account (see *LCL*, 669–78). (Some of these steps will be treated in the following section.)

Close collaborators and candidates who desire the gift of peaceful chastity also must do the things that enable good close collaborators to be peacefully chaste: accept Jesus' offer of special friendship, cherish his self-

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having again to choose—not to take another look or to stop fretting about one's persistent, frustrated desire—would.

172. The Council of Trent makes it clear that they can avoid all mortal sins against chastity by condemning the opinion that “all those who think they lack the gift of celibate chastity, even if they vowed it, can marry” and adding: “For God does not refuse [the gift of chastity] to those who rightly ask, ‘nor allow us to be tempted beyond our strength’ (1 Cor 10.13)” (DS 1809/979). Paul makes it clear that God always provides sufficient grace to avoid mortal sin, but his statement does not show that those who undertake close collaboration without peaceful chastity but later repent and sincerely pray for it will receive *that* gift. Some surely do, but others may well have a constant, lifelong struggle with temptations. If they sin against chastity regularly, even though only occasionally, they will be unable to testify to the power of grace with the transparent candor and assurance of those peacefully chaste; and they should decline assignment as formator or supervisor. However, repeated experiences of grace that enables them to overcome severe temptations may eventually convince them that they can testify candidly and confidently to the power of grace. If so, they have received an extraordinary gift enabling them to be of much help to the many Christians who burn with passion but cannot marry. If they are equally faithful to their vocations in other respects, they are good close collaborators despite lacking peaceful chastity.

gift, and constantly nurture their affection for him. While those things must be done for their own sakes rather than as means to acquire peaceful chastity, good candidates in formation must do them if they are to receive the gift of peaceful chastity, and close collaborators who have received it must continue doing them to keep it and mature in it. So, close collaborators who lack peaceful chastity and desire that gift need, as a remedy, spiritual formation in doing those things.

To understand how the relationship with Jesus that good close collaborators cherish for its own sake contributes to their peaceful chastity, it helps to consider how marriage can be a remedy for concupiscence. This means more than providing a legitimate outlet, for satisfying erotic desire does not by itself quiet it. Rather, the remedy is the virtue of chastity, which marriage is a way of developing. But merely marrying is not enough. Many spouses fail to become chaste because their reasons for marrying were inappropriate or inadequate, their feelings are more self-centered than mutually affectionate, and/or their sexual activities are directed more toward experiences each enjoys as an individual than toward fulfillment as a permanent communion of persons—fulfillment that includes the experience of their oneness. Chastity develops when a man and a woman really love each other, marry for the sake of the true goods of marriage, and shape their sexual activities by those goods. In such couples, erotic desire is subordinated to the requirements of their marriage and common life, which normally includes having and bringing up children. Conjugal love leads them to engage in marital intercourse and also to abstain from it when reasonable. Their affection for each other—and for their children, if any—focuses their sexual desires on each other and gives their reasonable choices decisive control of those desires.

Someone the Father calls to be a close collaborator is chosen by Jesus and loved in a special way. He wants such people to be his intimate friends and help him provide his saving service, not only for the benefit of those to be served and his own human self-fulfillment<sup>173</sup> but also for the sake of their friendship with him and their self-fulfillment. Some are peacefully chaste before entering a program of formation, indeed even before they begin to become aware of that call. Many others become peacefully chaste only as they become aware of their vocation and respond to it during formation.

The process varies in details from individual to individual, but its main lines are as follows. Good candidates become increasingly aware of how much Jesus sacrificed for them and how deeply he loves them. Their gratitude grows, and they begin to become fascinated by him. They become better acquainted with him as they participate in the liturgy by meditating on the gospels and devoutly receiving him in Holy Communion. They are moved in prayer by his charisma and admirable character, his strength and gentleness, his pastoral love and single-mindedness. Affection for Jesus and the desire to be with him grow until they love him wholeheartedly and wish to be with him always, to follow him wherever he goes, to love those he loves and is working to save, and to help him in saving them. Now clearly

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173. See Eph 1.22–23, Col 1.15–16, Heb 12.2; Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw, *Fulfillment in Christ: A Summary of Christian Moral Principles* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1991), 225–26.

understanding their calling to close collaboration with Jesus and the cogent reasons for engaging in it, they are ready to undertake that vocation, carry it out for the benefits Jesus has in view, and forgo everything else, including all satisfaction of erotic desire. By this formation process as a whole, the Holy Spirit has given them their readiness to make their commitment, a readiness that includes the peaceful chastity without which they could not rightly promise and/or vow celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake.

It should be clear, then, that both spouses and close collaborators become chaste inasmuch as they subject erotic desire to the love of those to whom they commit themselves in undertaking their vocations. But conjugal chastity and celibate chastity also differ in important ways.

Unlike conjugal love, which naturally persists and grows because it is grounded in the spouses' sexual complementarity and sustained by their interaction, close collaborators' love of Jesus wanes unless constantly nurtured by the experience of being with him, interacting with him, and working alongside him.

Aware of Jesus' action and bodily presence in the Eucharist, good close collaborators therefore keep it central in their lives and receive him daily. They also regularly engage in *lectio divina*, frequently seek Jesus' forgiveness and support in the sacrament of penance, join him in praying the Hours, and meet him in personal prayer. Moreover, as chaste spouses' shared affection for others—especially their children—contributes to the emotional motivation essential for chastity, good close collaborators' spiritual friendships contribute to the emotional motivation essential for their peaceful chastity.

These spiritual friendships all belong to their vocation and stem from their friendship with Jesus, but they contribute in different ways to peaceful chastity. Together with the intimacy of their friendship with Jesus, such friendships prevent loneliness and emptiness from seriously troubling and distracting them. Like good parents' love for their children, the love they share with Jesus for those they serve with him leads them to eschew hypocrisy and provide a consistent and convincing model of Christian holiness. In particular, they wish to give their spiritual children a shining model of purity, for they know that sexual sins not only are grave but tend to make the objects of faith seem unreal, thereby weakening faith and often leading to its abandonment.

This account of how good close collaborators' relationship with Jesus contributes to their peaceful chastity also explains how candidates who have become peacefully chaste can be morally certain of remaining faithful to their promise and/or vow of celibate chastity. Jesus will always be available and ready to offer the same companionship and practical help. Therefore, if they sustain their friendship with him by continuing to do what originally made peaceful chastity possible for them, they have the grounds for such moral certitude. By contrast, peacefully chaste married men and women cannot be morally certain in this way because their spouses, unlike Jesus, can be unfaithful and may be unavailable, indisposed, and/or unable to carry on the conjugal relationship for a long time or even permanently. Without the marital affection that marriage provided, their chastity may be strained



beyond its limits, so that they again regularly experience serious and troubling temptations.

**4) Good close collaborators faithfully live out their acceptance of celibate chastity.**

In what follows, *sexual act* refers to any act whatsoever—thought, word, or deed—in choosing which the agent intends, either as an end in itself or as a means to some other end, to bring about or maintain sexual arousal and/or to cause an orgasm or incomplete sexual satisfaction, whether in himself or herself, in another, or both (see *LCL*, 633–57).

Rejecting all rationalizations, good close collaborators put aside the notion that any sexual act could be morally acceptable for themselves. Their clear and firm judgment of conscience in regard to any temptation to engage in a sexual act is: That would be gravely wrong. If they are tempted and sufficiently reflect on the option of engaging in a sexual act, they freely choose not to.

Some degree of sexual arousal and satisfaction may be foreseen as a more or less probable but unwanted side effect of an act that could be chosen for a morally acceptable reason—for example, studying a certain subject matter, engaging in a certain sort of exercise, enjoying such and such entertainments. If the arousal and/or satisfaction that is foreseen might tempt one to commit a sexual sin, the act with that expected side effect is an occasion of grave sin; it should be dealt with like any other occasion of grave sin (see *LCL*, 221–24).

If an act that is an occasion of sin is not chosen for a morally acceptable reason or is already wrong due to some circumstance, its being an occasion of sin adds to its wrongness. So, when one foresees that an act that otherwise would be only venially sinful will be an occasion of mortal sin, one has a grave moral obligation not to choose that act. If it otherwise would be light matter to choose to overindulge slightly in alcohol or to delay briefly in fulfilling some responsibility, a good close collaborator will not choose to do that while foreseeing that it would be an occasion of a sexual sin or other sin in grave matter.<sup>174</sup>

Sexual arousal which is incidental to nonsexual acts can rightly be directed by married people toward their spouses, but close collaborators have no such option. For them, in fact, activities that incidentally bring about sexual arousal often already are venially sinful because they conflict with some other responsibility pertaining to their lifestyle and/or service. Moreover, the importance of their witness and example increases their responsibility to avoid occasions of sexual sin. Thus, good close collaborators are careful to avoid many occasions of sin that other chaste Christians need not avoid. This requires taking such steps as prudently selecting among entertainments and greatly limiting their exposure to the mass media.

By using hyperbole, Jesus emphasizes the importance of avoiding occasions of sin: “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw

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174. Watching television, surfing the internet, and many similar pastimes that often become occasions of grave sin are already venially sinful if they take time that should be used for work, prayer, healthful exercise, friendly conversation, or some other worthwhile activity.

it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell” (Mt 5.29–30; cf. Mk 9.43–48). Good close collaborators take Jesus seriously, give up many things to avoid occasions of sin, adhere to practices that minimize them, and strive to modify those they cannot avoid.

Constantly nurturing their vocational commitment helps them be peacefully chaste (see **3–A–5**, above). But even so, they expect sexual temptations and fortify themselves against them, partly by bearing in mind three sets of relevant truths.

First, legalism is false (see **1–E–1**, above). Sinning is not merely breaking a rule. Sins violate human goods and detract from or impede human persons’ fulfillment. Many sexual sins violate what John Paul II calls “the nuptial meaning of the body”—that is, they adversely affect the body precisely insofar as it is part of one’s capacity for self-giving.<sup>175</sup> Although couples sinning together may intend to experience something of the interpersonal communion that can be realized only in chaste marital intercourse, in pursuing that illusory good they destroy or damage the authentic friendship or other good that could be realized in their relationship.<sup>176</sup>

Second, as treason is one of the most serious of crimes because it violates the common good in a direct and very grave way, so, although any mortal sin is an awful evil, close collaborators’ mortal sins against their commitment to Jesus and his Church are especially so. Moreover, because of the special relationship close collaborators have with Jesus, any sexual sin they commit is infidelity to him.

Third, it becomes clear why every sexual sin is grave matter when one considers the dynamic factors involved in human sexuality and the importance of the human and Christian values at stake in sexual acts. Because the sexual drive is directed toward complete satisfaction in bodily union, even passing fantasies and incomplete, solitary, sexual acts cannot be reasonably regarded as isolated, private, or transient evils. The stability of marriages and the coming to be, survival, and well being of children are ultimately at stake in all human sexual acts. And in the sexual acts of Christians, the Lord’s body also is at stake.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, like masturbation, almost all other sexual sins involve objectifying the body and alienating it from the conscious subject, so that one’s own body and the bodies of others are reduced to the status of sex objects and instruments of satisfaction.

In order to strengthen themselves to resist sexual temptations, good close collaborators also follow appropriate ascetic practices. They sometimes fast and/or abstain from eating and drinking what they especially like. They readily and patiently endure discomfort for others’ benefit and seek only comforts that will help them serve well.

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175. See *LCL*, 649–51, including fn. 190.

176. See *LCL*, 651–54.

177. See 1 Cor 6.13–20, 1 Thes 4.1–8; for the generalization of Paul’s argument, see John Paul II, General Audience (11 Feb. 1981), *Inseg.* 6.1 (1981) 258–61, *OR*, 16 Feb. 1981, 3, 12.

Being conscientious, good close collaborators are quick to recognize temptations and set them aside by focusing on something else, preferably something interesting and unrelated to the temptation's source. Rather than dwelling on their own weakness, they recall St. Paul's assurance: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with the temptation will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (1 Cor 10.13). They also help one another resist temptations in accord with Paul's injunction, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal 6.2). That may be done informally—by asking a friend for moral support when a temptation persists and by responding to friends' similar requests, or perhaps more formally, by establishing a twelve-step program group.

Good close collaborators made their commitment to Jesus and his Church, and freely accepted celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake.<sup>178</sup> A few have been married, and many seriously considered the possibility of marrying and having children of their own. In no way do they depreciate the human body and its natural functions. They fully appreciate the fundamental human goodness of marriage, including marital intercourse and parenthood. They revere good Christian marriages. At the same time, rather than romanticize marriage, they are realistic about it, as St. Paul was when he recommended celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake partly because "those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that" (1 Cor 7.28). Marriage and parenthood entail heavy responsibilities. While living together causes continual sexual stimuli for spouses, they often must forgo satisfaction for good reasons, including illness, separation, and birth regulation. They should be intimate friends, but often they experience stress so great that persevering in their indissoluble relationship is very hard. Children bring not only joys but heartaches. Moreover, spouses and parents who love tenderly grieve profoundly when death takes away their dearest ones. Good close collaborators are therefore not tempted by daydreams about what might have been or illusions about how much they are sacrificing in not marrying. They are grateful for their charism of celibate chastity and do not envy the gifts enjoyed by happily married parents of good children.

In serving Jesus and the Church, men and women who give themselves totally to them use almost all the capacities that good married Christians use in fulfilling their spousal and parental responsibilities. Good close

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178. Marie Theresa Coombs and Francis Kelly Nemeck, O.M.I., *Called by God: A Theology of Vocation and Lifelong Commitment* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 128, hold that mature vocational awareness would lead those about to promise celibacy or vow chastity to think along the following lines: "I now experience a calling to celibacy essentially as an existential inability to become otherwise. Call it what you will, I am in fact unmarriageable [note omitted] for the sake of Christ and the gospel (Mark 10:29), for the sake of the reign of God (Matt 19:12)." The only other attitudes they consider are plainly inappropriate ones. As a matter of fact, though, some rightly undertake celibate chastity while experiencing marriage as a live option. Congregation for Catholic Education, *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy*, 48, EV, 5:297, p. 224; USCC, 43, makes this point: "An inclination towards marriage and family life, which makes their renunciation painful, ought not to be regarded necessarily as a contradiction to a celibate vocation. Even if the pain is lifelong, this does not prejudice the genuineness of the call to virginity, provided one can live exclusively for God with full and free assent of the will."

collaborators therefore fulfill much of their potential to be spouses and parents. Attending to that self-fulfillment and giving thanks for it is another way that good close collaborators nurture fidelity to their commitment to celibate chastity.

Not only do they strengthen themselves against sexual temptations, however, but they also strive to protect others. Knowing that everything they do reflects on Jesus and his Church, they take special care to avoid needlessly causing others to be tempted. They dress, behave, and talk modestly; when catechizing about sexual matters, they choose materials appropriate to the age and experience of those being instructed and express themselves in ways that, while sufficiently clear, are also delicate. In manifesting chaste affection, they avoid saying or doing anything likely to be misunderstood as erotic.

**5) Good close collaborators recognize and deal reasonably with sexual desires.**

Good close collaborators keenly anticipate reaching heaven and beginning to live in unbreakable communion with Jesus—the day when “the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready” (Rev 19.7). Realizing that celibate chastity is a gift of grace, however, they never take it for granted or assume that they are strong enough to remain chaste and ready for Jesus (see OT 10, PC 12). Instead, they continue nurturing their love for Jesus and praying for the grace to be faithful.

Since everyone needs some pleasure in life, some close collaborators reason that forgoing sexual pleasure entitles them to live very comfortably. But it is a mistake to use sensate satisfactions as compensation. Forgoing sexual pleasure is irrelevant to how much one should eat and drink or do anything else that provides bodily gratification, and using such satisfactions as compensation satisfies desires unreasonably, for it is either bad for health (eating and drinking too much) or inconsistent with simplicity of life (cultivating expensive tastes). In any case, desires are strengthened in satisfying them unreasonably, while the attractiveness of abiding by reasonable limits is weakened. Good close collaborators therefore act on sensory desires only when they have good reasons for doing that, and then always within reasonable bounds. As recreation, they prefer activities that provide other forms of pleasure—for example, cultural pursuits, challenging hobbies, and forms of play that require skill. Moderation also is necessary in such activities (see 3–A–6, above), but good close collaborators engage in appropriate ones.

Unlike hunger and thirst, the sexual drive can remain unsatisfied indefinitely without harming someone. Like hunger and thirst, though, it is a bodily state and at times causes specific sensations. As bodily states, hunger, thirst, and the sexual drive are not emotions, which are psychic entities; rather, when someone in whom they are present perceives or imagines something that would satisfy them, the perception or imagining causes a desire.

Sometimes, of course, nothing blocks acting on a desire: one feels thirsty, notices a fountain, desires a drink of water, and takes it. When something within or outside oneself blocks such spontaneous action, desire

normally leads to reflection: Shall I act on the desire and, if so, how? With the sexual urge as well as with hunger and thirst, all this is natural and good.

Normally, one is fully aware of a desire, reasonably considers whether to act on it, chooses in accord with that judgment, and, when the judgment is negative, accepts and ignores any discomfort that results from not satisfying the urge. For instance, a virtuous man who needs to lose weight imagines having a rich dessert, desires it, judges it excessive, chooses to forgo it, and has no difficulty tolerating his unsatisfied hunger for it. With sexual desire, however, fear or some other emotion that blocks acting on it sometimes represses it, so that one is no longer aware of it; yet the desire remains and influences behavior.

Repressed desire can lead to neurosis, with abnormal behavior the result.<sup>179</sup> For example, a priest who had seemed peacefully chaste since seminary days starts to suffer from depression, is tormented by sexual desires, and has an irresistible impulse to look at internet pornography and masturbate. Those who desire to be good close collaborators need to recognize such compulsive sexual behavior or other symptoms of neurosis, for it is a psycho-moral disorder that requires appropriate care and help (see **3-E-3**, below).

Not only fear of *acting on* desires but fear of *experiencing* them can lead to their repression. In that case, a repressed desire may lead to behavior normally associated with acting on it while preventing one from noticing the behavior's significance. For example, two close collaborators who are sexually attracted to each other and repress their desire may do things that are likely to lead to a sexual act while complacently supposing their behavior is entirely appropriate and safe.

Good close collaborators are wary of self-deception; they interpret their own and others' behavior as shrewd observers.<sup>180</sup> This involves recognizing signs of repressed sexual desire: inappropriate bodily contact with someone who could be its object, trying to be alone with him or her for no good reason, taking special care to look well for this person, having haunting thoughts about him or her, and so on. Noticing such signs in an associate's behavior toward a third party, good close collaborators call his or her attention to them and gently point out their significance. If they find themselves doing these things, they candidly acknowledge what is happening and face up to their repressed desire.

There is considerably less chance of sexual desire being aroused between good close collaborators and those they serve, for the former see the latter as fellow family members in Jesus and focus entirely on their needs and the benefits that Jesus and his Church wish to provide so as to meet those needs. Those thus served generally understand the relationship and respond appropriately. However, if an ongoing service—for example,

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179. See Anna A. Terruwe and Conrad W. Baars, *Psychic Wholeness and Healing: Using All the Powers of the Human Psyche* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1981), 33–61.

180. All close collaborators can profit from advice to priests by Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, 77, AAS 59 (1967) 688, PE, 276:77: “Rightly jealous of his full self-giving to the Lord, the priest should know how to guard against emotional tendencies which give rise to desires not sufficiently enlightened or guided by the Spirit. He should beware of seeing spiritual or apostolic pretexts for what are in fact dangerous inclinations of the heart.”

pastoral counseling about marriage problems or nursing care involving bodily contact—might bring about sexual desire in either party, good close collaborators deal with the problem much as they do in working relationships.

In the past, few close collaborators regularly spent much time working with anyone with whom a romantic relationship could develop, but such working arrangements are more common today. They can be cordial and enjoyable without becoming an occasion of sin, provided both parties remain focused on the work to be done. Good close collaborators do that and take care from the outset to ensure that the other party shares their understanding of the relationship and each party's role. If nevertheless they begin to experience sexual desire or notice signs of it in their behavior, rather than telling the other party how they feel, they are careful to avoid or desist from inappropriate behavior, and tell their spiritual director or another trusted, disinterested friend about the experience. If they notice signs of sexual desire in the other party's behavior, they do nothing to encourage or cooperate with it and gently resist or rebuff it. If the other party speaks of his or her sexual desire toward them, they gently but firmly make it clear that they are unwilling to become romantically involved, point out that romantic behavior would be bad for both of them and anyone else affected, and earnestly ask the other party to concentrate on the relationship's proper concern.

Couples preparing for marriage or exploring the possibility of marrying use kisses and caresses to express their sexual desire. Because that is likely to cause some sexual arousal, it is an occasion of sexual sin. Chaste couples minimize the danger by being careful about the circumstances and limiting the extent and duration of such contact (see *LCL*, 745–46). Some close collaborators mistakenly suppose they can rightly form romantic relationships with members of the opposite sex and express their sexual desire within limits.<sup>181</sup> Good close collaborators realize, however, that romantic relationships are not compatible with lifelong, celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake; they always avoid even bodily contact they might chastely engage in if free to marry.

Good supervisors develop norms of behavior for their subordinates to foster and protect their chastity and modesty, forestall their being falsely charged with wrongful sexual behavior, and prevent innocent behavior that would have the appearance of being immodest or unchaste.<sup>182</sup> In this, as in

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181. The so-called third way is based on this mistake. Many attempting it express erotic affection in ways that exceed the limits observed by a chaste couple free to marry and give in to temptations to commit what they recognize as sexual sins. A. W. Richard Sipe, *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1990), 98–99, 102, notes that some who undertake the third way repent and commit themselves more firmly to celibate chastity while many others do not repent but carry on secretive relationships or openly abandon their commitment.

182. *CIC*, c. 277, §2: “Clerics are to behave with due prudence towards persons whose company can endanger their obligation to observe continence or give rise to scandal among the faithful.” §3: “The diocesan bishop is competent to establish more specific norms concerning this matter and to pass judgment in particular cases concerning the observance of this obligation” (cf. *CCEO*, c. 374). *CIC*, c. 672, states that religious are bound by c. 277; in accord with the particular law of each religious institute, some competent superior can establish the more specific norms.

most other matters, good supervisors obtain the help of others, including subordinates, in considering which morally acceptable options to require for the common good. Good close collaborators generously help in developing such norms, then observe and support them, including admonishing violators (see **3-G-4**, below) and calling supervisors' attention to any serious, ongoing violation. Rather than keeping these norms secret from those to be served, good supervisors publish them and seek everyone's cooperation in implementing them. As part of the norms' periodic review, good supervisors ask both subordinates and those to be served for suggestions about improving them.

#### **D: Working Together: Exercising Authority and Practicing Obedience**

##### **1) Close collaborators' supervisors sometimes serve as moral guides.**

*Supervisors* here refers generally to all who shape the cooperation of close collaborators with Jesus and one another: the pope, other bishops, pastors of parishes, religious superiors, chapters, and general congregations; and those to whom the foregoing delegate authority.<sup>183</sup>

Good supervisors never see themselves as autonomous. They know very well that without Jesus and the Holy Spirit they can do nothing—except sin. They pray constantly to recall the blessings they have received and thank God for them, to intensify their friendship with Jesus, to put on his mind and put off worldly opinions, to obtain light and strength from the Holy Spirit, to be freed of all feelings but those consonant with charity, and to be aware of and repent any sins they commit. They pray especially fervently before offering moral guidance and before each stage in the process of exercising authority.<sup>184</sup>

Because holiness is essential for close collaborators' perspicuous witness and is conducive to the fruitfulness of their service, supervisors are called to foster their subordinates' moral rectitude, which includes being aware of relevant moral requirements as well as resisting temptations, and, when necessary, repenting and amending their lives.

Supervisors often decide among morally acceptable alternatives—for example, “The following assignments are effective July 1.” Subordinates have no difficulty distinguishing between decisions like that and the moral norms—for example, forgive injuries, never lie—that apply to all faithful Christians. At the same time, some moral norms irrelevant to other Christians apply to close collaborators. Indeed, due to legitimate differences among forms of service and ways of life, some moral norms apply to some of them but not to others. Moreover, supervisors sometimes conscientiously find only one morally acceptable possibility for all their subordinates: to

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183. The pope supervises all close collaborators; a bishop supervises, at least with respect to certain matters, all close collaborators within his diocese; the pastor of a parish supervises his clerical assistants and some aspects of the service of religious within his parish; each religious institute's superiors supervise its members with respect to matters specified in its proper law (see *CIC*, c. 273; c. 548, §1; c. 590, §2; c. 598, §1; c. 601).

184. St. Ignatius designed the *Spiritual Exercises* in the realization that authentic discernment presupposes spiritual renewal (see **2-A-5**, above). Good supervisors share that awareness, are motivated by it to ongoing formation by the Holy Spirit, and thus grow in holiness as they conscientiously fulfill their responsibilities.

take or not to take a certain course of action in their work together. In such situations, as well as when moral norms specific to some or all close collaborators apply, even supervisors, to say nothing of the subordinates, may find it hard to make and bear in mind the distinction between moral requirements and decisions between or among morally acceptable alternatives.

Even so, the distinction is important. Moral requirements can be known by reasoning, whereas good decisions between or among morally acceptable alternatives depend on sound discernment by attending to relevant feelings. Feelings must be educated for moral inquiry, so that they do not interfere with rational reflection; but in discerning, and only there, one may accept feelings as decisive, provided they are harmonious with one's upright commitments (see *DMQ*, 861–70). Moral requirements oblige independently of any human authority, and close collaborators and their supervisors must comply with them; but subordinates are obliged to comply with supervisors' decisions between or among morally acceptable alternatives only because the supervisors have the authority to make those decisions. Some moral requirements are exceptionless, but decisions always can be reversed by those who made them, and usually can be countermanded by higher authorities. Moreover, moral requirements or a sound understanding of supervisors' intentions can make it reasonable to act contrary to what they decide (see **5**, below).

Good supervisors try to have in mind all the moral requirements relevant to their subordinates' cooperative service and their own service of directing. In fulfilling their responsibilities as moral guides, they primarily strive to provide good example. They regularly examine their own consciences, never take for granted the moral acceptability of any new or complex option but always carefully look into it, and, if at all doubtful, obtain the help of faithful and able moral advisers. In acting as moral guides, they make clear what they are doing and carefully avoid saying or doing anything that would tend to impose their own preference between or among morally acceptable options on others.

In teaching moral norms, good supervisors provide motives for assenting to them as truths—for example, they cite authoritative Church documents and explain how the moral norm fosters and protects the relevant good or goods. Similarly, in exhorting, they leave no doubt that complying with the norm is the only morally acceptable course for themselves and their subordinates. In admonishing, they act if necessary to forestall misunderstandings by pointing out that they have no power to make morally acceptable the action in question.

When a supervisor provides moral guidance, good subordinates attend to it carefully with the presumption that it will be sound, and usually they accept the guidance and act on it with a good conscience. If they doubt the soundness of the advice, however, rather than act contrary to conscience, they pray for God's help, inform the supervisor about the problem, do whatever else seems reasonable to resolve it, and remain open to further enlightenment.

Supervisors sometimes issue a law or precept to enforce a moral requirement—they warn everyone, or certain subordinates, that violations of



the requirement will be punished. When good supervisors do this, it carries out a judgment that it is an appropriate way of protecting or fostering the common good of their group of close collaborators and/or those the group should serve. At the same time, they continue acting as moral guides by calling attention to the unreasonableness of violating the requirement. In this respect, they are like good parents, who explain moral norms and distinguish them from their own decisions, which could have been otherwise but call for obedience.

While nobody doubts the need for criminal laws by which governments impose sanctions on those who violate the common good, many people question supervisors' enforcement of moral requirements. Should not subordinates' love for Jesus and those to be served be enough to motivate them to fulfill their moral responsibilities? As a matter of fact, though, love does not always suffice, and limiting or even terminating a subordinate's service can be necessary to protect the common good. Milder sanctions, if well-chosen, help imperfect individuals live up to their commitments and better selves, and in no way constrain the virtuous.<sup>185</sup>

## **2) Close collaboration involves authority and obedience.**

Muggers order their victims to hand over valuables, and victims generally rightly submit. But the mugger-victim relationship does not involve authority and obedience. Exercising authority is not dominating others, and obeying is not simply submitting to another's will. There can be neither authority nor obedience unless the parties cooperate reasonably in order to act together for some good.

Though motivated by different interests, parties to a "deal" reach consensus on a plan for each to do something the other or others want done. The parties then do what they have agreed to do—a store delivers an item and a customer pays for it, a landowner lets a tract be farmed and the farmer delivers part of the crop to the owner. The parties' common interest, if any, is that their interaction be fair, since only fairness can morally require each party to play his or her part. Neither party exercises authority in deciding on the plan and neither is obedient in carrying it out.

In other cases, though, two or more people are interested in a common good—one they can attain only by sharing in it together and that they desire not only for themselves but for one another. That desire to benefit one another is mutual love. Along with self-interest, it motivates the parties to seek or welcome a plan to execute together. While people interested in a common good may work out their plan by consensus, as friends generally do, larger groups often leave that to an individual or subgroup, considered

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185. Some imagine that Vatican II's teaching on religious liberty rules out sanctions by ecclesiastical authorities to enforce moral requirements bearing upon religious matters. The Council does teach that no one is to be forced by any human power to act contrary to his or her own beliefs (see DH 2) and that no human power can command or forbid the internal, voluntary, and free acts in which the exercise of religion consists (see DH 3). I grant that supervisors' authority is a human power. Still, the Council's teaching does not mean supervisors should never enforce subordinates' moral responsibility to behave outwardly in accord with their beliefs and commitment. Subordinates whose beliefs and commitment change can avoid violating their consciences by giving up the status and privileges they enjoy as close collaborators.

better equipped for the task. Whether all or only some of the parties do the planning, they need to direct participants' cooperation reasonably—that is, so that it will be morally upright in every respect and likely to promote the common good effectively. And no plan will meet either condition unless it also fairly distributes burdens and benefits among participants.

Unlike cases in which people make a deal, the prospect of the common good in which the parties intend to share makes it unreasonable to leave their plan unexecuted, and mutual love, as well as fairness, morally requires each to play his or her part in carrying it out. So, while the planners make decisions and provide direction, they do not dominate the participants; and while the participants carry out the planners' decisions, they do not simply submit to another's will. Nevertheless, the planner-participant relationship does involve authority and obedience. The planning is a form of authorship, an exercise of authority; motivated by the common good and mutual love, the response to that exercise of authority—accepting the plan and carrying it out—is obedience.<sup>186</sup>

People cannot dominate themselves. But planners pursuing a common good often assign themselves a role in carrying out their plan; they exercise authority and also practice obedience. Sometimes all those interested in a common good arrive at a plan by consensus, and each plays a part in carrying it out—for example, there was a time in certain New England towns when every citizen participated in regular meetings that made the laws every citizen obeyed. Each citizen exercised authority and practiced obedience with respect to every citizen, including himself or herself.<sup>187</sup>

For many people, the words *authority* and *obedience* have bad connotations. Selfish members of a group want the benefits of common effort without doing their fair share and so resent reasonable decisions by authorities. Some people, who may not be selfish, are unhappy whenever they must accept anything disagreeable, from bad weather and their own limitations to unwelcome decisions by authorities.

Even some upright people are uneasy with any candid call for obedience. There are various reasons for that: people in authority who sinfully abuse their role often demand obedience of those they try to dominate; the word *authority* often is applied loosely to those who ought to exercise authority but proceed unreasonably—whether sinfully or blamelessly, due to ignorance—so that their plan lacks the moral basis that makes obedience possible; and the word *obedience* often is used loosely to

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186. That all members of a group be interested in the common good and love one another is ideal. Genuine authority and obedience also can exist in groups that fall short of the ideal. Authority is exercised and obedience practiced insofar as some group members are interested in the common good and are motivated by mutual love in making and/or carrying out decisions. Thinking of a political society's plan for its citizens' cooperation, St. Thomas says law is "an ordinance of reason for the common good promulgated by the person or body responsible for taking care of the community" (*S.t.*, 1–2, q. 90, a. 4, c.). While every citizen of a nation should be interested in its common good and most claim to be, many, being more or less selfish, love one another defectively and inconstantly, or not at all. Still, some of the items in any political society's legal code satisfy Thomas's definition and have true authority, and some portion of citizens' acts complying with those laws are genuine obedience.

187. See Yves Simon, *Philosophy of Democratic Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 144–94.

refer to submission to directives that lack true authority, particularly when that submission is morally required by some responsibility toward others or the common good.<sup>188</sup>

Christian hope is interest in a good—the kingdom—which Jesus’ disciples can attain only by sharing in it together with him, one another, and those he plans to save by their cooperation. Thus, Vatican II makes it clear that all the faithful are called to cooperate in the Church’s mission (her “apostolate”) in ways determined by their gifts (see LG 30, 33; AA 2–3). The master plan for that cooperation is the New Law—God’s plan, given by Jesus, and received by Christians with the obedience of faith. As part of it, Jesus assigned responsibility for detailed planning to the apostles and their successors, repeatedly warning them to fulfill their responsibility as a service and not try to dominate others.

In carrying out the Church’s mission, close collaborators work with Jesus and one another to make him and his acts present and fruitful. Much of their cooperative service is directed by the planning of the pope and other bishops, which is manifested in laws, precepts, and customary practices. Some of these bear upon the cooperation of members of religious institutes and upon its detailed direction by each institute’s particular law and the decisions of superiors. Thus, the obedience of members of religious institutes responds not only to planning by their founders or foundresses and authoritative bodies and individuals within the institutes themselves but to planning by the pope and other bishops.

Two goods are realized in and through any authentic exercise of authority and practice of obedience. One is the common good for whose sake the parties plan and play their parts; the other is the communion formed among the parties by their mutual love. The exercise of authority by good supervisors and practice of obedience by good subordinates are for the sake of the heavenly kingdom, considered as the common good in which they and those they serve are called to share together. The communion that good close collaborators realize in serving with Jesus and one another is a foretaste and sign of the kingdom still to be realized and an instrument of it as it is already incipient in the Church on earth.

### **3) The authority and obedience involved in close collaboration can be clarified.**

In governing the Church, a religious institute, or one of their regional or local parts, supervisors sometimes make decisions about instrumental goods that do not direct others’ actions—for example, about property and money. Since such decisions do not call for obedience, they do not pertain to the exercise of authority dealt with in this section and the next.

Inspiring and informing all genuine authority and obedience among Christians are three things: the model of Jesus’ perfect obedience to the Father’s saving will, Christian obedience of faith, and the mutual love and service Jesus asks of every disciple.<sup>189</sup>

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188. When an unjust directive can be carried out sinlessly, subordinates may be morally obliged to comply—for instance, so as to remain free to serve others as they deserve and/or to avoid providing a model that would lead others to disobey just directives.

189. See Lozano, *op. cit.*, 252–57.

All instances of close collaboration involve Jesus' authority and obedience to him, but things individuals do without any supervisor's direction or anyone else's cooperation involve no other authority-obedience relationship than that one. Because such acts are morally unproblematic, they will not be considered in this and the following two sections. Neither will instances of close collaboration, without any supervisor's direction, by close collaborators who cooperate by a consensus about what to do or whom to follow—for example, an individual or group pitching in to help another carry out its already-formed plan of action. Still, good supervisors do not overlook the existence and value of these forms of close collaboration, but welcome and commend them.

Authority and obedience in close collaboration raise the moral problems to be considered here only when supervisors are directing a group's cooperation. Since the problems tend to be more acute with larger groups, it will be helpful to begin by considering authority and obedience in any large group of people who cooperate for a common good.

Such groups seldom make decisions by consensus. The long discussions it requires are too time-consuming, and the requirement of unanimity is too severe a limit on cooperation. Sometimes, as in the New England town meeting, the entire group deliberates and the majority rules, but that procedure, too, is often unsatisfactory because it usually is very time consuming and tends to divide the group into opposing factions. Moreover, many members are likely to prepare inadequately and to participate actively only to protect their self-interest, so that the group as such seldom focuses steadily on the common good. Consequently, large groups often turn to an individual or small subgroup to exercise authority, often with checks and balances that may include requiring more or less widespread participation in the deliberation leading to decisions.

The unique good in which close collaborators are interested and their peculiar commitment to it give them additional reasons to accept the exercise of authority by individuals and/or small subgroups. Seeing cooperation in making God's gifts available to others as overwhelmingly worthwhile and most urgent, good close collaborators regard the exercise of authority as one task among others reasonably left to those specially gifted and/or trained for it. Besides, they themselves generally prefer to spend their own time giving direct service rather than deciding what others should do. Moreover, committed to promoting the kingdom's fellowship and wishing to be a sign of it, they value communion and dislike decision-making that generates factions. Finally, many sincerely regard themselves as ill-equipped to supervise others and decline that responsibility if offered it.

The most important reason why good close collaborators accept their supervisors' exercise of authority is that in obeying them they obey God.

Every moral truth is grounded in the law written on the human heart by God (see Rom 2.15), and, as has been explained, every genuine authority-obedience relationship is grounded in morality. So, all true authority is from God, and all true obedience is ultimately to him. Moreover, whenever Christians discern that it belongs to their vocation to comply with the

decisions of any authority, their obedience is primarily to God, and they obey him alone when they rightly submit to unjustly used power.<sup>190</sup>

But there is an additional and more profound way in which close collaborators obey Jesus rather than their supervisors. When using authority as they should, the Church's pastors discern and communicate not their own will but Jesus' will, for they act in the person of Christ (see 2-E-4, above); while in their own person, they practice obedience and serve those they supervise. Thus the latter obey not them but Jesus. Diocesan clerics are directly supervised by the Church's pastors. Religious superiors as such do not act in the person of Christ, but their authority depends on the proper law of their institute, which in turn depends on recognition and approval by the Church's pastors acting *in persona Christi*.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, all good close collaborators obey Jesus precisely insofar as the Church's pastors either rightfully and directly supervise them or empower those who do.

In giving themselves entirely to Jesus and his Church, a diocesan cleric promises to obey his bishop, and a member of a religious institute vows to obey its particular law and the decisions of superiors who exercise authority in accord with that law.<sup>192</sup> Good close collaborators' obedience to supervisors therefore carries out their commitment to Jesus and, being entirely voluntary, in no way limits their freedom. At the same time, in giving themselves entirely to Jesus and his Church, good supervisors subordinate every other interest they have to the common good that embraces the true best interest of everyone who should obey them.<sup>193</sup> Good supervisors will love and respect those in their charge, and good subordinates will trust their good supervisors and be open with them.

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190. Out of obedience to the Father, Jesus accepts Pilate's abuse of God-given authority: "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (Jn 19.11), and Paul teaches slaves to obey their masters "as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will to the Lord and not to men" (Eph 6.6–7; cf. Col 3.22).

191. *CIC*, c. 618: "Superiors are to exercise their power, *received from God through the ministry of the Church*, in a spirit of service" (italics added).

192. With respect to the obedience of religious, Vatican II teaches: "By professing obedience, religious offer God in self-sacrifice the full dedication of their own will and thereby unite themselves more stably and tightly to the saving divine will. Thus they follow the example of Jesus Christ, who came to do the Father's will (see Jn 4.34, 5.30; Heb 10.7; Ps 39.9) and 'taking the form of a slave' (Phil 2.7) learned obedience from what he suffered (see Heb 5.8). Moved by the Holy Spirit, religious subject themselves in faith to their superiors, acting in God's place, and by them are led in the service of all their brothers and sisters in Christ just as Christ himself, on account of his submission to the Father, served his brothers and sisters, and laid down his life as a ransom for the many (see Mt 20.28, Jn 10.14–18)" (PC 14); cf. *CIC*, c. 601. With respect to presbyters' obedience, see PO 15; *CIC*, c. 273; John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 28, *AAS* 84 (1992) 701–3, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VII.

193. John the Baptist fully realized that his role was subordinate to that of Jesus, and rejoiced in that limited role. When his disciples were distressed by Jesus' growing popularity, John responded with an answer that all good close collaborators, including supervisors, can share: "No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3.27–30).

Consequently, the exercise of authority and the practice of obedience should be joyful and free of stress.

In fact, however, moral shortcomings and blameless ignorance and mistakes on both sides often generate tensions and sometimes lead to open conflict. Some of those seeds of trouble will be addressed in the next two sections. But four widespread and serious confusions deserve treatment here.

(1) In a letter on the duty to obey that influenced much later thinking, St. Ignatius Loyola gathered up earlier thinking on the subject and called for unquestioning obedience. He urged Jesuits “to presuppose and believe (very much as we are accustomed to do in matters of faith) that what the Superior enjoins is the command of God our Lord, and His holy Will; and to proceed blindly, without enquiry of any kind, to the carrying out of the command, with the prompt impulse of the will desirous of obeying.”<sup>194</sup>

Much else in Ignatius’ letter on obedience is sound and important, but that passage, it seems to me, exaggerates the receptive attitude close collaborators should have toward their supervisors’ decisions.<sup>195</sup> Indeed, a few lines later, Ignatius himself introduces a condition: “without further enquiry, supposing that the command is holy and in conformity with God’s Will.”<sup>196</sup> To determine whether that condition is met, however, good subordinates who receive a command must ask themselves: “Is this in conformity with God’s will?” This means not presupposing that whatever is commanded is commanded by God and proceeding blindly, as they must with truths of faith.

Ignatius may have assumed that any command except a command to do something sinful would be in accord with God’s will, and that he and other Jesuit superiors would not command anything sinful. But sometimes a supervisor does tell a subordinate to do something obviously sinful (for example, lie in order to cover up wrongdoing) or less obviously wrong, yet still sinful (violate a relevant and applicable norm of canon law, withhold information about wrongdoing that ought to be reported to public authorities) or else a supervisor, not having tried to discern Jesus’ will or not having taken due care in discerning, commands a course of action that, though not wrong in itself, has been excluded by some higher authority. In cases of all three kinds, the command is not in conformity with God’s will. The supervisor does not really exercise authority; no subordinate can obey (using *obey* in the strict sense); and a good close collaborator who realizes the command’s wrongness will not comply with it.

(2) If one regularly conforms one’s will to God’s, one grows steadily in holiness (see 2–A–2, above). Since all true obedience is ultimately to God, practicing it conforms one’s will to God’s. Thus, true obedience is

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194. “Letter on Obedience,” in Manuel María Espinosa Pólit, S.J., *Perfect Obedience: Commentary on the “Letter on Obedience” of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1947), 28.

195. In “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” Alfred, Lord Tennyson, described an instance of truly unquestioning obedience: “‘Forward, the Light Brigade!’/ Was there a man dismay’d?/ Not tho’ the soldier knew/ Some one had blunder’d:/ Theirs not to make reply,/ Theirs not to reason why,/ Theirs but to do and die:/ Into the valley of Death/ Rode the six hundred.”

196. Loc. cit.

conducive to holiness. And since any practice conducive to holiness is a sound ascetical practice, good close collaborators' true obedience not only fulfills their commitment to serve and builds up communion among them and with those Jesus wishes to serve through them but is an ascetical practice that contributes to their personal sanctification.

Glimpsing this truth, many, from the Desert Fathers on, prescribed pointless or impossible tasks as part of spiritual formation—things like regularly watering a dry stick or trying to move a rock much too heavy to move.<sup>197</sup> The thought was that accepting and trying to carry out such commands would nurture humility. But commands to do pointless or impossible tasks cannot pertain to any reasonable plan of cooperating for a common good, and, lacking motivation by a common good and mutual love, those who accepted such commands were not truly obedient but were simply seeking to mortify self-will.<sup>198</sup> No doubt that effort was meritorious insofar as it was motivated by genuine love of God, but it did not of itself help them give themselves entirely to Jesus for close collaboration in his salvific service. On the contrary, it obscured the reasonableness of making that commitment, and eventually lent support to the mistaken suspicion that genuine obedience limits close collaborators' freedom rather than fulfills it. Moreover, prescribing and accepting pointless or impossible tasks as part of formation tended to exaggerate the submissiveness required by obedience, to the detriment of the individual initiative and creativity that genuine obedience also involves.

(3) In good supervisors, the awareness that good subordinates accept their decisions as God's will and obey Jesus in carrying them out nurtures humility and motivates their conscientious efforts to identify morally acceptable options and discern which to adopt. Sometimes, however, supervisors neglect those efforts or do not deliberate properly, perhaps confusedly expecting divine inspiration and mistaking their hunches for it. Sometimes, too, supervisors seem to assume that since they alone will make the decision, they can deliberate adequately with little or no help from anyone else. However, the gifts and limitations, experience and insights of those who will be called on to carry out decisions usually must be taken into account to identify all the options, find the reasons for and against each, and discern which Jesus prefers. Having failed to deliberate adequately, supervisors often make decisions they think are to be obeyed as the Lord's but in fact are not. Some of these decisions cannot possibly shape cooperation reasonably, and so fall short of being real exercises of authority.

In a document on the renewal of religious institutes mandated by Vatican II, Paul VI taught that in exercising authority superiors should imitate Jesus, who gave his life for us. He then goes on to explain that, while superiors necessarily make decisions, discernment requires dialogue:

Consequently, authority and obedience are exercised in the service of the common good as two complementary aspects of the same participation in

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197. See *ibid.*, where Ignatius also recounts stories of miracles by which God was thought to have confirmed blind obedience.

198. Lozano, *op. cit.*, 229–32, describes the origin in the Desert Fathers of such renunciation and criticizes it; he points out (232) that St. Benedict “eliminated every hint of obedience for the sake of obedience.”

Christ's offering. For those in authority, it is a matter of serving in their brothers the design of the Father's love; while, in accepting their directives, the religious follow our Master's example (see Lk 2.51) and cooperate in the work of salvation. Thus, far from being in opposition to one another, authority and individual liberty go together in the fulfillment of God's will, which is sought fraternally through a trustful dialogue between the superior and his brother, in the case of a personal situation, or through a general agreement regarding what concerns the whole community. . . . It is the duty of everyone, but especially of superiors and those who exercise responsibility among their brothers or sisters, to awaken in the community the certainties of faith which must be their guide. This pursuit has the aim of giving depth to these certainties and translating them into practice in everyday living in accordance with the needs of the moment; its aim is not in any way to cast doubt on them. This labor of seeking together must end, when it is the moment, with the decision of the superiors whose presence and acceptance are indispensable in every community.<sup>199</sup>

Since Pope Paul's premises are equally true of clerical service and life, his explanation also applies to the authority exercised by the Church's pastors and the obedience of their subordinates. For instance, in order to exercise true authority in its decisions bearing on the service and life of various groups of close collaborators, the Holy See must seek God's will fraternally through trustful dialogue with those concerned.

Of course, the *Code of Canon Law*, the particular law of many religious institutes and perhaps of some dioceses, and customary practices require that in some specified circumstances supervisors consult at least some of those affected before making decisions. *The Rule of St. Benedict* requires the abbot to listen to the whole community before deciding important matters and to consult senior community members on lesser matters (see 2-C-2, above), and many other institutes' law or customary practices include more or less similar requirements. But the existing requirements fail to mandate the consultation with subordinates that most supervisors actually need when deliberating about almost all of the decisions the subordinates will be expected to carry out. Moreover, even the existing requirements are sometimes treated as hurdles to be met legalistically by *pro forma* acts that contribute nothing to sound discernment.

(4) Since the 1960s, there has been a crisis in the practice of obedience and the exercise of authority due, among other things, to heightened consciousness among close collaborators of the three confusions just described. Unfortunately, the heightened consciousness, along with resentments and disregard of relevant truths of faith, have generated a new, and no less serious, set of confusions.

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199. Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 25, AAS 63 (1971) 510–11, Flannery, 1:692. This passage develops Vatican II's teaching: "Superiors, who are to render an account of the souls entrusted to them (see Heb 13.17), should be docile to God's will in fulfilling their role. They should exercise authority in the spirit of service for their brothers or sisters, and thus express the love by which God loves them. . . . And so superiors should gladly listen to their associates and promote their working together for the good of the institute and the Church, while maintaining their authority to determine and prescribe the things to be done" (PC 14); cf. *CIC*, c. 618.



Rejecting unquestioning obedience, some suppose decisions need not be obeyed by subordinates whose objections have not been answered to their satisfaction. Rejecting the exaggeration of the submissiveness required by genuine obedience, some subordinates consider obeying any seriously displeasing decision to be incompatible with human dignity. Rejecting decision making when those affected have not been involved in the deliberation that precedes it, some confuse gathering opinions about what to do with gathering information necessary for sound discernment of God's will: decisions, they suppose, deserve obedience only if they reflect the group's will.

Confused, unsure of their role, and/or intimidated, some supervisors omit or unduly delay making needed decisions that would be unwelcome, persuade themselves that the group's will can never differ from God's will, and/or tolerate disobedience that gravely violates the rights of people whom close collaborators should serve. Rather than exercise their authority, they more or less abdicate it in favor of serving as *de facto* chairperson and/or secretary of the group.<sup>200</sup>

#### **4) Good supervisors reflect, obey, inquire, instruct, listen, discern, and follow up.**

The ways of acting ascribed to good close collaborators in this and the next section are shaped by considering authority and obedience together rather than separately, as has generally been done, and by applying the general theory of authority and obedience already set out. That theory is rooted in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, but few close collaborators have used his insights to shape their cooperation. Yet many who have recently reflected on the traditional ways of exercising authority and practicing obedience among close collaborators have found these ways to be problematic, and few good close collaborators are sanguine about developments in this regard since Vatican II. Plainly, the old ways cannot be restored; something different is needed. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that even saintly close collaborators of recent times have seldom if ever proceeded, especially in exercising authority, as I am about to say good close collaborators do.

This section deals with supervisors' exercise of governing authority. Corresponding to it is obedience, not only by the supervisors' clerical and/or

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200. Congregation For Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Fraternal Life in Community*, 47, *EV*, 14:467, p. 259; (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1974), 15, noted some good fruits of developments between Vatican II and 1994 in the understanding and practice of authority and obedience in religious institutes but also summarized—48, *EV*, 14:468, p. 259; *loc. cit.*—some of their bad results: “The desire for deeper communion among the members and an understandable reaction against structures felt as being too rigid and authoritarian have contributed to a lack of understanding of the full scope of the role of authority; indeed, some consider it to be altogether unnecessary to community life, and others have reduced it to the simple role of coordinating the initiatives of the members. As a result, a certain number of communities have been led to live with no one in charge while other communities make all decisions collegially. All of this brings with it the danger, not merely hypothetical, of a complete breakdown of community life; it tends to give priority to individual paths, and simultaneously to blur the function of authority—a function which is both necessary for the growth of fraternal life in community and for the spiritual journey of the consecrated person.”

religious subordinates but by the lay people whose pastors they are or who choose to participate in the work of the close collaborators they direct. (Since lay people's obedience does not pertain to this volume and the responsibilities toward them of various groups of supervisors differ greatly, specific features of supervisors' relationships with lay people will not be treated here.)

Good supervisors exercise governing authority to foster and direct cooperation, and they do that in order to build up community—proximately, the community of the close collaborators they supervise but, ultimately, the community of the Church as a whole and as God's incipient kingdom here on earth. Thus, canon law supplies a framework for religious superiors' exercise of their power (see *CIC*, c. 618) by summarizing their wider responsibilities:

Superiors are to devote themselves diligently to their office and together with the members entrusted to them are to strive to build a community of brothers or sisters in Christ, in which God is sought and loved before all things. Therefore, they are to nourish the members regularly with the food of the word of God and are to draw them to the celebration of the sacred liturgy. They are to be an example to them in cultivating virtues and in the observance of the laws and traditions of their own institute; they are to meet the personal needs of the members appropriately, solicitously to care for and visit the sick, to correct the restless, to console the faint of heart, and to be patient toward all. (*CIC*, c. 619)

Bishops and other pastors, too, have governing authority within the framework of their wider responsibilities for teaching, sanctifying, and caring for the communities entrusted to them.

The Church, each religious institute, and their regional and local parts are communions of persons who often are morally obliged to cooperate. In this respect they are like families whose members must cooperate. Still, good couples focus more on the divine gifts of marriage and parenthood, their spousal and familial relationships, and the relationships among the children than on the specific results of their cooperation, important as those are. Therefore, good family leadership cannot be reduced to management that sees to it that necessary tasks are done. Similarly, good supervision cannot be reduced to ecclesiastical or institutional management.<sup>201</sup>

Looking for a job, Juanita Smith, a middle-aged, devout widow, hopes to help others while meeting her own needs. Fluent in both Spanish and English, she is hired by the local office of the federal agency concerned with citizenship and immigration. Most of her work is answering questions by Hispanics notified of mistakes they made trying to bring family members to the United States. Juanita enjoys her work, and her pay and benefits are adequate, but she is increasingly appalled at the hardships many families suffer due to errors committed by various services, profit and free alike, that assisted the people she deals with. She starts spending weekends helping

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201. Of course, honest and competent management is important, and good supervisors are conscientious and prudent stewards of the instrumental goods for which they and their subordinates are responsible. But good management does not require the constant attention to ulterior ends and human relationships essential for any pastor or religious superior to help those he or she supervises collaborate well with Jesus and one another.

similar people at a free service in her neighborhood, and soon there are many who look to her for help. Quitting her job, she provides the same assistance for a modest fee; her reputation spreads, and again she has a waiting list. She hires and trains a friend, then other employees, including a lawyer, as she expands her business to help Hispanics with all sorts of citizenship and immigration problems. Becoming ill with a terminal condition, she persuades Oliver Garcia, also a former government employee, to join her and trains him to manage the business. When Juanita can no longer work, the business, with hardly a lost beat, goes on providing excellent service for modest fees.

In starting this business, Juanita had to reflect on her own gifts and people's needs and think creatively about how to meet those needs, how much to charge, the qualifications of employees and job applicants, how to train and motivate them, and so on. Oliver needed to accept Juanita's insights, learn how she managed things, and in general continue doing the same. Eventually, he had to adapt to policy and procedural changes by the government, deal with new employee problems, relocate the business when few potential clients remained in the original neighborhood, and so on. Since none of that affected anything central in Juanita's creative work, however, Oliver never needed to reflect as Juanita had done at the start.

When close collaborators become supervisors or supervisors take positions of greater responsibility, they understandably seek help to learn things similar to what Juanita taught Oliver. Deplorably, however, some seldom reflect on their own gifts and those of the people they supervise, the needs of those to be served, how best to meet the needs, and so forth. Still less do they reflect deeply or often on Jesus' action, the most important principle of close collaborators' activities, or on the network of relationships it builds up. Supervising is thus reduced to managing a nonprofit organization—following standard operating procedures, filling vacancies, running programs, and so on—with occasional adaptations to change.<sup>202</sup>

Like Juanita's business, many nonprofit organizations are focused on meeting specific human needs. The activities of staff need to be managed,

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202. In an unpublished paper I wrote in May 2002, "Submission to the Ad Hoc Committee on Sexual Abuse of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops," I commented on what seems to me to have been the disastrous failure of some bishops to take into account the Church's mission—to carry on Jesus' work of saving souls—before making decisions: "Genuine pastoral care is focused on the Church as a communion and on her members and potential members as persons to be saved; their spiritual goods, spiritual injuries, and spiritual remedies are the good bishop's main concerns. But the focus of pastoral charity often is replaced by the managerial optic of overseeing ecclesial ways and means—for example, providing personnel to fill positions, preventing bad publicity, avoiding paying damages, and so on. The managerial optic led many bishops who confronted clerical sexual offenses to see them as a 'problem' to be managed. Victims did not appear as members of Christ who had suffered spiritual injuries that called for care, but part of the problem to be dealt with. So, the bishops sought the advice of secular experts and followed it, expecting thereby to solve the 'problem.' Health care professionals, at least some of whom were hardly suitable, provided treatment for offenders and supported returning them to service. Lawyers advised against the candor and contacts with spiritually injured people necessary to offer them spiritual remedies. Public relations people advised dishonest remedies: carefully worded but evasive apologies, which provoked merited scorn; concealment of information from people who should have been informed; and so on."

but the principles of those activities and the relationships they generate are subordinate to the results to be achieved. Managers therefore can generally take for granted most of those presupposed realities and relationships.

Unlike the relationships generated by Juanita's business and many nonprofit organizations, however, the relationships generated and nurtured by close collaboration are far more important than any definite goal to be achieved by managing the collaboration well. For it is in and through those relationships, centered in Jesus, and the activities that foster them that close collaborators help Jesus distribute the gifts God offers in him to humankind. In the Church, in each religious institute, and in their regional and local parts, standard operating procedures and existing programs must constantly be reconsidered and altered when necessary to harmonize with the realities presupposed by close collaborators' activities and build up the relationships in which the close collaborators are involved. Therefore, good supervisors constantly and deeply reflect upon those realities and relationships. They also continue to participate in those relationships and nurture them by keeping in touch with their subordinates rather than withdrawing and even becoming inaccessible.

Good supervisors also reflect on everything else they must accept as a given framework for their own work and their subordinates' cooperative action. The framework consists in God's gifts, the good to be pursued cooperatively, and the truths about that good embodied in the norms to which any authentic exercise of their supervisory authority must conform—both moral norms and the applicable norms of canon law and particular law—as well as in relevant, authoritative decisions of higher authorities. Good supervisors regularly and carefully explain that framework to their subordinates so that they will appreciate it and cooperate wholeheartedly, not so much constrained to serve by commitment and duty as motivated by gratitude to God, love for each person to be served, and hope to help everyone share abundantly in the good that their obedient cooperation will foster insofar as it is close collaboration with Jesus.

As was pointed out at the beginning of section 3, above, most supervisors sometimes make choices about merely instrumental goods. In such cases, a previous decision has already taken into account all the ways in which the good to be pursued cooperatively will be affected, and the only question remaining is how to carry out the decision; the available options differ only in technical and/or esthetic features, and the appropriate one can be selected without considering anything else. Here, good supervisors do act as good managers, if possible leaving such matters to some competent person appointed to handle them and simply seeing to it that he or she does the job adequately. Someone making choices of this sort cannot discern in the strict sense and does not shape cooperation.

A supervisor can engage in discernment only when there are, within the given framework of cooperation, two or more possibilities for cooperative action differing in how they will affect the good to be pursued cooperatively. While no one can anticipate all the matters allowing for discernment, some are familiar, for example, personnel assignments, the revision of formation programs, and extending or cutting back service, as when a bishop opens a new parish or a provincial closes a school. Whenever

there are alternatives for the common efforts of close collaborators and it is possible to discern between or among them, good supervisors see discernment as necessary. Because the cooperation they supervise is with Jesus, they do not see choices shaping it as theirs to make. He is in charge. Their role is to discern his wishes and carry them out.

In preparing to discern, they do everything any wise and competent leader does when deliberating. They do not expect the Holy Spirit to do that work for them, but they do count on him to enlighten and empower them.

Good supervisors put into practice what they teach about the framework of cooperation by always exercising their authority within it. They exemplify the wholehearted cooperation they strive to inspire in their subordinates. In calling for others' obedience, they make themselves models of obedience and never require obedience of others unless morally certain that requiring it is an authentic exercise of their authority. They are especially careful to obey moral and legal norms that safeguard elements of God's revelation in Jesus or protect rights of those for whom they are particularly responsible: their subordinates and those whom they are committed to serving.<sup>203</sup>

Some supervisors rather freely make exceptions not only to canon law, particular law, and the decisions of higher authorities but also to moral norms that admit of exceptions—for example, the norm that promises are to be kept (see *LCL*, 412–14). It is important to make sure that any exception to a moral norm is in accord with all the goods at stake, and exceptions to laws and higher authorities' decisions are in harmony with the purposes implicit in the laws or decisions. For instance, good bishops almost always are careful about making promises and almost always keep them; good superiors almost always adhere to canon law.

But note the qualification “almost always.” Suppose a recently installed bishop, having been assured that the diocese's income is adequate, promises his pastors that he will not increase the two-percent tax on parish income, but later discovers substantial liabilities incurred but concealed by his predecessor. After getting competent advice, listening to those concerned, and finding no fairer solution, he rightly breaks his promise and increases the tax to three percent. Again: a good provincial superior of a congregation of teaching sisters must deal with a court order awarding damages to a tenured college professor discharged for encouraging pregnant students to obtain abortions. The province will lose the provincial house unless she

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203. In relation to the sexual abuse problem, for example, good supervisors who dealt appropriately with sexual seduction and/or the abuse of minors by their subordinates were exemplars of obedience, who met their responsibility to protect the moral and legal rights of the minors as well as the accused diocesan clerics or religious. Wishing to promote the spiritual healing and, where necessary, reconciliation of *every* young person or child who was seduced and/or abused, they publicized (rather than covered up) known wrongdoing in an effort to find *everyone* who needed such help. But they also presumed accused subordinates to be innocent and were careful to conform to all applicable laws in taking action against those who confessed or were proved guilty—namely, the steps necessary to ensure that they never again engaged in any service—while doing whatever was reasonably possible to promote their reconciliation and spiritual welfare. Their handling of the first cases of sexual seduction and/or abuse which they encountered increased their credibility, probably deterred many subordinates who experienced such temptations from engaging in similar wrongdoing, and almost entirely forestalled lawsuits against their dioceses and institutes.

mortgages it, and she is not certain the province will be able to pay the interest on the mortgage from ordinary income. Canon law forbids her to contract the debt: “Religious superiors are to take care that they do not permit debts to be contracted unless it is certain that the interest on the debt can be paid off from ordinary income” (*CIC*, c. 639, §5). But she reasons soundly that the point of the canon is to protect the institute’s assets and adhering to the letter of the law in this case would not serve that purpose. So, she mortgages the property, judging it better to risk its loss later than accept it now and planning a special fund-raising effort that may save it.

Moral norms and laws empowering supervisors also limit their authority. Since it extends only to decisions likely to shape cooperation reasonably toward the common good, supervisors abuse authority—and are thus disobedient—if they try to shape cooperation toward something not included in or conducive to the common good or likely to be more reasonably decided by others.<sup>204</sup> For instance, good supervisors always take relevance to the common good as their guide in determining whether to command something pertaining to a secular matter, the personal benefit of subordinates, or obligatory uniformity.

Nevertheless, supervisors do not abuse their authority in calling attention to a responsibility that lies beyond those limits and urging that it be fulfilled (see **1**, above). Nor is their authority limited by subordinates’ expectations as such, even if these are reasonable. Thus, in the years immediately after Vatican II, subordinates required to do things they had not undertaken to do, contrary to their reasonable expectations that certain “traditions” would never change, would have been wrong to accuse a supervisor who commanded those things in line with the Holy See’s direction of abusing his or her authority.

Deliberately omitting to perform the service to which one is assigned is disobedience, and supervisors are assigned to exercise authority.<sup>205</sup> Yet some of them systematically try to avoid doing that. Some only offer suggestions, thinking it better not to burden subordinates; some wish to let subordinates use their own judgment and develop at their own pace; some fear provoking rebellion and defections. But concerns like these do not

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204. Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 59 (pp. 69–70), sets forth “the principle of cooperation,” according to which all the faithful share in the Church’s mission in ways determined by each one’s gifts and personal vocation, and draws conclusions about the limits of the bishop’s authority: “In those things not essential to the common good, the baptized justly enjoy freedom of opinion and of action. In governing the diocese the Bishop should willingly recognize and respect this healthy pluralism of responsibility and this just freedom, whether of persons or associations. He should gladly communicate to others a sense of responsibility, both individual and collective, and he should encourage this in those who hold office in the Church, showing them his full confidence; in this way they will accept and fulfill with zeal the tasks that fall to them by virtue of canon law or their vocation.” The same document, 60 (p. 70), next sets forth “the principle of respecting the competence of others”: “In guiding his particular Church, the Bishop should follow the principle according to which he should not normally take to himself what others can accomplish well. On the contrary, he should show respect for the legitimate competence of others, granting appropriate faculties to his co-workers and encouraging healthy initiatives, individual or collective, among the faithful.” All good supervisors conform to similar norms.

205. “Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin” (Jas 4.17).

justify temporizing over difficult problems, failing to direct cooperation conducive to the common good, or neglecting to safeguard the interests and rights of other close collaborators and those to be served. Faced with rebellion and defections, good supervisors do not suppose that they can abdicate their authority to act in Jesus' name, but instead try to identify and address the sources of disaffection.

Good pastors count among those to be served not only Catholics but everyone within their assigned territory. Good religious superiors count among those to be served anyone at all who could be helped by a service conducted under their supervision.<sup>206</sup> All good supervisors regularly ask themselves and their subordinates: Are we doing all we can with the gifts each of us has and the resources we can gather to evangelize nonbelievers, help Christians separated from the Catholic Church grow toward the fullness of faith and holiness, recall lapsed Catholics, help practicing Catholics find and fulfill their personal vocations, welcome and better form those called to join us in collaborating closely with Jesus, and more perfectly fulfill our own commitments? They also ask themselves and their subordinates whether they are helping other parts of the Church as generously as Jesus wishes—for example, by freeing those gifted for missionary work to serve where most needed.

In considering these matters it is necessary to have in mind not only present but foreseeable needs for service and opportunities to provide it. To be sure, good supervisors are deeply concerned about what needs doing here and now, and they also trust providence, but they are determined to be fair to those whom their successors will serve, and this moves them to be careful to avoid unreasonably burdening or impeding the provision of service in the future.

Keeping such things constantly in mind will regularly bring options for deliberation into focus. Often, a possible new initiative must be considered. At the same time, some parishes or houses, schools or hospitals may need to be closed, some programs or projects terminated. No matter how much effort and how many resources were devoted to those things in the past, good supervisors are determined to evaluate them dispassionately by the contribution they are making now and are likely to make in the future, to the service Jesus wants to provide. Some structures and practices may need to be changed. Subordinates might be reassigned to use their gifts more fully, and resources might be put to better uses. Prudent but not fearfully cautious, good supervisors are open—and sometimes eager—to plan and implement radical, sweeping changes.

Still, they attempt to identify *all* the morally acceptable options, examine them carefully, and discern well among them. That requires accurate and complete information, which can be gathered only by listening to those who will be affected by decisions, especially subordinates who will have to carry them out. Thus, while taking care to maintain morally required secrecy, good supervisors almost always share their thinking about problems

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206. Good bishops and superiors are especially open to arguments for exceptional provision of service to those in urgent need, as Jesus, whose mission was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, was open to the argument of the Canaanite woman (see Mt 15.21–28, Mk 7.24–30).

and options, encourage input, and deliberate openly, in the knowledge that this is the best way to obtain help and forestall false expectations.

The message they communicate to subordinates and others who will be affected is therefore along the following lines:

We have a situation [a problem, an opportunity] which probably will require me to make a decision. I want it to be the right one for all of us. It's important to identify the morally acceptable possibilities, gather sound information about them, and consider the pros and cons. I can't do that without your help.

Please do not suppose I'm asking you to make the decision. You may well have strong feelings for or against a particular option. You may even think it's obviously the way to go—or not go. Please try to bear in mind that you can't know for sure. If we could know beforehand, there would be no decision to make.<sup>207</sup> Of course, your feelings and thoughts are important, and I will take them into account. But no matter how many people feel or think the same way, I won't be able to take that as deciding the matter. Nor will my own feelings and ideas be decisive.

I will do my best to take into account the interests of everyone concerned—not only now but in the future. I will carefully consider the various possibilities and all their pros and cons, ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten me and make up for my defects, and discern what Jesus wants us to do. When I announce the decision, please be ready to accept and support it as his preference. I expect all of us to be ready to obey him and hope we will work well together in doing whatever he asks of us.

There are many ways of putting instructions along these lines, and good supervisors do not say exactly the same thing every time they seek help in deliberating. They instruct both groups and individuals so as to get their input before deciding about matters such as reassignments. Requests for help in deliberating usually include directions about how and when to respond.

Having invited help in deliberating, good supervisors listen and try to make it clear that they are. Every contribution to the process is acknowledged, and those who make a serious effort to help are thanked. Clarification of comments is sought as needed. Sometimes a supervisor arranges to moderate a discussion between parties who offer conflicting input or asks them to communicate with one another. When good supervisors receive more input than they can handle, they have it analyzed and summarized by capable people. Even mistakes and unsound arguments are taken seriously, because they often inadvertently spotlight areas where clarification or correction may be required and they may include the seed of something worthwhile and important.

Good supervisors sometimes obtain the advice of experts when investigating options, but they are careful to choose ones who will help them fulfill their commitments. Expert advice to the contrary is rejected. Imagine

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207. Realizing that there cannot be known reasons that would compel assent for or against any of the options among which a superior must discern, Ignatius, *op. cit.*, in Pólit, *op. cit.*, 24, rightly said: "For although [the intellect] has not the freedom of the will, and naturally gives its assent to what is presented to it as true, there are, however, many instances when the evidence of the known truth is not coercive, in which it can with the help of the will, favor this or that side. And when this happens every obedient man should conform his thought to the thought of his Superior."



that Sister Angela, a good supervisor who is the administrator of a Catholic hospital, needs legal advice on minimizing the bad consequences of resisting a court order to obey a law requiring hospitals to help patients end their lives. When the lawyers urge her to comply, she dismisses them and looks elsewhere for legal advice.

Sometimes law or custom requires that a certain group be consulted before a decision is made. Good supervisors do not regard a requirement like that as a mere formality but take it very seriously. They consult before discerning, provide those consulted with the information and advice already received, and encourage them to speak candidly.<sup>208</sup>

After gathering the necessary information and advice, good supervisors seek to set aside their personal attachments and focus on the needs of those to be served. But they keep clearly in mind what serving well entails. A good bishop never forgets that his presbyters and deacons need time to study the readings prayerfully and look into theological problems if they are to prepare homilies communicating what the Lord wants to communicate. A good provincial superior of teaching sisters never forgets that the sisters need good professional formation and regular opportunities for further study. All good supervisors assume that Jesus prefers that urgent and grave needs be met by fruitful service even if that means not meeting some less urgent and less serious needs at all.

After calmly considering everything and praying, good supervisors discern Jesus' preference, accept it, and communicate it.<sup>209</sup> They take steps to prevent confusion by setting out exactly what needs doing and making it clear that the decision calls for obedience.

Sometimes the reasons in favor of a decision emerge fully in the course of deliberation and are well known to those who must carry it out. If not, however, good supervisors generally explain the reasons, to encourage compliance and make clearer what the hoped for benefits are. But if some reasons cannot be shared without violating confidentiality or losing important advantages of secrecy, it is enough to say that one is not free to go into the reasons and ask that the decision be accepted with trust. Moreover, in explaining the reasons for a decision, it is important to make it clear that the reasons in themselves were not decisive; the decisive factor was the discernment of Jesus' preference—that those reasons be acted on rather than others favoring morally acceptable alternatives.

Sometimes supervisors issue commands without expecting obedience or meaning to require it. Dissimulation like that not only is wrong in itself but nurtures disobedience and hypocrisy. Because good supervisors command only what they discern as Jesus' preference, faithfulness to him requires that they expect obedience and be prepared to insist on it.

They also pay attention to whether and how well commands are being carried out. Those who do well are publicly commended, thanked, and defended against unjust criticism and interference. If someone seems to be disobedient, a good supervisor asks why and listens to the explanations and

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208. See *CIC*, c. 127; *CCEO*, c. 934. These canons also deal with cases in which the consent of a group is required; in such cases, authority is exercised by the group, which as such fully shares supervisory responsibilities.

209. On discernment, see **2-A-5**, above.

excuses. Those trying to comply but inculpably failing are praised for their good will and effort, and helped to do better if that is possible. Those who offer excuses for noncompliance are presumed to be in good faith; the excuses are evaluated and dealt with. Confusions about responsibilities and how to fulfill them are clarified. Disobedient subordinates are admonished and exhorted to obey. If they fail to respond satisfactorily, good supervisors do not tolerate persistent disobedience but proceed step by step with medicinal sanctions provided in applicable law.<sup>210</sup> While they do what is necessary to safeguard the common good and the rights of third parties, however, good supervisors are meek and forgiving when it comes to subordinates' personal offenses against themselves.

**5) Good close collaborators always obey and never act against conscience.**

All good close collaborators have given themselves entirely to Jesus and his Church for salvific service, well aware they would serve by cooperating not only with Jesus but with his other close collaborators under the direction of a network of supervisors. When ordained and/or professed, therefore, all, including the future supervisors among them, undertook to obey every legitimate command of those who supervise them in helping carry out the Church's mission. Knowing that supervisors act in the place of God whenever they truly exercise authority, all good close collaborators imitate Jesus' perfect obedience and participate in it by obeying not only welcome but repugnant commands. For, preferring his Father's will to his own, he did the same when he accepted his passion and death.

Instead of obeying a command as they should, people jealous of their freedom to do as they please often comply only to the extent they think necessary or prudent for avoiding trouble. Unlike such people, good close collaborators obey legitimate commands out of love—for Jesus, those to be served, their associates in serving, and themselves. In obeying, they strive to realize the benefits of the cooperative salvific action in which they take part rather than merely comply with the letter of their supervisors' commands. When various ways of obeying are likely to be more and less fruitful, they discern with loving hearts how Jesus wishes them to fulfill the command and thus often do more than could be required of them.

Whenever a supervisor seeks help in deliberating, good subordinates provide any readily available information they consider dependable and likely to be helpful, including information about likely difficulties in carrying out possible decisions. But they know they are not in a position to discern which option Jesus prefers and they prepare to accept the outcome of the supervisor's discernment. When a decision comes, they do not spend

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210. *CIC*, c. 1371: "The following are to be punished with a just penalty: . . . 2 a person who otherwise [than by wrongful doctrinal dissent] does not obey a legitimate precept or prohibition of the Apostolic See, an ordinary, or a superior and who persists in disobedience after a warning." Canon law provides various penalties, and particular law may provide additional ones. A good close collaborator chosen to supervise a group among whom habitual disobedience is common declines or resigns the office if he or she considers it impracticable to enforce obedience. In doing so, he or she explains why to the members of the group and to higher authorities, and urges the latter to address the conditions that have so profoundly corrupted the group that it can no longer be governed.

time measuring the reasons for the decision against reasons for alternative(s). To associates reluctant to obey the decision, they explain that only the person or group authorized to make a decision is in a position to discern which option Jesus prefers.

At the same time, nevertheless, good subordinates try to understand the reasons for decisions so as to pursue effectively the benefits that Jesus has in view and the supervisor is hoping for. If a command is unclear, they seek clarification without delay, perhaps first from a wise associate but if necessary from the decision maker. Until the matter is clarified, they proceed as they think the decision maker, *taking their uncertainty into account*, would wish—refraining from action or doing what they think the decision maker probably intended, as the case may be.

Sometimes a supervisor's command, like a positive law, can be inapplicable because of specific conditions, unmentioned and perhaps never even envisioned by the supervisor, in which it cannot reasonably have been meant to apply. Suppose the pastor of a parish or superior of a religious house makes a rule forbidding residents of the rectory or house from spending time alone there with anyone under eighteen. Late one cold evening a seriously ill child comes to the door, and the only person at home judges it right to admit the child and summon help. Here is a departure from the letter of the rule but not its spirit.<sup>211</sup>

Told to do something they would have done without being told, good close collaborators accept the command as supportive rather than resenting it as a reminder that they are subject to authority. When an unwelcome command bothers them, they do not suppress the feelings but acknowledge and discuss them with a spiritual director or friend who can help put them in perspective. They also tell God about them, thank him for the goods they must now give up, focus on the prospective benefits that obeying will have for others and themselves, and ask the Holy Spirit to give them peace and joy.

Good subordinates anticipate temptations to commit sins of thought in respect to obedience and prepare to resist them. Since they do not obey blindly but only after ascertaining that a command is in conformity with God's will, the possibility of not obeying cannot be entirely excluded from their thoughts. Disobeying may also be suggested by others or brought to mind by negative feelings aroused by an unwelcome command. They may think, "Nobody would notice if I ignored this command," "This command could be plausibly interpreted as not applying to me," or "Disobedience is widespread and tolerated." But they reject such thoughts and concentrate instead on the harm disobedience would cause to the common good and the benefits of wholehearted, obedient cooperation to all concerned.

Ideally, supervisors would always deliberate appropriately and do their best to discern Jesus' preference before commanding anything. In that case, their commands almost always would be true exercises of authority. But pastors and superiors who misunderstand their supervisory role and focus on efficient management of the Church's or their institute's affairs and "human resources" are unlikely to see themselves as acting on Jesus' behalf and,

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211. Such a reasonable judgment to act against the letter of a command or positive law is called "epikeia": see *S.t.*, 2-2, q. 120; *CMP*, 281-83.

when deliberating, unlikely to prepare as they should to discern his preference. They are likely to use their authority badly, and that may result in a command to do something wrong. But good subordinates never act against conscience, and if it forbids complying with a supervisor's command, they do not comply.

Acting against conscience should not be understood too narrowly. Many judgments of conscience do not bear on an intrinsically evil act. For example, although promises sometimes should be broken, someone who believes he or she should keep a particular promise yet chooses to break it acts against conscience. Again, close collaborators who believe they should obey the Church's law act against conscience if they comply with the directives of supervisors contrary to that higher authority. People also act against conscience when they judge they should do something now—work at a certain task, end a pleasant break from work—yet choose to delay.

Neither, however, should acting against conscience be understood loosely. People who set out to make a case against any command they find repugnant are not acting on conscience but rationalizing insubordination. Moreover, a subordinate who thinks, "If I were supervising, I would not tell someone in my situation to do what I am being told to do," is not making a judgment of conscience. Conscience is not one's opinion about someone else's action but one's judgment about how one should or should not choose, or about one's own past action. Nor is it a judgment of conscience to think, "I cannot carry out my supervisor's command because that would prevent me from doing something else I ought to do." Conscience is one's last and best judgment about what one should do or not do (see *CMP*, 73–78), and one must consider the possibility that the supervisor's command overrides what otherwise would be a duty.

St. Peter and his companions were asserting the overriding authority of conscience when they told the high priest and council, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5.29). Because Jesus told the Twelve what God wanted and the Holy Spirit enlightened and strengthened them, they knew the truth with clarity and certitude, and were fully prepared to act on it, regardless of consequences. In this there was no self-assertion, nothing at all subjective. Thus, subordinates' consciences require them not to comply with a supervisor's command only if they have fulfilled their responsibility to seek the moral truth and concluded that complying with the command would require something morally wrong and therefore disobedient to God, or would at least more likely be wrong than morally acceptable.<sup>212</sup> Only

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212. Subordinates should presume that supervisors' commands are to be obeyed. Not every reason for doubting the moral acceptability of complying with a command is sufficient to ground a judgment of conscience against complying. Therefore, while striving to resolve doubts, good close collaborators obey. But the presumption in favor of obedience is rebuttable, as the Church's teaching recognizes; and a good subordinate sometimes becomes morally certain that complying with a command would be wrong—see, for example, Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 28, AAS 63 (1971) 513, Flannery, 1:694: "Apart from an order manifestly contrary to the laws of God or the constitutions of the institute, or one involving a serious and certain evil—in which case there is no obligation to obey—the superior's decisions concern a field in which the calculation of the greater good can vary according to the point of view." Unfortunately, in that formulation, Pope Paul, like many others teaching on obedience, overlooked the possibility that, after having considered everything, including

subordinates who reach that conclusion by doing all they should to form their consciences with due care can rightly say: I would offend God by sinning if I complied.

Forming conscience with due care may require consulting someone who is competent to clarify difficult moral questions and habitually obedient to his or her own supervisors' legitimate commands. But canvassing the opinions of less able and/or less well-disposed people cannot contribute to conscience formation and is likely to be an occasion of the sin of rationalizing disobedience.

If in order to avoid sinning good subordinates do not comply with a command, they generally do not conceal it from the supervisor. Rather, they respectfully and privately tell him or her.<sup>213</sup> They refrain from imputing a bad motive to the supervisor or otherwise focusing on how he or she went wrong, but instead focus on explaining their judgment.

Upon receiving such a communication, supervisors sometimes can show that the judgment of conscience is mistaken by refuting the reasoning that led to it or clarifying their command. Sometimes a supervisor will acknowledge having made a mistake and either withdraw the command or amend it. Good supervisors convinced that they are right but unable to convince a conscientious objector that he or she is wrong sometimes can accept the noncompliance without detriment to the common good and do that to resolve the problem.

When communicating with their supervisor does not resolve their problem, good subordinates convinced they would sin if they complied with a command appeal if possible to higher authority, hoping to promote cooperation in conformity with God's will—the goal of all obedience. They may wish to encourage the supervisor's obedience to higher authority, call the attention of higher authority to a problem, and/or provide a model for associates who might be tempted to respond inappropriately—for example, by rebelling openly or by abandoning their commitment to Jesus and his Church. They take care to be accurate and to proceed properly in making their appeal. Since the presumption in favor of obedience was rebutted when they met their responsibility to form their conscience with due care, they avoid sin by not complying as long as the appeal is pending.

If no appeal to higher authority is possible or if the appeal is unsuccessful, some subordinates might comply to avoid penalties or out of a false sense of loyalty to a supervisor they consider sincere. Regardless of motive, however, complying against conscience would be sinful. A good close collaborator who remains convinced that it would be a sin to comply with a command will never comply.

Sometimes paternalistic or maternalistic supervisors command someone to do something mistakenly thought to be for his or her benefit—

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the grounds for the presumption in favor of obedience, a subordinate who has failed to attain moral certitude may judge that it more likely would be wrong than morally acceptable to comply. When that occurs, a good close collaborator will not comply.

213. If supervisors command what everyone concerned knows to be violations of Church law—for example, practices at odds with liturgical norms—good subordinates who are convinced it would be pointless to communicate their judgment may rightly disregard the invalid commands; if called to account, they explain their judgment and propose submitting the matter to higher authority.

for example, adopt a particular diet and regimen—which in fact is neither beneficial nor harmful and neither conducive to the common good nor at odds with it. In such a case, the matter is beyond the limits of the supervisors' authority, and the command lacks legitimacy. Yet even if a subordinate more expert in the matter than his or her supervisor is morally certain of that, he or she may judge compliance more conducive to the common good because noncompliance would encourage others in their all-too-common disobedience to authentic exercises of authority.

Sometimes a supervisor commands subordinates to act in a way conducive to the common good yet the command lacks legitimacy because it preempts someone else's authority, is made without legally required consultation, or is defective in some other way. Had the supervisor not commanded but only suggested, good subordinates may have rightly followed the suggestion. But they may judge that it is likely to be conducive to the common good—that is, to the communion among all the close collaborators and supervisors involved—to call the defect respectfully and privately to the supervisor's attention, urge the withdrawing of the command, and take any other appropriate steps to rectify the situation.

Whether the judgment of conscience that a supervisor's decision should be obeyed comes easily or with great difficulty, good subordinates resist any temptation to murmur to associates and put down any murmuring in their own hearts. Knowing it would be not only useless but counterproductive to wish the decision had been otherwise and regarding the voice of their rightly formed conscience as the voice of God, they wholeheartedly accept God's plan for them: "Not my will, but thine, be done" (see Lk 22.42; cf. Mt 26.39, 42; Jn 18.11).

### **E: Special Problems of Cooperation among Close Collaborators**

#### **1) Groups properly exercising authority engage in authentic discernment.**

Authority in the Church and in religious institutes is sometimes assigned to groups. Authority is not exercised in only helping prepare for a decision—for example, by suggesting options and/or contributing information. But a group that joins in discerning Jesus' preference and embracing it shares in exercising authority even if it cannot act decisively apart from a certain supervisor, who must either be part of the group or must ratify what it has done.

Here are examples—not an exhaustive list—of groups that exercise authority. Supreme authority in Church governance may be exercised not only by the pope, acting as vicar of Christ and pastor of the whole Church, but collegially by the body of bishops acting, as ecumenical councils have done, with the pope and never without him.<sup>214</sup> Church law assigns authority in some matters to conferences of bishops, and the particular law of religious institutes assigns authority in some matters to a collegial body, such as a general chapter. In some instances, too, Church law and the particular law of religious institutes assign authority to a designated

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<sup>214</sup> See LG 22. Supreme authority in articulating truths of faith and morals, which also may be exercised collegially, is not relevant here.

supervisor together with one or more other persons, whose consent is required for him or her to act validly.

An adequate account of authentic discernment by various groups exercising authority would have to take into account the specific features of each one. As the examples indicate, however, groups differ greatly in composition and structure and are subject to different legal norms. That complexity makes providing a complete account of authentic group discernment beyond the scope of the present work. What follows is a general account of how a group of close collaborators properly exercising authority would go about discerning.

There are diverse reasons for giving authority to a group: the potential benefits of richer experience and cooperation in deliberation; a virtual impossibility of identifying a suitable individual to exercise authority; the advisability of requiring others' consent in order to forestall an individual's misuse of supervisory authority.<sup>215</sup>

Individuals do not exercise authority in undertaking their vocation, for only they are bound by their commitment to obey the call they discerned. Nor do groups exercise authority in accepting their vocation to become a community, for each member's discernment and free self-commitment is equally necessary for the community-forming action—for example, a man and a woman who obey God's call to marry do not exercise authority, because their mutual consent makes the marriage. But a group does exercise authority not only when it supervises others by commanding them but even when it discerns and decides how its members are called to cooperate—for example, by considering and adopting procedural norms. In that case, the group commands each member to do his or her part in carrying out its common decision.

A group's authentic exercise of authority over close collaborators constitutes supervision. Within their assigned limits, supervisory groups ought to proceed as good supervisors in general do, *by discerning* what Jesus wants done and how. It is probable, however, that few groups exercising authority in the Church or religious institutes have tried to do that.

Members of such groups come with different attitudes toward the roles they are to play. Some see participation as an opportunity to foster and protect partisan interests. Some who are interested in the common good nevertheless understand it inadequately and reduce their supervisory role to mere management, which precludes considering what Jesus wants done. Others are interested in the common good and understand it well; but some of them assume that decisions about promoting and protecting it are up to supervisors rather than Jesus and proceed much like upright politicians do. Still others realize that the decisions are Jesus' to make but assume that only individuals can discern; they therefore do their best to discern what Jesus wants them to try to get the group to decide. Members of supervisory groups who fall into any of these categories come more or less prepared for their

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215. There is an additional reason for ecumenical councils' collegial exercise of governing authority: the Church's supreme pastoral authority is closely related to her teaching authority, and common witness to the truth by many is more powerful than isolated witness by any of them alone.

work. Insofar as they are well prepared, they have a definite agenda that precludes group discernment. Insofar as they are not, they prefer proposals harmonious with their attitudes but may support compromises, even incoherent ones, to get the group's work done.

Generally, even the best close collaborators do not understand that group discernment is appropriate. Those who do and who have some idea of how to engage in the process usually are involved in groups in which most other members do not understand group discernment and/or are unwilling to engage in it. The following is only a sketch of how good close collaborators called to exercise authority *might* fulfill their responsibility to leave decisions to Jesus by engaging in group discernment. Although any authentic group discernment would involve many of these elements, others are included merely to show how a group *could* proceed.

There is, to begin with, an obvious need for constant prayer, especially at each stage in deliberation and discernment (see **3-D-4**, above).

Sometimes a supervisory group begins deliberating without making sure its members agree on the framework for their work. Time is wasted and relationships strained by discussions that cannot prepare for authentic discernment. For example, some group members may assume—and perhaps be morally certain—that a moral norm, an applicable legal norm, or the common good excludes an option other members regard as acceptable and eminently worth considering. If appropriate to his or her role, a good supervisor who convokes a group or prepares for its meeting strives to head off this situation by instructing the group members in advance. In the absence of advance instruction, however, good close collaborators participating in a supervisory group raise such potentially divisive issues at the start and try to persuade the group to deal with them before it begins deliberating about the possibilities between or among which it might discern.

If a supervisory group is irresolvably divided about the moral acceptability of some possibilities, no possibility judged unacceptable by anyone who will fully participate in discerning can be included among the possibilities to be considered. The group might then consider only those possibilities unanimously judged acceptable or it might agree that it is unable to exercise authority. Sometimes, participants convinced that the challenged possibilities are acceptable consider themselves competent to exercise the authority assigned to the group without full participation of those who challenge those possibilities. But unless those who cannot participate fully constitute only a small portion of the group, proceeding in the face of such disunity is likely to lead later to serious divisions among the group's subordinates. Good members of a supervisory group therefore do not proceed unless nearly all can agree that all the possibilities to be considered are morally acceptable.

Like all good supervisors, good supervisory groups look into possibilities and deliberate carefully about them before beginning to discern among them. While some members, pressed for time, may wish to proceed without considering all the readily available information, good members insist on adequate consideration, even when it is very time consuming, to resolve factual questions about the pros and cons of various options.



Having made up their minds in advance about what the group should decide, some may take up time making a case for their agenda and thereby provoke others to argue against it. If the debate divides a significant portion of the group into parties, authentic discernment becomes impossible. Knowing they will not be in a position to discern which option Jesus prefers until the group has met, inquired, and deliberated, good members refrain from forming an opinion about what the group should decide and remain ready to accept the result of the group's discernment. Instead of making a case for or against any possibility, they help gather and clarify information about all of them, and keep their minds open to the advantages and disadvantages of each one. To prevent partisan debate and foster good preparation for discernment, they encourage organizing the group's time for inquiry and deliberation into three distinct periods: first, describing the possibilities; second, stating the considerations against each; third, stating the considerations favoring each.<sup>216</sup>

After, and only after, completing this preparatory examination of relevant data does the good supervisory group begin to discern. It commences by recessing so that the members can reflect and discern tentatively. Each reflects on *all* the information now available about *all* the possibilities, and notes any significant experiences with respect to each. Then the group regathers, and the members share these new data with one another, each describing his or her experiences while the others try to listen with the same openmindedness with which they tried to hear what the Spirit was saying to them. Nobody offers the old data—the considerations against and for each possibility—as reasons for choosing; members mention those considerations only insofar as necessary to describe their experiences in response to them. During this sharing, everyone tries not to think about the outcome of the discernment, and so no one interrupts by drawing a premature conclusion. Members may question one another only to clarify descriptions that seemed unclear; after the sharing, they may add what they experienced while others were sharing.

When this first sharing has been completed, the group again recesses for prayerful, individual reflection. The sharing has made new data available, and everyone focuses on these new things and ponders *all* of them in his or her heart. The members continue seeking divine help, and each receives new insights and has fresh experiences concerning which possibility the group as such is to embrace.

At this stage, the members are tentatively discerning. Good ones can be moved toward an outcome different from the one toward which the experiences they described during the initial sharing pointed. Still, they do not doubt the latter's genuineness, for they realize that the Spirit often takes complicated paths, communicates differently with different individuals, and

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216. Most of the insights about group discernment in this and the next three paragraphs were drawn from or suggested by John Carroll Futrell, S.J., "Communal Discernment: Reflections on Experience," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 4:5 (Nov. 1972): 161–64, 173–81. Although Futrell's study is addressed only to Jesuits and includes some views with which I do not agree, I found his reflection on group discernment uniquely helpful. The study also includes many additional ideas worth considering by those organizing an attempt at group discernment.

may well give an individual different indications after the first sharing in order to bring the group to authentic, final discernment.

In working to that end, the group begins with a second, quick sharing. Sometimes a unanimous or virtually unanimous consensus emerges at once regarding Jesus' preference among the possibilities, or consensus is easily reached after discussion by amending the formulation of a possibility and/or some details. Sometimes a predominant view emerges, and good members who do not at first share it are able to join in forming a virtually unanimous consensus. They realize that they cannot know what is best; that their individual, tentative discernment could not be decisive; and that only the group *as a unified whole* is in a position to discern which option Jesus prefers. So, they trust their companions' discernment of the Spirit's indications, share their confidence and contentment with the outcome, and join in the unified group's exercise of authority.

An analogy may clarify the preceding account. A half-dozen married couples who are friends wish to decide on a plan for vacationing together. In the first discussion, three possibilities emerge (A, B, and C) that everyone is willing to consider. Everyone looks into all three, but knowing that no argument could prove any one possibility to be unqualifiedly better than the rest, no one settles on one of them as his or her preference and tries to make a case for it. Instead, when the friends gather again, they cooperate in accurately describing A, B, and C, listing every consideration against each, and listing all the considerations favoring each. Then they take a break and imagine themselves taking A, B, and C together. When they meet again, they take turns telling one another about the *feelings* they had (and perhaps the feelings they imagine other members of the group having) as they daydreamed about A, B, and C and imagined getting ready for each and paying the bills afterwards. They take another break, and this time reflect on everyone's feelings about A, B, and C. Realizing that nobody will have a good time unless everyone does, their feelings about A, B, and C shift, in some cases drastically. In their next session, seven of the friends report feeling that B would be best, and the other five are comfortable in making that the unanimous choice, though three of them initially favored A and two C.

Like members of a group engaging in authentic discernment, the friends realize that arguing the pros and cons of acceptable options is likely to divide the group into parties and can never make it clear which option is to be chosen. They take one another's feelings into account in order to identify the option that feels best to the group as a whole; while the members of a group engaging in discernment focus on feelings in order to identify the option that Jesus prefers. The friends can say they are comfortable with their unanimous choice; the members of a group engaging in authentic discernment can say: "It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . ." <sup>217</sup>

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217. Acts 15.28. Of course, that group exercised both magisterial and governing authority, with the two inextricably linked in its action. Much of the reported discussion (vv. 6–18) is irrelevant here, for it focused on the truth revealed about the calling of the Gentiles. What is relevant is the group's discernment in exercising governing authority, reported only

But suppose a supervisory group assigned governing authority finds itself deadlocked in a division that blocks virtually unanimous consensus. Since Jesus cannot be divided against himself, the group as a whole has failed to discern authentically. This is a possible outcome the authority in charge of the group should have foreseen and provided for.<sup>218</sup>

**2) Good supervisors and subordinates cooperate well in determining assignments.**

Good supervisors welcome their subordinates' help in making decisions regarding assignments. Good close collaborators usually know their gifts and limitations better than others do and sometimes are aware of needs they might meet. Because it may help supervisors in preparing to discern assignments, good close collaborators regularly and carefully make such information available without letting false modesty get in the way; but they also are candid about unpleasant truths that need to be taken into account. At the same time, realizing their lack of competence in the matter, they do not anticipate the outcome of their supervisors' discernment.

Having given themselves totally to Jesus and the Church, good close collaborators are always ready to serve wherever and however Jesus prefers. They have no agenda of their own, set no career goals. Except insofar as they have a duty to prepare for what they are to do later, they do not think about their own future and stand ready to undertake whatever Jesus asks of them. They therefore gladly accept any assignment legitimately given by their supervisors, discern and follow God's plan when invited to volunteer

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briefly: "Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them" and so on (v. 22).

218. It seems to me that this should not be authorizing the subgroup whose view is predominant, even if it be a two-thirds majority, to exercise the authority assigned the group. That would assume either that the majority (if of a certain proportion) rather than the minority have discerned authentically or that supervisory authority can be rightly exercised without authentic discernment. The latter assumption cannot be sound if close collaborators really obey Jesus rather than their supervisors (see **3-D-3**, above). As for the former assumption, while it may be correct in some cases, it is not always so, and it will tempt members of supervisory groups to pursue their own agenda rather than discern what Jesus wants. It therefore seems to me that the authority that organizes a supervisory group to exercise governing authority should provide that its authority with respect to an issue will end if it fails to reach virtually unanimous consensus on that issue, and should make clear where authority regarding the issue will then lie. Given the moral acceptability of all the possibilities among or between which the group that fails to discern would have exercised authority, I also think that casting lots would be preferable to rule by the predominant subgroup. For, although casting lots leaves the matter to chance so far as we are concerned, the outcome is included in God's providence. Discernment of the Holy Spirit's presence and action seems to have replaced casting lots (see Acts 6.3-6, 13.2-3). But before Pentecost, when the eleven staying in the upper room replaced Judas, they identified two acceptable candidates, prayed—"Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which one of these two thou hast chosen to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside, to go to his own place" (Acts 1.24-25)—and cast lots (v. 26). Of their casting of lots, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Acts*, 228, says: "Significantly, it is the means chosen by the early community to ascertain God's will in this matter, since not a democratic election but a divine choice is involved."

for onerous tasks, and gratefully accept unavoidable suffering as God's gift. Their wholehearted obedience leads to fruitful service and holiness.<sup>219</sup>

Janice, trained in music at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins, resigns an apprentice fellowship as a harpist with the Chicago Symphony to enter the Perpetual Help Sisters. Their midwestern province operates a college with a small but excellent music program, to which the superiors expect Janice will make a lifelong contribution. Two years after her final profession, however, financial problems compel the province to close the college. After exploring several possibilities with Sister Janice and other sisters concerned, her provincial decides that she can contribute well to the province's apostolate by teaching English in one of its high schools, although she will be able to use her musical gifts and training only to help with liturgies and a student chorus. To qualify for high school teaching, Sister Janice has to do two more years of undergraduate work—in English and education. Friends from her Chicago Symphony days urge her to pursue her career. They point out that other gifted, religious women are working independently of their institutes' projects and doing well in the fine arts and higher education. But Sister Janice resists the temptation to talk with her provincial about that possibility and concentrates on her studies—especially the education courses, which she dislikes. With prayer and self-discipline, she is well prepared when she begins high school teaching. Content with her vocation, she enjoys working with her students. Her teaching, example, and friendly counsel help many of them find their vocations and seek holiness in them. Her work with her sisters and the students improves the liturgies and the chorus. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sister Janice's first profession, she looks back on her life without regrets and with gratitude for her wonderful friendships with Jesus, most of her sisters, and very many students.

In seminary, Bernard does well in systematic theology, and his professors urge the bishop to send him to Rome for a licentiate. The bishop likes the idea, and Bernard, enthusiastic about the prospect and gifted for languages, studies Italian. But the pastor of the diocese's largest one-priest parish becomes chronically ill and needs help. Right after ordination, Father Bernard is assigned there "for a year or two." During the next six years, he throws himself into priestly ministry, falls profoundly in love with his flock, and virtually becomes pastor of the parish as the older priest's health worsens. When he dies, the bishop calls Bernard in and warmly commends him for his good work. Then the bishop recalls the idea of Bernard's going on with studies and tells him the tribunal badly needs another member, if possible fluent in Spanish. Explaining that he has no other priest who is likely to do the job well, he asks Bernard to go to Pamplona, Spain, to get a licentiate in canon law. Pamplona is not Rome, and canon law was not Bernard's favorite subject. Hesitating, he considers saying he will obey if

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219. John XXIII, *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, AAS 51 (1959) 556–57, PE 264:28, offers the Curé of Ars as a model of obedience: "All his life he longed to lead a quiet and retired life in the background, and he regarded pastoral duties as a very heavy burden laid on his shoulders and more than once he tried to free himself of it. . . . [But] out of complete obedience to his superiors, John M. Vianney carried out his tasks as pastor of Ars, and remained in that office till the end of his mortal life."

ordered but arguing that the flock he has been tending needs a pastor who can care for it singlehandedly, that no other priest is likely to serve it as well, and that the prospect of studying canon law and working in the tribunal hardly appeals to him. But realizing that the bishop is better able than he is to discern how to meet needs and is fully aware of the parish's need for a good pastor, Father Bernard focuses on the tribunal's need, obeys without arguing, and bids his flock a sad farewell. Devoting himself to his studies, he prepares for the tribunal, and upon undertaking that work he is also named assistant at a two-priest parish. But holding down two jobs prevents him from ever again developing the wonderful relationship with a flock he enjoyed in his first assignment. Even so, he sees how that experience helped prepare him for his tribunal work, which he also realizes is an important service. After becoming judicial vicar, Msgr. Bernard fosters better understanding of the tribunal's work among clergy and faithful, improves its efficiency so that it eventually has almost no backlog despite the steadily increasing number of cases its good service attracts, and strives to ensure that those upset by the outcome in their cases are cared for pastorally. Living austerely, working hard, and treating everyone kindly, he is widely regarded as a saint. Amused rather than flattered, he constantly thanks God for having given him a life so full of blessings and free of temptations.<sup>220</sup>

Many good subordinates never suggest assignments for themselves to their supervisors. But some do, because they see a possibility that the supervisor would not otherwise consider along with good reasons for considering it.

For instance, someone may notice an unaddressed need for service within his or her supervisor's jurisdiction and ask to be assigned to meet it. Managing nursing services at St. Mary's Hospital, Sister Alexis becomes acutely aware of the problem faced by chronically ill people without insurance who come to the emergency room for care. She thinks she could set up a service, apart from the hospital, to develop ways to address the situation, sketches out the project, and asks her provincial to consider the idea. Again, recovering from an automobile accident in which he was nearly killed, Father George experiences a new and profound conversion, reads many of John Paul II's documents for the first time, discovers that the universal call to holiness and personal vocation are virtually unknown to his diocesan brothers, and asks his bishop to consider delaying his return to the parish in order to draft a pastoral letter that will encourage more and better treatment of those important matters in homilies and catechetical programs.

A close collaborator's commitment primarily is to Jesus and his Church rather than a particular diocese or religious institute. Good subordinates also may become aware of needs for services they could provide outside the jurisdiction of their present supervisors. For example, Sister Janice hears that the diocesan seminary needs someone to conduct summer workshops

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220. Of course, real cases seldom seem to go so well. But many unwelcome assignments would turn out better than they do if supervisors properly exercised authority in making assignments and close collaborators properly obeyed in undertaking them. In some cases, of course, real goodness on both sides cannot forestall great suffering. Jesus' own mission—to gather up the lost sheep of the house of Israel—ended in apparent disaster.

for parish choirs and suggests to her provincial that she be allowed to apply. Vacationing in Mexico, Msgr. Bernard meets a needy bishop who has no tribunal but is preparing to establish one and needs help; he drafts a letter for the Mexican bishop to send to his own bishop, requesting that he be sent to help for a year.

In any organization, it is not uncommon for weak managers to allow demanding subordinates to have the positions they prefer while distributing the rest among the submissive; strong managers may regard positions to be filled as rewards or bribes to motivate subordinates, or as gifts for friends and punishments for enemies. Managers sometimes are forced to operate under policies requiring them to give people with seniority the positions they prefer, shift people about every so often, or find places for individuals who will not perform adequately in any job. Laws or an organization's policies sometimes require preferential treatment of members of certain groups, as a way of compensating for unfair treatment of the group in the past. Political considerations often affect the filling of important positions.

These are not acceptable models for supervisors in the Church. Their subordinates presumably have given themselves entirely to Jesus and his Church in order to help him carry on his salvific work in the world (see 2–D–2 and 2–E–6, above). In making assignments, therefore, good supervisors intend that their subordinates' service truly benefit those whom Jesus wishes to be served and make assignments with that end in view. They are never motivated by considerations that are likely to reduce the fruitfulness of their subordinates' service considered as a whole.<sup>221</sup>

In preparing to discern Jesus' preferences with respect to assignments, good supervisors focus on the benefits he intends to provide those to be served. As always, they proceed within the given framework of the cooperation they are supervising and obey relevant legal norms and decisions of higher authorities. In deliberating, they almost always communicate with those to be assigned and others, especially other close collaborators, who can provide information relevant to the suitability of particular individuals for particular positions.

In communicating with those up for assignment, good supervisors pay attention to their negative feelings. Some of these they prudently judge to be unalterable, but others are seen as understandable reluctance to make the sacrifice the assignment will require—for instance, giving up the people whom a good subordinate is serving well now and has come to love. Good supervisors sympathize with such feelings, while gently but firmly instructing and encouraging subordinates to continue laying down their lives for Jesus and his Church.

In still other cases, negative feelings are recognized as symptoms of defects and limitations that can and should be overcome. Even when

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221. Congregation for Bishops, *Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 61, p. 70: “*The Principle of the right Person for the right Post*. In conferring offices within the diocese, the Bishop ought to be guided solely by supernatural criteria and the pastoral good of his particular Church. Therefore he should look first of all to the good of souls, respecting the dignity of persons and making use of their talents in the most appropriate and beneficial way, in the service of the community, always assigning the right person to the right post.” With respect to religious superiors' conferral of offices, see *CIC*, c. 626.

subordinates are unlikely to be given an assignment about which they have negative feelings of this kind, good supervisors address these symptoms and attempt to foster ongoing formation. Encouraging rather than provoking, they challenge subordinates who are reluctant to accept an assignment in which, for example, their close associates would often be critical or irritable, or those to be served would often be unresponsive, or the living conditions would be less convenient than those they now enjoy.

But defects and limitations that would detract from an individual's service and that he or she is not likely to overcome weigh against particular assignments—and even against all positions of service in the case of subordinates unfit for all available positions due to their serious defects and limitations, whether blameworthy or not.<sup>222</sup>

In deliberating about assignments, good supervisors are impartial and unmoved by pressures or demands, whether from self-seeking subordinates, wealthy donors, or other supervisors. But they do make and keep in mind a preferential option for people with special needs: those who do not believe in divine revelation, those whose faith falls short of the full truth God has revealed in Jesus, and Catholics who have lapsed or are living in mortal sin.

Legal norms and higher authorities' decisions sometimes constrain them, for example, by requiring that subordinates be reassigned after a specified time. Good supervisors obey such requirements but they rarely if ever establish them, for many such constraints are unreasonable. For example, someone serving well in a position usually develops good relationships with those served and with associates, and such relationships contribute to the fruitfulness of their service.

Of course, not all supervisors are good, and sometimes bad supervisors give close collaborators assignments that will prevent them from contributing as well as they might. Someone who receives such an assignment may suspect or even know the supervisor's unreasonable motives for making it. In such cases, a good close collaborator presents the supervisor with the reasons for reconsidering.

When, however, supervisors reaffirm their decisions regarding assignments, there is seldom any avenue of appeal. Good close collaborators do not carry out an assignment if doing so is contrary to conscience (see **3-D-5**, above). But inappropriate assignments rarely require doing anything morally evil. Since the supervisor's wrongdoing, if any, pertains, as a permitted evil, to God's providential plan, inappropriate assignments that close collaborators can carry out in good conscience are part of their personal vocations. Realizing that halfhearted service would cause those to be served to lose doubly, a good close

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222. This norm for all *assignments* by any supervisor generalizes the idea in canon law's provision for bishops' *removal* of pastors: "When the ministry of any pastor becomes harmful or at least ineffective for any cause, even through no grave personal negligence, the diocesan bishop can remove him from the parish" (*CIC*, c. 1740). The unsuitability of a close collaborator for any position of service may be temporary or permanent, and may be due to a physical or mental illness, senility, addiction, adoption of an immoral lifestyle, persistent disobedience, loss of faith, and so on. For example, good supervisors never reassign subordinates who admit or are proved guilty of sexually seducing or abusing minors; see Germain Grisez, "Sin, Grace, and Zero Tolerance: An Exchange," with a reply by Avery Cardinal Dulles, S.J., *First Things*, 151 (Mar. 2005): 27–36.

collaborator who receives an inappropriate assignment accepts it as God's will, recommits himself or herself to serving Jesus and his Church as well as possible in the given situation, and carries out the assignment with the same energetic and creative faithfulness he or she would bring to an appropriate one.

Even close collaborators who do not hold a supervisory office exercise authority and thus function as ad hoc supervisors when they participate in decisions to elect supervisors or to nominate individuals for supervisory positions.<sup>223</sup> Participants in such decisions share most of the responsibilities of supervisors making assignments.<sup>224</sup> However, such decision making has a few special aspects that require attention.

Good participants in nominating and electing supervisors, and especially those in charge of such processes, take special care to observe relevant procedural norms. Noticing an apparent deviation that may affect or has affected the outcome, a good participant calls attention to it and, if the deviation is verified, challenges the validity of the process and calls for its rectification.

Generally the norms for such processes allow for or require communication among decision makers, and sometimes between decision makers and potential nominees or candidates. Such communication is dealt with in the norms for electing a pope issued by John Paul II. Having forbidden cardinal electors to cooperate with or submit to interference by civil authorities and other outsiders, he continues:

The Cardinal electors shall further abstain from any form of pact, agreement, promise or other commitment of any kind which could oblige them to give or deny their vote to a person or persons. . . . It is not my intention however to forbid, during the period in which the See is vacant, the exchange of views concerning the election.

I likewise forbid the Cardinals before the election to enter into any stipulations, committing themselves of common accord to a certain course of action should one of them be elevated to the Pontificate.

John Paul next excludes inappropriate motives for choosing a pope and mandates the right way to choose:

I earnestly exhort the Cardinal electors not to allow themselves to be guided, in choosing the pope, by friendship or aversion, or to be influenced by favor or personal relationships towards anyone, or to be constrained by the interference of persons in authority or by pressure groups, by the suggestions of the mass media, or by force, fear or the pursuit of popularity. Rather, having before their eyes solely the glory of God and the good of the Church, and having prayed for divine assistance, they shall give their vote to the person,

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223. Among those who nominate supervisors are bishops who "compose a list of presbyters . . . who are more suitable for the episcopate" (*CIC*, c. 377, §2), a pontifical legate who proposes a *ternus* (often called *terna* by those involved in appointments) when a diocesan or coadjutor bishop is to be appointed (see §3), a diocesan bishop who proposes presbyters for the office of auxiliary bishop (see §4), and curial officials who propose presbyters or bishops to the pope for assignment or reassignment to episcopal offices.

224. For that reason, *CIC*, c. 626, deals at once with religious who exercise such authority and with superiors who confer offices.



even outside the College of Cardinals, who in their judgment is most suited to govern the universal Church in a fruitful and beneficial way.<sup>225</sup>

The principles underlying these norms should guide participants in the nomination and/or election of other supervisors.

Good participants in such actions set aside personal and partisan preferences, focus on the common good of the close collaborators who will be supervised and the people they are to serve, and prepare to discern Jesus' preferences.<sup>226</sup> Since those preferences can be known only when discernment has been completed, good close collaborators never anticipate its outcome; no good participant in the process makes any promise in order to motivate other decision makers to nominate or elect this or that individual, and no good decision maker promises anyone his or her support or vote.<sup>227</sup>

Accordingly, good participants in nominating and/or electing supervisors never divide into groups whose members communicate secretly with the aim of getting the result they prefer.<sup>228</sup> Rather, they prepare to discern Jesus' preference by communicating openly and making relevant information available to every decision maker. Good decision makers seek information about each potential nominee's or candidate's suitability for the supervisory position.

A good supervisor has a special set of gifts. Canon law requires that a nominee for the episcopacy be a man "outstanding in solid faith, good morals, piety, zeal for souls, wisdom, prudence, and human virtues" (*CIC*, c. 378, §1, 1°). In norms for bishops who prepare lists of those to be considered for the episcopacy in the Latin Church, the Holy See specifies some of the human virtues required and adds other qualities: a spirit of sacrifice, impartiality, a social sense, even-temperedness, dependability, a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, aptitude for governing, devotion to the pope and his teaching authority, and an understanding of the signs of the times.<sup>229</sup> Good participants in nominating and/or electing other supervisors look for the same qualities.

Good potential nominees and candidates are not ambitious to become supervisors. They may be aware that they do not comprehend what would be required of them if they were put in a supervisory position, and they always realize that they may be blind to some of their limitations and shortcomings.

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225. John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Universi Dominici gregis*, 81–83, AAS 88 (1996) 339, *OR*, 28 Feb. 1996, 9.

226. While John Paul II does not say that the electors discern Jesus' preference, doing so is compatible with what he does say; and my previous section implies that they should. So, I assume that good participants discern rather than judge in some other way.

227. This conclusion and the reasons for it clarify the meaning of procuring votes and manifest the soundness of *CIC*, c. 626, which requires participants in elections of superiors in religious institutes "to avoid any procurement of votes, either directly or indirectly, whether for themselves or for others." Although canon law has no similar requirement for the processes that lead to the naming of bishops and their reassignment, good participants in those processes plainly have the same moral responsibilities.

228. However, if other participants do divide into such groups, a good one might communicate secretly in order to mitigate the defective procedure's ill effects.

229. See Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, *De promovendis ad Episcopatum in Ecclesia latina*, VI, 2, AAS 64 (1972) 389.

When asked for information as part of the selection process, they respond not only truthfully but with complete candor, even if that means they will not get the position.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, they do not try to discern whether a supervisory position may pertain to their vocation, except to the extent that it may be a matter of acting responsibly for them to acquire some advance information, and they never try to discern whether a position does pertain to their vocation as a matter of fact until they are asked to undertake it. Thus, ambition for any supervisory position is a strong indication of unsuitability for it.

### **3) Psycho-moral disorders pose challenges that good close collaborators meet well.**

In this section, I shall try to answer three questions. What are psycho-moral disorders? What help is needed by those affected by them? How do good supervisors and good groups of close collaborators deal with the challenges they present?

By *psycho-moral disorders*, I mean psychic or psychic *and* somatic conditions that bring about such strong, nonrational motives that someone so affected repeatedly does something that is the matter of grave sin, though with responsibility reduced and perhaps eliminated by the strength of the nonrational motives.<sup>231</sup> Alcoholism is a typical psycho-moral disorder, and the alcoholic's craving is typical of the strong, nonrational motives such disorders bring about. But the definition is broad enough to include other conditions: drug addictions, eating disorders, sex addictions, and compulsive or quasi-compulsive gambling, working, shopping, and so forth.

Psycho-moral disorders cannot be understood by someone who assumes either that human beings never make free choices or can always choose to refrain from behaving badly. The truth that must be grasped and kept in mind is that people *can* freely choose but *only between or among* options they understand and find appealing, and that factors beyond their control *usually generate* those options and *always limit* them. Understanding psycho-moral disorders and how to deal with them therefore requires insight into the interplay between an individual's free choices and the various factors that generate and limit his or her options for making them.

While some disorders, including alcoholism, involve physiological dependence, so that withdrawal can bring on harsh symptoms, not all do. But all have three common features. First, engaging in the characteristic behavior quickly changes an affected person's conscious state, from feeling miserable to feeling well, or from feeling normal to feeling excited and euphoric. Second, although there are motives not to engage in the characteristic behavior, anticipation of the change in conscious state arouses

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230. Those secretly aware of their unsuitability for a supervisory position may avoid self-incrimination by declining it, if possible by persuading decision makers not to nominate or choose them.

231. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, *Alcoholism: Getting the Facts*, rev. ed., NIH Publication No. 96-4153 (Bethesda, Md.: 2004), 3: "People who are not alcoholic sometimes do not understand why an alcoholic can't just 'use a little willpower' to stop drinking. However, alcoholism has little to do with willpower. Alcoholics are in the grip of a powerful 'craving,' or uncontrollable need, for alcohol that overrides their ability to stop drinking. This need can be as strong as the need for food and water."

a desire for that change, which makes the prospect more vivid, which in turn intensifies the desire, and so on; while the alternative of refraining from the behavior becomes less and less appealing, until it almost, or even completely, fades away. Third, either the affected individual eventually chooses to give in to the intense desire—perhaps rationalizing: “I cannot resist”—or, even though he or she does not choose to give in, the desire prevails and brings about the behavior.

As criteria for identifying persons affected by psycho-moral disorders, works on the subject generally cite various consequences of the relevant behavior—for example, harm to themselves, interference with work and other interests, and/or damage to interpersonal relationships.<sup>232</sup> While those factors can make behavior seriously wrong, so can others—for example, the injustice done to those whose needs ought to have been met with resources wasted by compulsive gamblers, the incompatibility with the good of marriage of every kind of nonmarital sexual act.<sup>233</sup> That his or her typical behavior is the matter of grave sin is therefore a sufficient criterion for judging that someone who meets the other conditions of the definition is affected by a psycho-moral disorder.

Since only what gravely impedes, damages, and/or destroys an instance of a fundamental human good is the matter of grave sin, behavior characteristic of psycho-moral disorders is truly bad. Even if the nonrational motives eliminate direct responsibility for the bad behavior, those with psycho-moral disorders should acknowledge that their behavior is bad and should seek appropriate help to stop. If the behavior gravely wrongs others, they should also acknowledge its injustice, seek appropriate help to prevent it, and make reasonable restitution.

However, while those with psycho-moral disorders are more or less aware that their behavior is bad, they find the prospect of stopping so repugnant that it either is not an option for choice or is an option with very little appeal. Rather than seek the help they need, they are likely to rationalize and deceive themselves about the moral quality of what they are doing, their need for help, and/or the possibility of change. This self-deception may reduce responsibility for not seeking help but cannot exclude it.<sup>234</sup>

Those affected by a psycho-moral disorder need both health care and moral-spiritual help. Neither is adequate by itself.

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232. While Patrick Barnes, *Don't Call It Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction* (New York: Bantam, 1991), 9–38, describes patterns of sexual behavior almost everyone would regard as addictions, his criteria exclude some habitual sexual behaviors that have the three features of psycho-moral disorders as I define them. Sexaholics Anonymous, “What is a Sexaholic and What is Sexual Sobriety?” <http://www.sa.org/index.php> (accessed 29 Jan. 2008), more narrowly and accurately describes sexual addiction as I understand it.

233. On large-stakes gambling, see *DMQ*, 836–39; on nonmarital sexual acts, including those involving only the spouses, see *LCL*, 643–68.

234. Perhaps some alcoholics and others are so mentally ill and/or so self-deceived that they cannot acknowledge their condition and seek appropriate help. But if so, I am not concerned here with them. Nor am I here concerned with recovered alcoholics who remain sober and others who experience but habitually resist the nonrational motives characteristic of various disorders.

Psycho-moral disorders are psychic, somatic, and/or psychosomatic conditions which are pathological insofar as the nonrational motives they bring about resist direct control by those affected and motivate behavior that is the matter of grave sin.<sup>235</sup> Such a disorder may be at least partly due to antecedent pathological conditions, and the bad behavior involved may cause or contribute to still other pathologies. Consequently, those affected need health care—always for the disorder itself and often also for antecedent and/or consequent pathologies.<sup>236</sup>

Insofar as people with psycho-moral disorders can change or be changed so as to better prevent or resist the nonrational motives involved, they ought to desire such change in themselves. To be able to prevent or resist nonrational motives leading to behavior that is the matter of grave sin is a moral-spiritual capacity that first of all is a divine gift and only becomes a human power when freely and gratefully accepted as such a gift. Speaking in the person of someone who lacks the capacity, St. Paul makes its moral character clear:

I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rom 7.18–20, 24–25)

Those affected by a psycho-moral disorder thus need appropriate moral-spiritual help in order to pray for grace, accept God's empowerment, and change as required. They also may need help to identify injustices they have done and heal injured relationships by righting those wrongs.

In sum, people in this situation suffer from both an illness and a moral defect, and they need appropriate help to deal with both the pathology and the "sin which dwells within" them.<sup>237</sup> This view is supported by the insights underlying Alcoholics Anonymous, the leading organization helping people affected by a psycho-moral disorder.

Most members of A.A. regard alcoholism as an illness.<sup>238</sup> When they joined the fellowship, they acknowledged their powerlessness: the craving for drink was compulsive. But A.A.'s "Big Book" describes alcoholism as "an illness which only a spiritual experience will

235. Various normal and healthy conditions bring about nonrational motives that are not under one's direct control and that motivate appropriate and morally acceptable behavior; for example, thirst and hunger motivate one to drink and eat healthily.

236. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), includes a general treatment of substance dependence, substance abuse, and substance-induced disorders (175–94), followed by specific discussions of disorders related to alcohol (194–204) and other substances (204–72).

237. Joseph H. Fichter, *The Rehabilitation of Clergy Alcoholics: Ardent Spirits Subdued* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1982), 26–37, argues that alcoholism is not simply a disease, but, focusing on rehabilitation, finds it adequate to regard it as a form of behavioral "deviance" so that "rehabilitation means a switch from behavior aberrancy to behavioral normalcy" (34).

238. See Ernest Kurtz, "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Disease Concept of Alcoholism," Behavioral Health and Recovery Management; Papers and Publications, Addiction; <http://www.bhrm.org/papers/AAand%20DiseaseConcept.pdf> (accessed 29 Jan. 2008).

conquer,”<sup>239</sup> and its founders summarized the process by which they recovered in the following twelve steps, which remain A.A.’s path toward recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.<sup>240</sup>

After the first step acknowledging a pathological condition, the other steps of recovery plainly pertain to a moral-spiritual conversion by which alcoholics recognize a previously unrecognized option: to seek divine help to change. Accepting the grace to allow God to change them, they examine their consciences, rectify their lives, and strive to help others. People affected by many other psycho-moral disorders have formed fellowships modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous and followed its twelve-step path.

Many people probably will not recover without a therapeutic support group. Focusing on clerics with psycho-moral disorders of sexual behavior, a priest with psychological training and extensive experience attests:

My impression is that by far the best therapy for compulsives is the program designed by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous. Compulsives have many things in common and this includes sexual compulsives. A comprehensive change in the person’s entire lifestyle with a complete dedication to the spiritual life and conversion accompanied by counseling or therapy is the best treatment by far. The assistance and support of a group of recovering compulsives is to my way of thinking essential. I have worked individually and in group with clergy suffering from sexual addictions for about two decades. I still can find no substitute for the group and its

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<sup>239</sup> *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed. (New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001), 44.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–60.

processes. The self-respect of the individual is restored, the defense of denial is confronted and helpful steps are suggested.<sup>241</sup>

As the final sentence suggests, one of the main ways participants in twelve-step programs help one another is by criticizing unsound thinking, including self-deception, and promoting habits of sound thinking and coping skills for dealing with problems. Such help is informal therapy, similar to the cognitive-behavioral therapy provided by some health care professionals.<sup>242</sup> Of course, many members of Alcoholics Anonymous, and surely of other similar groups, seek and benefit from various additional forms of professional treatment and/or counseling.<sup>243</sup>

How, then, do good close collaborators and their good supervisors deal with psycho-moral disorders?<sup>244</sup>

Good close collaborators avoid not only sin but its proximate occasions (see *LCL*, 221–24), while helping associates who are morally less mature not only by prayer and good example but by practicing restraint in the use of things that could be used rightly but are likely to become occasions of sin for others. So, for example, in communities and gatherings, alcoholic beverages are served and consumed with such moderation that those who completely abstain never feel odd while those who show even slight signs of intoxication plainly are odd. In this way, groups of good close collaborators strive to avoid, for their associates as well as themselves, the problems that may result from risky drinking.<sup>245</sup>

Regarding other close collaborators as brothers and sisters in Jesus, good ones feel responsible for their spiritual siblings' well being. Part of that involves learning what the various psycho-moral disorders are and how to identify those affected by them, and keeping a kindly and solicitous eye on their associates. They avoid bonding with peers against authority figures and are not childishly reluctant about reporting associates' incipient

241. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R., "The Psychosexual Development and Maturity of the Clergy," in *Critical Issues in Contemporary Health Care: Proceedings of the Eighth Bishops' Workshop*, ed. Russell E. Smith (Braintree, Mass.: Pope John Center, 1989), 315.

242. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "Alcohol Alert," 49 (Oct. 2000), <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/aa49.htm> (accessed 29 Jan. 2008), reports a study comparing 12-step programs with those involving cognitive-behavioral therapy, which concludes, among other things, that "12-step programs achieved more sustained abstinence and higher rates of employment compared with participants in the other two programs," and offers partial explanations for that finding, ending with: "AA's approach often results in the development of coping skills, many of which are similar to those taught in more structured psychosocial treatment settings, thereby leading to reductions in alcohol consumption."

243. Alcoholics Anonymous, Media Resources, Membership Survey, [http://www.aa.org/en\\_pdfs/p-48\\_04survey.pdf](http://www.aa.org/en_pdfs/p-48_04survey.pdf) (accessed 29 Jan. 2008), reports that a 2004 random survey of more than 7,500 members found that: (1) 64% received some sort of medical, psychological, spiritual, etc. treatment and/or counseling before joining and 74% of that group said it played an important part in directing them to A.A., and (2) 65% received some sort of medical, psychological, spiritual, etc. treatment and/or counseling after joining and 84% of that group said it played an important part in their recovery from alcoholism.

244. When speaking of supervisors here, I refer either to them or to the person or group they delegate to deal with these matters.

245. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, *Alcoholism: Getting the Facts*, 2: "Currently, nearly 17.6 million adult Americans abuse alcohol or are alcoholic. Several million more adults engage in risky drinking that could lead to alcohol problems. These patterns include binge drinking and heavy drinking on a regular basis."

problems and failings to supervisors. Realizing that an associate is affected with a psycho-moral disorder, they promptly provide the evidence to his or her supervisor or to the individual or group the supervisor has delegated to deal with such matters.<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, their total commitment to Jesus and his Church leads good close collaborators to have as their primary concern the well being of those to be served, and if a close collaborator gravely wrongs one of these, his or her good associate who knows about it informs the wrongdoer's supervisor at once.<sup>247</sup> Good supervisors for their part look into every such report without delay, and, if it is verified, make sure the wrongdoing is stopped and take steps to mitigate and remedy the harm done the wronged person and others.

For example, discovering that a fellow diocesan priest is engaging in sexual intimacies with a fifteen-year-old boy, a good priest at once informs his bishop, and a good bishop, having verified the report, sees to it that the misbehavior stops. He then does his best to ensure that the seduced boy receives the able and gentle priestly ministry he needs, and to remedy or prevent other evils, such as damage to his physical and mental health, and the alienation of his family from the Church.

At the same time, nevertheless, in dealing with a subordinate or associate affected by a psycho-moral disorder who has gravely wronged one or more of those to be served, good close collaborators deal compassionately with the wrongdoer and, *insofar as responsibilities toward others allow*, provide encouragement and support, as they also do for those affected by disorders who have not yet gravely wronged anyone.<sup>248</sup>

Even if an associate with a psycho-moral disorder has not gravely wronged anyone, good close collaborators who learn of his or her condition regard it as a very serious matter that must be dealt with promptly, not only for the sake of the affected individual, who needs help, but also because the bad behavior, if allowed to continue, is likely increasingly to impair his or her witness, service, and relationships with other close collaborators.

In dealing with the psycho-moral disorder of a close collaborator, his or her good associates and supervisors bear in mind the complexity of any such condition, taking into account both the pathological element and the residual moral responsibility of the affected individual, without exaggerating either. The pathology moves them to avoid resentment, facile moralizing, and

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246. Fichter, *op. cit.*, 62: "The people who are probably the first to spot the aberrant behavior of the clergy alcoholic are fellow clergy who are most closely associated with him in his work. Often they are sympathetic, cover up for him, take his duties when he is unable to perform. . . . Even if the clergyman has little sympathy for his drinking colleague, he may have a well-developed sense of loyalty that prevents him from 'snitching.' A provincial said that it is a 'kind of disloyalty to the man, and a lack of fraternal love, to let him drink himself to death.'"

247. For close collaborators, *those to be served* refers not only to the people they are specifically assigned to deal with but to everyone they might help to benefit—or impede from benefiting—by Jesus' saving acts. A close collaborator's grave moral and spiritual shortcomings can harm all those aware of them just as a good close collaborator's perspicuous witness can benefit everyone.

248. Responsibilities toward others include the general obligation to report probable crimes to the proper authorities (see *LCL*, 888–89) as well as any duty to report specified types of offenses, such as child abuse, and to cooperate with the criminal justice process.

punitive responses. However, the moral responsibility of an affected individual to acknowledge the condition and seek help is grounded not only in his or her own good but in the common good to which associates and supervisors also have committed themselves. So, for the sake of everyone concerned, good supervisors and good close collaborators insist that every affected associate face reality and accept needed help.

Some who have written very helpfully about their recovery from psycho-moral disorders have described how unshakeable their self-deception was until they experienced a major disaster. Many people therefore suppose that it is necessary to wait for such individuals to “hit bottom” before they will accept help. But that is not so:

An alcoholic can't be forced to get help except under certain circumstances, such as a traffic violation or arrest that results in court-ordered treatment. But you don't have to wait for someone to “hit rock bottom” to act. Many alcoholism treatment specialists suggest the following steps to help an alcoholic get treatment:

Stop all “cover ups.” Family members often make excuses to others or try to protect the alcoholic from the results of his or her drinking. It is important to stop covering for the alcoholic so that he or she experiences the full consequences of drinking.

Time your intervention. The best time to talk to the drinker is shortly after an alcohol-related problem has occurred—like a serious family argument or an accident. Choose a time when he or she is sober, both of you are fairly calm, and you have a chance to talk in private.

Be specific. Tell the family member that you are worried about his or her drinking. Use examples of the ways in which the drinking has caused problems, including the most recent incident.

State the results. Explain to the drinker what you will do if he or she doesn't go for help—not to punish the drinker, but to protect yourself from his or her problems. What you say may range from refusing to go with the person to any social activity where alcohol will be served, to moving out of the house. Do not make any threats you are not prepared to carry out.

Get help. Gather information in advance about treatment options in your community. If the person is willing to get help, call immediately for an appointment with a treatment counselor. Offer to go with the family member on the first visit to a treatment program and/or an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting.

Call on a friend. If the family member still refuses to get help, ask a friend to talk with him or her using the steps just described. A friend who is a recovering alcoholic may be particularly persuasive, but any person who is caring and nonjudgmental may help. The intervention of more than one person, more than one time, is often necessary to coax an alcoholic to seek help.

Find strength in numbers. With the help of a health care professional, some families join with other relatives and friends to confront an alcoholic as a group. This approach should only be tried under the guidance of a health care professional who is experienced in this kind of group intervention.<sup>249</sup>

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249. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Addiction, FAQs for the General Public-English, “If an alcoholic is unwilling to get help, what can you do about it?” <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov/FAQs/General-English/default.htm#help> (accessed 29 Jan. 2008).



Good diocesan bishops and major religious superiors will develop plans along these lines for making it clear to subordinates affected by psycho-moral disorders that they have a problem, need help, and will not be allowed to go on without it.<sup>250</sup>

Until they recognize that an associate is affected by a psycho-moral disorder, good close collaborators naturally regard that associate's bad behavior, perhaps observed only occasionally, as a lapse, and they understandably play it down and compensate for it; after they grasp the situation, moreover, they will continue doing what they can to care for those whom their associate should be serving. But they will do nothing else that would enable him or her to go on without getting treatment. They refuse to enable from genuine concern, not resentment, and they pray that their associate will see his or her condition as it is and seek help.

Good supervisors get to know one or more mental health professionals whom they can trust to help them and their subordinates with psychological problems, including psycho-moral disorders. Of course, these professionals must be well trained, competent, and lawfully able to provide needed help. But they also will understand and value the commitment made by close collaborators, trust that a competent individual can fulfill it with God's grace, and accept the responsibility of helping and encouraging those with problems to deal with them so as to fulfill it well.<sup>251</sup>

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250. Eleace King, I.H.M., and Jim Castelli, *Culture of Recovery, Culture of Denial: Alcoholism among Men and Women Religious* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 1995), 12, state: "Alcoholism in one member affects the whole community and the drinking alcoholic lacks the inner resources to recognize or remedy the illness. Thus, the community is morally responsible for making alcoholic members face the consequences of their behavior." They suggest that religious institutes "review their procedures for intervention in light of their own charism and spiritual tradition" (27). Fichter, *op. cit.*, 102, reports: "The advice of rehabilitation experts is that the alcoholic should not be allowed to 'hit bottom' before seeking relief." He offers some ideas about how to get alcoholic clerics into treatment (57-74); he also briefly discusses alcoholic bishops and states that their close associates are likely to be "a coterie of enablers" (48). However, conscientious subordinates of a supervisor affected by a psycho-moral disorder will press him or her hard to get appropriate help, and if he or she resists, will report him or her—if necessary repeatedly—to higher authority.

251. Many alcoholic close collaborators have been sent to rehabilitation centers, often ones that deal with them exclusively, some for six months or more. Before using such a center, good supervisors require evidence proving beyond reasonable doubt that it is trustworthy. Different alcoholics need somewhat different care, but it appears that most will benefit from some professional help followed by regular A.A. participation. See Fichter, *op. cit.*, 75-130, who concludes (130): "The spirituality of the clergy alcoholic appears to be strengthened by his continued association with members of AA. He is much more likely than the nonmember to have had a spiritual renewal in the rehabilitation process and to manifest this renewal in his habits of prayer." Also see King and Castelli, *op. cit.*, 83-112; they state that the CARA findings "illustrate the positive impact of AA on alcoholic religious and raise questions about the wisdom of lengthy residential treatment" (96); "The CARA findings suggest that the more regularly recovering alcoholic religious attend AA, the better off they are" (110).

Good supervisors may well encourage or at least permit subordinates who are close to someone affected by a psycho-moral disorder to act as a group in confronting him or her. If so, there must be no deception or physical force, and any confrontation will be planned carefully with the advice, and perhaps the participation, of a trustworthy professional. The intention will be to show the affected person that he or she has a serious disorder, express deep and loving concern along with confident hope for recovery, stress the urgency of getting help, and promise understanding and support during long-term recovery. At the same time, good associates and supervisors confronting an affected person will be prepared for delaying tactics on his or her part. Alcoholics, for instance, are likely to offer the alternative of cutting back; the appropriate response is to cite the evidence that the individual is alcoholic and present authoritative testimony that alcoholics cannot drink moderately.<sup>252</sup>

If confrontation is not used or does not succeed in moving those with psycho-moral disorders to seek help, a good supervisor will listen patiently to them, show concern, urge them to accept help at once, and, if they refuse, remove them from assignment and threaten to proceed against them in accord with canon law. If affected subordinates still obdurately refuse to take steps toward recovery, a good supervisor, mindful of his or her responsibility to protect the common good, will carry out the threat.

On the other hand, those who seek help and begin recovering have changed for the better and are now dealing with their pathologies and fulfilling their moral responsibilities. When those sent away to begin recovery return, good associates welcome them back and support them—for example, by listening to them and encouraging them, by praying along with them in thanks for the graces they have received and for the ongoing graces without which no one avoids grave sin, and by facilitating their regular participation in meetings of AA or whatever other support group is available to persons with their particular disorder.<sup>253</sup>

#### **4) Good close collaborators cooperate despite profound conflicts.**

*Conflict* here refers to a disagreement between two groups of clerics in the same diocese or of religious in the same institute. It can be called *profound conflict* if it has two features: first, the issue is whether something must be believed, can rightly be believed, must be done, or can rightly be done; second, at least some of those involved are sure their position necessarily flows from their commitment of faith or their commitment to close collaboration or both.

Other disagreements among close collaborators can be important and intense, but profound conflicts pose special challenges. Those convinced

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252. See Fichter, op. cit., 63–73, on confrontation and the desirability of getting alcoholics into treatment without delay. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, *Alcoholism: Getting the Facts*, 7, states: “Although alcoholism can be treated, a cure is not yet available. In other words, even if an alcoholic has been sober for a long time and has regained health, he or she remains susceptible to relapse and must continue to avoid all alcoholic beverages. ‘Cutting down’ on drinking doesn’t work; cutting out alcohol is necessary for a successful recovery.”

253. See King and Castelli, op. cit., 73–76, on the importance of such support and its frequent omission.

that their fundamental commitments require a certain position cannot give it up or act at odds with it without violating their consciences in the sense explained in **3-D-5**, above. To be logical, they also must hold that those who share their commitments ought to agree with them; and so they must regard the associates with whom they disagree as profoundly mistaken, gravely unfaithful, or both.

Since Vatican II, close collaborators in many dioceses and religious communities have been divided by profound conflicts. Often, the divisions have persisted for many years. This disunity is bad in itself: if all close collaborators were one with Jesus in mind and heart, as they should be, there would be no profound conflict among them. Disunity also weakens the credibility of their witness, obscures their common good, fosters individualism, and impedes their cooperation with one another, thus reducing the quality and quantity of their service to Jesus and his Church. Then too, their numbers are likely to decline: some who belong to the diocese or institute withdraw in order to escape its divisions, while some who consider joining are put off by the prospect of becoming involved in such a situation.

Because virtually all close collaborators value comradeship and solidarity, persistent divisions are deeply repugnant to them. Many are ashamed of their disunity and prefer to veil it, while others openly regard their opponents as wrongheaded and/or disloyal, wish they would go away, and avoid them as much as possible. Some live in denial and try to go on as if the conflicts did not exist. Others acknowledge them but downplay their significance, often by suggesting that they arise from differences in psychological traits, cultural backgrounds, previous experiences, and/or preferences about legitimate alternatives in matters of theology, spirituality, and/or ministry. Although these latter generally advocate compromise and tolerance, they frequently condemn and write off associates who decline their proposals as rigid, divisive, and judgmental.

Ideally, persistent divisions are prevented by resolving issues that lead to them. When a dispute arose in the early Church about whether Gentile converts had to be circumcised, Peter, Paul, James, Barnabas, and others met in Jerusalem, reflected on experiences that manifested God's will with respect to these people, and concluded that they need not fulfill the Mosaic law's requirements with regard to circumcision and most other matters. The participants in the meeting then agreed on a plan to communicate the truth they had discerned and put it into practice.<sup>254</sup> Thus, they prevented persistent profound conflict.<sup>255</sup>

Good close collaborators undoubtedly have prevented at least some persistent divisions in their dioceses and religious institutes by proceeding in the same way and resolving issues that would have led to profound conflicts.

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254. See Acts 15.1–29; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, 538–67. Fitzmyer explains (556–58) that the four things the Jerusalem decision required of Gentile converts were meant to facilitate their fellowship with Jewish Christians; thus, the letter sent to the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia conveyed both a truth (circumcision and other requirements of the Mosaic law are not necessary for salvation) and legislation to promote ecclesial communion.

255. The later conflict between Peter and Paul (see Gal 2.11–14) concerned a different, though related, issue. We do not know how it was resolved: see **2-B-4**, above.

But some good efforts failed because they did not have the participation and support of supervisors who ignored or overlooked an issue's profound significance and feared the disturbances and defections they anticipated from resolving it.

Moreover, many issues over which close collaborators find themselves in conflict also divide other groups, even the faithful in general, in other parts of the Church, often in all or most of the more or less affluent nations. This is the case, for example, with issues of sexual morality, the indissolubility of marriage, clerical celibacy, and women's ordination. Particular dioceses and religious institutes are not competent to resolve such issues. Recent popes or one or more curial offices have addressed many of them, but not definitively, so that the issues remain unresolved in practice and the conflicts persist. Bishops and major superiors may disagree with the Holy See or, although agreeing, may consider it either a practical impossibility or wrong to do what would be necessary to end the divisions among their subordinates. Where profound conflicts persist, a close collaborator must either live with them or withdraw from his or her diocese or religious institute.

Although good close collaborators, as noted, find these divisions repugnant, they are not greatly surprised or distressed by them. Jesus predicted that his teachings would provoke divisions, even in families (Mt 10.34–36, Mk 13.12, Lk 12.49–53); groups of Christians have often been in profound conflict. Good close collaborators do not expect to enjoy perfect harmony short of the heavenly kingdom. Nevertheless, they take the divisions very seriously.

While realizing that profound divisions like these spring ultimately from lack of perfect oneness with Jesus, they presume good faith on the part of associates with whom they disagree, do not blame them for the divisions, take care to avoid overstating or otherwise misrepresenting their views, treat them fairly and with respect, and refrain from labeling them in negative terms, much less calling them unfaithful or uncharitable.

In recent years, however, the reality of profound conflict among close collaborators has often presented a very different picture. As issues emerged and conflicts developed, many became anxious, sad, and angry. Human weakness led many close collaborators to say and do unkind and hurtful things. Good close collaborators readily forgive such wrongs and hold no grudges. They also regularly examine themselves and repent their own offenses against associates, sincerely apologize, and earnestly seek forgiveness—if necessary, repeatedly.

Where profound conflicts persisted, some of those involved have generally become hardened opponents. This has led them to exaggerate the significance of other issues that could rightly be left unsettled or be resolved by compromise. Misunderstandings and confusions then have generated still other issues lacking real substance. Good close collaborators resist such hardening, keep comparatively insignificant matters in perspective, live patiently with differences that need not be dealt with, compromise when they rightly can, and strive to clarify misunderstandings and dissipate confusions.

Of course, having formed their consciences carefully, good close collaborators never violate them but choose a morally upright alternative, even if that means putting up with unjust treatment by supervisors and/or associates. Moreover, presuming that those with whom he or she is profoundly in conflict are in good faith, such a person respects their conformity to their consciences. Rather than wanting them to violate their apparently erroneous consciences, he or she hopes they will come to recognize and rectify their mistakes.

In Romans 14.1 to 15.13, St. Paul “deals with the age-old problem of the scrupulous versus the enlightened conscience, or the conservative versus the progressive.”<sup>256</sup> Paul considers members of the former group to be overly restrictive about what they may eat and drink; but because those in the latter group can accept the overly strict view without violating their consciences, he urges them to do that for two reasons: first, to avoid pressing the overly strict to violate their consciences: “Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother” (Rom 14.13); second, to prevent or overcome conflict in the community: “May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 15.5–6).

Accordingly, when all those on one side of a profound conflict are good close collaborators who can give up or refrain from acting on their position without violating their consciences, they will concede the issue in order to avoid burdening their opponents’ consciences and impeding solidarity and cooperation within the group. And when the conditions necessary for that way of maintaining or restoring harmony do not exist, groups of good close collaborators living in persistent, profound conflict act like faithful Christians of different ecclesial communities who practice ecumenism: they engage in dialogue, identify everything they still have in common, and cooperate, insofar as they can do that in good conscience, in serving Jesus and his Church.

Where profound conflicts persist, liturgical celebrations often pose problems. While close collaborators rarely regard one another as defective in the ecclesial communion required to celebrate together, liturgical abuses cause tensions. So, good close collaborators abide by liturgical norms unless they judge themselves bound in conscience to deviate from them and, despite others’ deviations, continue participating unless they judge themselves bound in conscience not to.

## **F: Appropriately Using Economic and Other Resources**

### **1) In using economic resources, Christians should follow God’s plan.**

Used in a strict sense, the expression *economic resources* refers to money and the goods and services money can buy. More broadly, one’s talents, time, and energy are also economic resources since they can be used to earn money, acquire goods, and provide services.

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<sup>256</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Romans*, Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 686.

There is a widespread assumption in affluent societies, shared by most Christians, that people have few moral obligations regarding their use of legitimately acquired economic resources. Of course, using them for bad purposes or in ways that unfairly harm others is excluded, and people should pay just taxes and do their fair share in supporting organizations to which they belong. For Christians, the latter obligation includes contributing to their church. Many also feel obliged to give a little something to beggars, united fund campaigns, and special appeals. Beyond that, charity tends to begin at home and usually ends nearby: it consists in helping loved ones and friends. As long as such obligations are met, however, most people suppose that, no matter how prosperous they become, they can rightly do as they please with their economic resources.

In this matter, attitudes of many devout Catholics hardly differ from those of their nonbelieving colleagues and neighbors. Once they can afford the essentials and are saving for retirement, they use most of their remaining income to enhance their security (more insurance and savings) and/or to obtain more goods and services—a larger home with more amenities (perhaps a hot tub or swimming pool), another car (perhaps a luxury model or SUV), frequent dining out, fashionable clothes, up-to-date electronic devices and other equipment, hobbies, travel, pets, and much else. They may collect fine jewelry, art objects, and other beautiful things. Gambling or shopping might become a regular recreation so that losses mount or seldom-used bargains accumulate. Leisure activities may require costly child care. Various services—from plastic surgery to help around the house—may seem virtually indispensable. If challenged, devout Catholics like this may defend their use of economic resources by saying that they haven't taken a vow of poverty, God provides good and beautiful things for people to use, and they are only enjoying what they acquired legitimately, not doing anything inherently evil.<sup>257</sup>

Indeed, for the most part, what they are doing is not *in itself* sinful and could be morally good in some circumstances. But they fail to take into account what John Paul II calls “the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere.”<sup>258</sup> Vatican II clearly articulates it:

God has destined the earth and all it contains for the use of all human individuals and peoples, in such a way that, under the direction of justice accompanied by charity, created goods ought to flow abundantly to everyone on a fair basis [fn. omitted]. One must always bear this universal destination of goods in mind, no matter what forms property may take, as it is adapted, in accordance with diverse and changeable circumstances, to the legitimate institutions of peoples. (GS 69)<sup>259</sup>

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257. Another, and more sophisticated, defense acknowledges large-scale, social injustice, such as the maldistribution of wealth and economic opportunities among and within nations, points out that self-restraint by individuals and families cannot overcome that injustice, and concludes that Christians are called to social action rather than frugality. Social action and frugality, however, are not alternatives but complementary responsibilities, both of which are specified by the conditions proper to each Christian's unique vocation.

258. John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, 18, AAS 73 (1981) 623, PE, 280.82.

259. The omitted note (fn. 8 in the Council's text) refers first to Pius XII, *Sertum laetitiae*, AAS 31 (1939) 642 and 653, PE, 223.34: “The fundamental point of the social question is this, that the goods created by God for all men should in the same way reach all,

The universal destination of goods does not mean that the first human beings jointly owned the material world or that everyone is entitled to an equal share in economic resources. Rather, it means that God gave people everything they have—including their earning power and their work—and they should be grateful to him for his gifts and should use and share them with others as he wishes. Thus, the first moral consequence of legitimately acquiring any economic resource is not a right but an obligation, namely, the obligation to use it *fairly* to promote and protect the true well-being of one or more people with respect to their fundamental human goods.

From that obligation follows the right to use legitimately acquired economic resources to meet one's own and one's dependents' authentic needs. Once those are reasonably well met, however, the universal destination of goods requires making excess resources available to satisfy others' needs. John the Baptist made that point concretely when people asked how they should respond to his call for repentance: "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise" (Lk 3.11). Using a general but accurate formulation, Vatican II teaches that "people should consider the exterior things that they legitimately possess not only as their own but as common, in the sense that their possessions should benefit not only themselves but others as well" (GS 69). To bring that point home, the Council quotes a striking precept of the Church Fathers: "Feed those who are dying of hunger, for if you have not fed them, you have killed them [fn. omitted]" (GS 69).<sup>260</sup>

Authentic needs go beyond what it takes to survive. The authentic needs of individuals or groups are for what they must have to fulfill their personal vocations or missions. Those called to particular kinds of work need education and training to do it, children need appropriate toys and recreational facilities, and the Church needs the means to carry out her mission of evangelization.<sup>261</sup> When people think about their own needs and the needs of loved ones, most grasp the point that what suffices to survive does not suffice for a decent human life; but many people miss the point when considering others' needs.

Then too, the false values that permeate affluent societies generate many false needs, so that people, including leaders of groups, crave things they cannot reasonably seek to obtain. No one needs anything whose use will be even venially sinful; nobody has an authentic need to keep up with colleagues and neighbors by spending money on current styles or the latest technology; it is unreasonable to use more resources when using fewer will meet authentic needs as well; no individual or group has an authentic need for savings and insurance adequate to meet every possible future responsibility, however unlikely; and even less does any individual or group need to engage in careless waste.

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justice guiding and charity helping"; the note refers also to John XXIII, Consistorial Address, AAS 52 (1960) 5–11; John XXIII, *Mater et magistra*, AAS 53 (1961) 411, PE, 267.43.

260. For a fuller treatment of the universal destination of goods, see *LCL*, 789–92.

261. John Paul II, Homily at Mass in Recife (Brazil), 5, AAS 72 (1980) 929, OR, 4 Aug. 1980, 10, uses a broad concept of needs: "As regards necessities—food, clothes, housing, medico-social assistance, basic instruction, professional training, means of transport, information, possibility of recreation, religious life—there must be no privileged social strata."

Moreover, authentic needs can be met moderately, luxuriously, and frugally.

Meeting needs moderately means meeting them without additional satisfactions or burdens relating to how this is done. Virtuous people who habitually meet needs moderately consult advertising only for the verifiable information it contains while ignoring its attempts to persuade. Before shopping for goods or arranging for services, they define the need to be met, objectively evaluate possible ways of meeting it, and then identify an appropriate way of proceeding.

Meeting needs luxuriously is more costly than meeting them moderately and is likely to be more pleasant, comfortable, and convenient. People who meet needs luxuriously may be eager to display their wealth and impress others—by costly self-indulgence or liberality. Their preferences are often shaped by advertising and they are likely to enjoy shopping for “bargains”—quality goods available at deep discounts. As a result, they are likely to obtain services that provide little or no real benefit and amass possessions that they seldom or even never use.

Meeting needs frugally is less costly than meeting them moderately but generally involves some unpleasantness and discomfort, and often takes up more time and other noneconomic resources. Virtuous people for whom frugality is a necessity focus on what is essential to meet needs, have no interest in impressing others, shop carefully, and take advantage of sales and coupons only in buying needed items they otherwise would have to pay more for.

The three categories (luxuriously, moderately, frugally) extend over a spectrum, so that the ways of meeting most needs (for example, for a healthful diet) range by imperceptible degrees from the most frugal to the most luxurious.

With their limited economic resources, poor people either cannot meet their own authentic needs and those of their dependents or can do so only by being very frugal. Others have some choice about how to meet at least some of their needs, and the wealthier they are, the more choices they have. Christians who are not poor and who take to heart the universal destination of goods shape their choices by justice accompanied by charity, as Vatican II teaches. In forming their consciences about using economic resources, they consider how much it would take to meet their own needs at various levels and the possibility that some other very needy person or group is entitled to part of those resources. In other words, they apply the Golden Rule with Christian love.

This is not a merely optional exercise. The parable of the unmerciful servant makes it clear that those who receive God’s mercy sin if they fail to show mercy to others, and God will judge them justly (see Mt 18.23–35). Consequently, within the community of the new covenant, whose members must treat every human being as a neighbor, the requirements of mercy are requirements of justice.<sup>262</sup> Being merciful is not just a good thing for those who want to do more than they must. In demanding mercy, the Lord

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262. See *LCL*, 360–71; Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1972), 210–14.



explains that those who do not show it to others are neglecting him and “they will go away into eternal punishment” (Mt 25.46).

How does one apply the Golden Rule with Christian love? Jesus lays down his life for his friends and sets a new standard for their treatment of others: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15.12). What matters in the end is how Jesus evaluates conflicting claims: a famine victim’s need for food, and one’s own need for foods and beverages that cost five times as much as a frugal but healthful diet; third-world children’s need for education and one’s own children’s need for the latest toys and electronic equipment; a pagan community’s need to hear the gospel and a particular church’s need for a grand celebration when a new bishop is installed. In using the Golden Rule, one does not ask how one would feel in the poor person’s place. Instead, one recalls Jesus’ teaching about wealth.<sup>263</sup> Then one asks how one would feel in Jesus’ place, striving to answer in a way one will be comfortable with on judgment day, when the Lord applies his standard and announces his verdict: What you did or failed to do for one of the least of my brothers or sisters, you did or failed to do for me (see Mt 25.40, 45).

## **2) Good close collaborators meet needs more modestly than good lay people do.**

In using the economic resources available in affluent societies, many Catholics take into account neither the universal destination of goods nor what Jesus says about possessions:

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms; provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Lk 12.32–34)

While that teaching is addressed to all Jesus’ disciples, it has special relevance to close collaborators. To fulfill their vocation, they must give perspicuous witness to the kingdom, and they enjoy the freedom to do that by living frugally. Celibate chastity, as Paul points out (see 1 Cor 7.32–35), frees them from many of the anxieties about worldly affairs that trouble Christians with spouses and/or children to support. Thanks to the support of the faithful, moreover, most are assured the necessities of life by their diocese or institute.

Close collaborators who overlook the relevant principles often seem vaguely aware that their treasure and hearts are not where they ought to be, and they may be defensive because people expect more of them. Then, not

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263. In addition to other New Testament passages I cite or quote, many passages in Luke, some proper to him, are relevant and very clear: beatitudes for the poor and hungry matched by woes for the rich and full (6.20–21, 24–25), “Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return” (6.35), the parable of the Good Samaritan (10.30–37), the parable of the rich fool (12.16–21), instruction to replace concern about one’s vital needs with the quest for the kingdom and trust in providence (12.22–34), advice to offer hospitality to those who cannot reciprocate rather than those who will (14.12–14), renunciation essential for discipleship (14.28–33), “You cannot serve God and mammon” (16.13), the parable of Dives and Lazarus (16.19–31), and “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (18.25).

uncommonly, they rationalize their behavior by claiming that they really need certain luxuries or near luxuries: to preserve their physical health or safety, to sustain their psychological health, to work more efficiently, to provide better service, to maintain contact with the surrounding culture, to celebrate special occasions appropriately, to make celibate chastity bearable, to carry on good relationships with wealthy relatives, friends, and benefactors. In each case, however, to the extent the purpose actually pertains to the close collaborator's vocation, it could be served adequately, and indeed better, by a less lavish use of economic resources.

Some also point out that they never took a vow of poverty, others that the vow they took excludes personal ownership but allows them, with a superior's approval, to enjoy whatever their community has or outsiders offer. Both groups may invoke Jesus' saying on the "poor in spirit" (Mt 5.3) and/or Paul's teaching on detachment (see 1 Cor 7.29–31), arguing that only the right attitude, not the actual practice of austerity, is required. Noting that the frugality of a few will save almost nothing for the poorest of the poor, some claim to fulfill their responsibilities for social justice by promoting radical changes in sinful social structures and supporting governmental programs to redistribute wealth.

In many places, supervisors have much the same social status as fairly high-ranking secular officials, whose share of economic resources increases with their status. This standard of living seems to many supervisors appropriate for themselves, and they find it easy to rationalize living very comfortably. Their own lifestyle is an obstacle to urging their subordinates to live more simply, and their silence and bad example provide reassurance to those who may have pangs of conscience.

By contrast, good close collaborators, including good supervisors, like other good Christians, take to heart the universal destination of goods and Jesus' teaching about detachment from earthly possessions. Grateful to God for the economic resources at their disposal, they learn how to use them rightly by considering what is really needed to fulfill their responsibilities as individuals and their missions as groups. To have more than they need is abhorrent to them, for it would give rise to temptations, make them less like Jesus, distract them from collaborating with him, and impede the fruitfulness of their service by obscuring their witness to the unique worth and absolute primacy of the kingdom.

The rationalizations of close collaborators who think otherwise are at odds with the Church's teaching.

Having noted that diocesan priests are entitled to enough economic resources to meet their authentic needs, Pius XI teaches:

But once "called to the inheritance of the Lord," as his very title "cleric" declares, a priest must expect no other recompense than that promised by Christ to his Apostles: "Your reward is very great in Heaven" (Mt 5.12). Woe to the priest who, forgetful of these divine promises should become "greedy of filthy lucre" (Tit 1.7). Woe if he join the herd of the worldly over whom the Church like the Apostle grieves: "All seek the things that are their own: not the things that are Jesus Christ's" (Phil 2.21). Such a priest, besides failing in his vocation, would earn the contempt even of his own people. They would perceive in him the deplorable contradiction between his conduct and the doctrine so clearly expounded by Christ, which the priest is

bound to teach: “Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven” (Mt 6.19–20).<sup>264</sup>

John XXIII, having quoted Pius XII’s rejection of the view that diocesan clerics are bound by divine law to the evangelical counsels, teaches that it would be

a distortion of the real mind of this same Supreme Pontiff . . . and a contradiction of the perpetual teaching of the Church in this matter, if anyone should dare to infer from this that clerics were any less bound by their office than religious to strive for evangelical perfection of life. The truth is just the opposite; for the proper exercise of the priestly functions “requires a greater interior holiness than is demanded by the religious state.”<sup>265</sup>

Vatican II directs that seminarians be formed for a life of simplicity and self-denial (see OT 9) and asks presbyters to embrace voluntary poverty in order to be more clearly conformed to Jesus and more available for ministry (see PO 17). Subsequent teachings of the magisterium make it clear that celibate diocesan clerics’ evangelical perfection includes not only inner detachment but outward austerity of life (see 2–E–9, above).<sup>266</sup>

Vatican II also teaches that religious must be poor in reality as well as in spirit, so that their treasure truly will be in heaven; it is not enough for them to forgo personal ownership and be subject to superiors in having and using economic resources (see PC 13). Paul VI tells religious, in accord with their special vocation, to heed the cry of the poor, which, among other things, “enjoins on you a use of goods limited to what is required for the fulfillment of the functions to which you are called. It is necessary that in your daily lives you should give proof, even externally, of authentic poverty.”<sup>267</sup> John Paul II teaches that every Christian should make an option for the poor, in the sense of preferring to serve those in greater need, and that members of institutes of consecrated life, who have vowed to share Jesus’ lifestyle, should do so in a special way:

The sincerity of their response to Christ’s love will lead them to live a life of poverty and to embrace the cause of the poor. For each institute, according to its charism, this involves *adopting a simple and austere way of life*, both as individuals and as a community. Strengthened by this living witness and in ways consistent with their choice of life, and maintaining their independence vis-à-vis political ideologies, consecrated persons will be able to denounce the injustices committed against so many sons and daughters of God, and commit themselves to the promotion of justice in the society where they work [fn. omitted]. In this way, even in present circumstances, through

264. Pius XI, *Ad catholici sacerdotii*, AAS 28 (1936) 29, PE, 216:49.

265. John XXIII, *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, AAS 51 (1959) 550, PE, 264:12; the internal quotation is from St. Thomas, *S.t.*, 2–2, q. 184, a. 8, c.

266. John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, 18, AAS 85 (1993) 1148, OR, 6 Oct. 1993, IV, maintains that Jesus’ teaching that poverty is required for evangelical perfection of life (Mt 19.16–22, Mk 10.17–22, Lk 18.18–25) is not only for those who make a vow of poverty: “*The invitation*, ‘go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor,’ and the promise ‘you will have treasure in heaven,’ are meant for everyone, because they bring out the full meaning of the commandment of love for neighbor, just as the invitation which follows, ‘Come, follow me,’ is the new, specific form of the commandment of love of God.”

267. See Paul VI, *Evangelica testificatio*, 18, AAS 63 (1971) 507; Flannery, 1:689.

the witness of countless consecrated persons, there will be a renewal of that dedication which was characteristic of the founders and foundresses who spent their lives serving the Lord in the poor.<sup>268</sup>

Thus, a vow of poverty means more than inner detachment and forgoing personal ownership. For members of religious institutes, the option for the poor means solidarity with them by individual and communal austerity, or simplicity of life, and by service in accord with each institute's charism.

In teaching about the lifestyle appropriate for bishops, John Paul II, after calling attention to Jesus' poverty, explains how voluntary poverty is essential to their service to Jesus and his Church:

The bishop who wishes to be an authentic witness and minister of the gospel of hope must be a *vir pauper*. This is demanded by the witness he is called to bear to Christ, who was himself poor. It is also demanded by the Church's concern for the poor, who must be the object of a preferential option. The bishop's decision to carry out his ministry in poverty contributes decisively to making the Church the "home of the poor."

This decision also provides the bishop with inner freedom in the exercise of his ministry and enables him to communicate effectively the fruits of salvation. Episcopal authority must be exercised with untiring generosity and inexhaustible liberality. On the bishop's part, this calls for complete trust in the providence of the heavenly Father, an open-hearted communion of goods, an austere way of life and continuous personal conversion. Only in this way will he be able to share in the struggles and sufferings of the People of God, whom he is called not only to lead and nourish but with whom he must show fraternal solidarity, sharing their problems and helping to build their hope.

He will carry out this service effectively if his own life is simple, sober and at the same time active and generous, and if it places those considered least important in our society not on the fringes but rather at the center of the Christian community [fn. omitted]. Almost without realizing it, he will foster a "creativity in charity" which will bear fruit not simply in the efficiency of the assistance offered but also in an ability to live in a spirit of fraternal sharing.<sup>269</sup>

The Pope introduces this teaching, part of a section on the evangelical counsels, by pointing out that "the bishop must radiate the life of Christ," including his obedience, his chaste love, and "his poverty which is absolute detachment from all earthly goods." Moreover, John Paul at once makes it clear that bishops, as supervisors, must set the example for other close collaborators: "In this way the bishops can lead by their example not only those members of the Church who are called to follow Christ in the consecrated life but also priests, to whom the radicalism of holiness in accordance with the spirit of the evangelical counsels is also proposed."<sup>270</sup>

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268. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 82, AAS 88 (1996) 458–59, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XVI. The omitted note refers to the Synod's proposition 18.

269. John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, 20, AAS 96 (2004) 852–53, OR, 22 Oct. 2003, VII; the omitted footnote refers to the Synod's proposition 9.

270. *Ibid.*, 18, AAS 850, OR, VI. If all close collaborators truly practiced evangelical poverty—absolute detachment from earthly goods, an austere way of life, and open-hearted communion of goods—stronger ecclesial communion would develop among all the faithful

In taking to heart the universal destination of goods, good close collaborators show by their lives as well as by words where their treasure and their hearts are, and thus testify to the unique worth and absolute primacy of the heavenly kingdom. Whether or not they have made a vow of poverty or are supervisors, they imitate Jesus' and Paul's detachment and behavior with respect to economic resources.

By comparison with celibate chastity in respect to witness value, voluntary poverty has both a disadvantage and an advantage. Because poverty cannot be absolute, it is effective as a sign only when the self-denial it involves is not only entirely consistent but so radical that it cannot be missed. But because the use of economic resources rarely requires secrecy and privacy, suspicions and accusations of hypocrisy can be prevented by always acting openly and in a way that is above question.

For these reasons, good close collaborators not only live with thoroughgoing and transparent austerity but strive to avoid even the appearance of self-indulgence, greed, eagerness to profit by their service, or stinginess with those in need. Their austerity, while countercultural, is not met with skepticism as celibate chastity often is. Many influential people in affluent societies are somewhat embarrassed about their unfair use of economic resources and have some sympathy for the poor, so that the witness of voluntary poverty seldom provokes the defensive reaction that celibate chastity often does.<sup>271</sup> When a disciplined and well-educated individual who could live comfortably practices frugality in order to invest as much as possible in some venture, people often become curious and want to look into it themselves. So, good close collaborators make their lives into very effective advertisements for the kingdom.

In sum, the practice of voluntary poverty by good close collaborators has many advantages. Since whatever they forgo for Jesus is part of their self-gift to him, they love him more as they get by with less. A simple life frees them from the distractions of getting and caring for things they can do without. It also frees them from occasions of sin that would arise from the goods and services they forgo, and compels them to trust in divine providence. Besides, voluntary poverty greatly facilitates their relationships with the people they serve. Poverty especially increases their solidarity with the poor and their approachability. At the same time, the frugal use of economic resources gains the respect and support of soundly motivated benefactors. By encouraging the affluent faithful to love and share with the poor, good close collaborators' austerity and simplicity of life nurture ecclesial communion and help them foster the fruitfulness of Jesus' salvific acts. Above all, voluntary poverty complements good close collaborators' celibate chastity in a detachment that confirms their witness to Jesus and his kingdom.

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and there would be far more fraternal sharing. Treated as equally respected and loved members of God's family, the poor would be fully at home in the Church.

271. My point is not to belittle celibate chastity but to call attention to the importance for witness, particularly in evangelizing those enslaved by lust, of *complete* self-giving, including voluntary poverty.

### 3) Good close collaborators practice poverty both individually and cooperatively.

The standard of austerity that good close collaborators use is included in their preferential option for the poor: solidarity with poor people by sharing their simplicity of life. That does not mean sharing the misery of the very poor—their lack even of things generally required for survival and health, such as food, clothing, shelter, and ordinary health care. No decent poor person either expects or wants anyone else to share such privations. Nor does it mean forgoing educational opportunities, housekeeping assistance, and other things close collaborators may need so as to provide more and better service. But solidarity with the poor does mean forgoing many things that conscientious people with just enough to make ends meet must do without. That will involve, for instance, traveling only when necessary, doing without delicacies and costly beverages, using free or inexpensive cultural resources and recreation, entertaining and celebrating special occasions as simply as poor people do, and using still-serviceable things rather than replacing them.

Most people tend to be careless and wasteful when using things that do not belong to them or to those they love or deeply respect. But close collaborators use many things belonging to the Church or their institute, and the abuse and waste of such things eventually adversely affect those Jesus wishes to benefit through close collaborators' service. Good close collaborators therefore regard all such things as Jesus' property and use them very carefully.

Whenever feasible, good close collaborators share with one another so as to live more economically and have more resources to devote to service. Such sharing is an essential feature of religious life, and it also is appropriate for diocesan presbyters and their bishops. Vatican II teaches: "Some common use of things, on the model of the sharing of goods extolled in the history of the early Church (see Acts 2.42–47), best paves the way for pastoral charity; and by that way of living presbyters can laudably put into practice the spirit of poverty commended by Christ" (OT 17). Thus, not only religious faithful to their charism but good diocesan clerics prefer communal life.<sup>272</sup> For its sake, some good religious make a long daily commute, and some good bishops reside in rectories instead of private residences.

Some close collaborators have special needs resulting from handicaps, illnesses, accidental injuries, psycho-moral disorders, and so on, and their good supervisors do what they can to meet these needs. Good associates of such people neither begrudge that use of economic resources nor assume that they are entitled to a larger share of the resources than they need. They also are careful to avoid abusing arrangements for meeting special needs, as by taking unreasonable advantage of health insurance provided by their institute or diocese and thus driving up its cost. So, for example, if

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272. As elsewhere in this chapter, *diocesan clerics* refers here only to those who have undertaken celibacy. Brotherly or sisterly life in common is one of the characteristic features of religious life: see PC 15; *CIC*, c. 607, §2. It also is recommended when possible for diocesan clerics: see CD 30, PO 8. Of course, communal life is commended for both groups of close collaborators primarily because it manifests communion in charity and is conducive to mutual support in service and life.

terminally ill, they will seek hospice care rather than costly examinations, repeated surgeries, and prolonged hospitalization.

Preferring others' spiritual welfare to their own economic interests, good close collaborators are prepared to forgo compensation due them for their service. Indeed, they will always do that if getting what they deserve would reduce the salvific benefits Jesus wants to confer by means of their collaboration. Their self-sacrifice imitates St. Paul's. He was entitled to economic support by the Corinthians: "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor 9.14). But he had not "made use of this right" for he was determined not to "put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ" (1 Cor 9.12). Apparently, Paul regularly supported himself; he tells other communities that sprang from the word he preached: "We worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God" (1 Thes 2.9; cf. 2 Thes 3.7–8), and: "I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me" (Acts 20.33–34; cf. Acts 18.3). Generally, of course, good close collaborators who forgo deserved compensation need not support themselves, as Paul did, since they usually are adequately supported by the donations of those they have served, as Jesus himself was during his public life (see Luke 8.2–3; cf. Mt 27.55–56, Mk 15.40–41).

Many people who have benefited from the service of good close collaborators offer them personal gifts.<sup>273</sup> When this happens, they respond with sincere, promptly expressed gratitude; but having done that, they then sometimes gently refuse the gift because it is unreasonably generous.<sup>274</sup> In refusing any gift, they warmly welcome and respond to the good will and/or kindly sentiment it represents.

They accept gifts offered reasonably that they can use appropriately to meet their own or others' authentic needs, while unusable gifts are dealt with in one of three ways. Items of very small economic value are, if possible, accepted as tokens of good will and discreetly discarded. An unusable item of significant value whose donor could possibly exchange it for something usable is refused with thanks together with an explanation that acknowledges its value and an expression of readiness to receive a usable alternative. Regardless of value, all other items that cannot be rightly used—a winter vacation at a luxurious tropical resort or simply an unneeded snack—are politely declined.

Often it is appropriate for a close collaborator to give a personal gift as an expression of love, friendship, respect, gratitude, appreciation, apology, solidarity in joy or sorrow, or encouragement. Lacking resources for expensive gifts, good close collaborators may give spiritual gifts, something they made or received, or a simple purchased item. If the reason for the gift might be missed, they express it in heartfelt language; and when a gift

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273. Each religious institute's particular law and customary practices determine how members and superiors deal with offered gifts. Good religious always observe those requirements.

274. Examples would be a substantial gift offered by a young child, mentally disabled person, or very poor person; or something offered by someone who mistakenly thinks he or she has an obligation to offer it.

would be appropriate but is impossible, they express their sentiment in words along with regret at being unable to offer more.

Good close collaborators' voluntary poverty shapes their actions in regard to the buildings and other goods of the Church or their religious institute. The attitude of good spouses toward their residence sheds light on this.

A family's home, like an individual's clothing, protects against the elements, is a medium of self-expression, and more or less manifests the family's position in society. But like an individual's body, without which he or she cannot live and act, a family's home also is necessary for its common life and cooperation. "Going home" therefore means both returning to the family's dwelling and participating in its common life, and family members are usually so strongly attached to their home that they tend to regard it as part of their communal reality. But even so, good married couples do not find their personal fulfillment in their home and its contents. Important as these things are, they are valued only as means that are good to *have*, while virtuous couples seek personal fulfillment in familial relationships—in *being* good spouses and parents.

Larger communities that need buildings for their common life and cooperation similarly tend to be strongly attached to those places and their contents. Parish churches and religious institutes' houses, colleges, hospitals, and so on are typically regarded by members of those communities as part of their communal reality. Like good spouses, however, good close collaborators do not find personal fulfillment in Church or community property. While some close collaborators and many supervisors invest a great deal of time and effort in such things, good ones find their personal fulfillment in their friendships with Jesus, their associates, and the people they serve. They value material goods as means to *have* and use, but are intent on *being* good clerics or religious. They are always ready to dispose of property that is no longer useful. In doing so, of course, they abide by relevant laws.<sup>275</sup> They also carefully respect the interests of lay people and are considerate of their feelings.

Involved in building and furnishing or administering facilities, including churches and chapels, good close collaborators carefully avoid idiosyncrasy and transient fashions, which are often wasteful and sure to be burdensome to those who come later. They also shun extravagance.<sup>276</sup> So, while they admire the devotion and generosity of those who constructed magnificent facilities in times gone by and they take good care of precious things that have been handed down by their predecessors, they also bear in mind John Paul II's reminder that

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275. See *CIC*, c. 634–40, cc. 1290–98; *CCEO*, cc. 423–25, c. 558, cc. 1034–42; also see relevant particular law.

276. They share the priorities attributed to Jesus by St. John Chrysostom in his reflection on the action of the woman who poured over Jesus' head precious ointment that could have been sold for a large sum to benefit the poor (see Mt 26.6–13; cf. Mk 14.3–9, Jn 12.2–8). Chrysostom thought Jesus would not have approved what the woman did had she asked beforehand, but appreciated her well-intentioned gesture and considered the disciples' reaction inappropriate. See his *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, lxxx; in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, ser. 1, 10:481–82.



part of the *teaching* and most ancient *practice* of the Church is her conviction that she is obliged by her vocation—she herself, her ministers and each of her members—to relieve the misery of the suffering, both far and near, not only out of her “abundance” but also out of her “necessities.” Faced by cases of need, one cannot ignore them in favor of superfluous church ornaments and costly furnishings for divine worship; on the contrary it could be obligatory to sell these goods in order to provide food, drink, clothing and shelter for those who lack these things.<sup>277</sup>

Knowing that Jesus would rather be available for those who need him and be cared for in the poor than be honored by sumptuousness, good close collaborators allocate fewer economic resources to facilities and furnishings than some of their predecessors did and more to service and helping the poor. Still, they do not overdo frugality. Rather, taking functionality and long-term serviceability into account, they prefer the elegance of simplicity and restraint carried out with materials and work of high quality.<sup>278</sup>

Good managers of secular, nonprofit organizations with more money than they need invest it prudently to provide for future contingencies, including possible expansion of the organization’s program. Good supervisors also invest prudently for foreseeable needs, including expansion. But the practice of poverty means they never have more money than required to meet current and reasonably foreseeable needs, because whatever is not required to meet those needs goes to help the poor. For instance, the bishop of a prosperous diocese may use diocesan funds to subsidize another, very poor one; and while good supervisors may purchase land that will be needed in a few years, they do not engage in real estate speculation.

The practice of poverty bears on thoughts as well as deeds, and on economic resources, broadly so-called, as well as in the strict sense.

The Tenth Commandment explicitly forbids only coveting others’ goods—that is, desiring to obtain them wrongfully—but, implicitly, other sins of thought bearing on economic resources (see *CCC*, 2534–47). Jesus teaches his disciples to “beware of all covetousness, for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Lk 12.15) and goes on at once to tell the parable of the rich fool (see Lk 12.16–21), whose sin is simply pursuing security by heaping up earthly goods rather than acquiring heavenly wealth. He then exhorts them not to be anxious even about the necessities of life but instead to trust the Father and concentrate on seeking his kingdom (see Lk 12.22–31). He concludes with the passage already quoted at the beginning of **2**, above, which ends: “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Lk 12.34). All thoughts and wishes about

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277. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 31, *AAS* 80 (1988) 555, *OR*, 29 Feb. 1988, 8. To the end of the passage quoted, the document’s fn. 59 is attached: “Cf., for example, St. John Chrysostom, *In Evang. S. Matthaei*, Hom. 50, 3–4: *PG* 58, 508–510; St. Ambrose, *De Officiis Ministrorum*, lib. II, XXVIII, 136–140: *PL* 16, 139–141; Possidius, *Vita S. Augustini Episcopi*, XXIV: *PL* 32, 53f.”

278. Functionality, of course, is defined by the purpose for which things are used. So, the functionality of buildings, furniture, and equipment to be used for different purposes is different. Unlike an office building, theater, or airport terminal, a church or chapel and its furnishings and equipment are functional by reference to prayer, liturgy, catechesis by images, and so on.

economic resources that distract close collaborators from the kingdom and their service to it are sins of thought; they result from inadequate detachment from this-worldly things, which in turn results from less-than-wholehearted love for Jesus and those to be served.

It follows that, apart from thanking God for economic resources, good close collaborators think about them only to the extent they are responsible for acquiring, caring for, or using them. They do not wish for goods and services they do not need or cannot have. They avoid and resist the media's seductions to greed just as sedulously as they do media seductions to lust. They do not grumble or even feel upset if a new assignment means giving up many things they have rightly enjoyed.<sup>279</sup> Unlike Lot's wife, whose heart remained in Sodom with the things she left behind (see Gn 19.15–26, Lk 17.28–32), they go wherever the Lord sends them and never look back. And because their inward detachment is complete, the consistency and cheerfulness of their austerity make it manifest that their treasure and heart are wholly in and with the kingdom, so that nobody can suspect them of hypocrisy with respect to money and possessions.

Those things aside, however, even many people who live frugally are careless about realities that are economic resources in the broad sense: their gifts, and their time and energy.

Many people inadequately appreciate their gifts and squander them by failing to do what they can to obtain the education or training required to develop them. By contrast, good close collaborators are grateful to God for their gifts and carefully cultivate them. This involves not only being good seminarians or novices and conscientious students but being diligent in lifelong formation and ongoing study.

Some close collaborators waste a large part of their strictly limited and absolutely irreplaceable resources of time and energy. They welcome distractions, do simple tasks very carefully so as to put off challenging ones, engage in pleasant activities with no real benefit for themselves or anyone else, muddle along and wander about due to lack of planning, carry out plans for doing now-pointless things, unreasonably polish and tinker with work already done well enough, rigidly adhere to a schedule in the face of emergencies demanding immediate attention, and do one thing at a time when they could just as well be doing two or more.

Often, however, such people meticulously plan their schedules to be sure of having one day off every week (plus Sunday afternoon and evening) and an annual month of vacation,<sup>280</sup> not counting days lost due to illness or spent on retreats, meetings, and personal business. Some jealously guard their free time by putting aside distinctive dress, traveling incognito, and skipping religious exercises, even weekday Mass.

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279. Thus, John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 30, AAS 84 (1992) 706, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, VIII, teaches that poverty is necessary for priests: "It is a condition and essential premise of the apostle's docility to the Spirit, making him ready to 'go forth,' without traveling bag or personal ties, following only the will of the Master."

280. Church law limits diocesan clerics to one month's vacation each year, not counting their retreat; see *CIC*, c. 283, §2 (cf. PO 20); c. 395, §2; c. 410; c. 533, §2; c. 550, §3. The particular law and/or customs of religious institutes regulate members' vacations and days off.

After explaining that Christians have been raised up to live a new life, St. Paul teaches:

Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of [Greek: *redeeming*] the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (Eph 5.15–16; cf. Col 3.17, 4.5)

Jesus redeemed his time: he made the most of it by using every moment to do the Father's will. Paul also seems to have wasted very little time and energy. In this matter as in others, their example has been followed by many saints and, in our own day, by people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta and Pope John Paul II. Like them, other good close collaborators husband their time and energy, so as to use them as completely and fruitfully as possible in fulfilling the responsibilities of their personal vocations.

Of course, close collaborators' vocations do include taking vacations and spending other time away from their usual surroundings and activities. Good close collaborators, who pour themselves out in service through long and often hectic days, need rest and recreation for good health. But they never take a break from their commitment to Jesus and the Church, from daily Mass and prayer, or from providing very urgently needed service that briefly interrupts a vacation. They generally use days off to take care of personal needs and visit family or friends. They may count a pilgrimage or activity pertaining to ongoing formation as their vacation or part of it.

Good superiors know that how they behave will have a decisive impact on the practice of poverty in their communities; good bishops know that only their own clear and consistent austerity and simplicity of life will make these things seem admirable rather than eccentric to their diocesan brothers. Not only do supervisors like these therefore always avoid luxuries, as other good Christians do; leading by example, they also practice frugality, regularly and cheerfully accepting the discomfort and inconveniences it imposes.

#### **4) Good close collaborators deal with others justly and mercifully.**

Justice in economic matters is a frequent theme for many close collaborators. Here, as in other areas, their actions should match their words:

On the parish and diocesan levels, through its agencies and institutions, the Church employs many people; it has investments; it has extensive properties for worship and mission. *All the moral principles that govern the just operation of any economic endeavor apply to the Church and its agencies and institutions; indeed the Church should be exemplary.* The Synod of Bishops in 1971 worded this challenge most aptly: "While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence, we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and lifestyle found within the Church herself."<sup>281</sup>

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281. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, 347, in *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops*, vol 5, ed. Hugh J. Nolan (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1989), 486–87. The included quotation is from: Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World* (30 Nov. 1971), AAS 63 (1971) 933, Flannery, 2:703. When the bishops speak of the Church's "agencies and

The special lifestyle of bishops and other close collaborators may nevertheless result in their failure to understand the real life situations of others where economic matters are concerned. So, for instance, a pastor who lacks insight into the other responsibilities of his housekeeper-cook may treat her unfairly without realizing it, and she may be reluctant to insist on her rights; a mother superior who asks a community member's father for professional photographic services, assuming he will donate them, may be shocked when billed, despite the sharply discounted rate. Sometimes the difficulty is mutual: failure on one side to understand why some people insist on specifying purposes for which their donations are to be used, and failure on the other side to understand the burdens such restrictions impose.

Good close collaborators strive to form their consciences well, so that they will treat others fairly and make efficient use of the economic resources for which they are responsible. Humbly aware of their limited comprehension of others' interests and limitations, they deal with or even prevent many problems by candid and timely dialogue with the other party involved in a transaction. They often ask someone with whom they are dealing what he or she thinks would be fair and why. They seek and follow sound advice by reviewing their business relationships with able and fair-minded people whose situations are similar to those of the people with whom they have dealings.

They also practice moderation in employing people. This means hiring not just for their personal convenience or comfort but to meet real needs, not least the needs of those to be served, especially the poor. In hiring and dealing with employees, they not only abide by Church and civil laws but conform to the Church's social teaching regarding labor-management relations.

Good close collaborators hire fairly. That means focusing on applicants' qualifications for a job, including their faith and devout practice of it, to the extent relevant, and ignoring, to the extent irrelevant, many other factors, like family or friendship ties, race, gender, age, and so on. Another part of it is providing employees with wages, hours, benefits, and working conditions that meet legal requirements and are at least as good as, and often better than, those offered by other employers in the vicinity. Often better, because good close collaborators never take advantage of anyone's need for work and compensate every employee fairly. Among other things, fair compensation means a wage adequate to provide the necessities of life for a full-time employee and his or her dependents, pay for overtime work, and appropriate benefits; it excludes unjust practices like exploiting undocumented workers, using contractors who treat their employees unfairly, and paying women less than men for the same, or even more and better, work (see *LCL*, 765–67).

Promises about the duration of an ongoing employee's job and provisions if it is terminated are grave moral obligations, and good close collaborators always clearly state such promises in a legally enforceable

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institutions," they at least refer to entities that are juridic persons in the Church; that includes not only dioceses, other particular churches (see *CIC*, c. 373), and parishes (see *CIC*, c. 515, §3; *CCEO*, c. 280, §3); but also religious institutes, their provinces, and houses (see *CIC*, c. 634, §1; *CCEO*, c. 423).

employment contract.<sup>282</sup> They also take care that workers are well trained, including helping them understand the purpose of what they do so that, insofar as feasible, they can work without supervision. Where supervision is appropriate, it is clear and consistent, and given in timely fashion. Employees are never required to compromise sound standards for their work, and unusually good work is rewarded. There is no meddling in employees' personal affairs. Their need for security or hope for advancement is not exploited so that they will provide extra services or do personal favors.

Good close collaborators also exercise moderation in purchasing goods, obtaining services, and making investments. They proceed deliberately, not impulsively, and carefully consider available alternatives. Having made a purchase or arranged for a service, they faithfully fulfill their part of the deal. In particular, they never demand more than was agreed upon and always pay on time.

When they borrow things, they take care of them, return them in good time, and offer fair compensation for any wear or damage that a reasonable lender would not have anticipated.

Good close collaborators also consider the appropriateness of accepting donations offered to them.

If a potential donor offers ill-gotten gains that they judge ought to be used to make restitution, they refuse the offer and explain why.<sup>283</sup> If a potential donor offers ill-gotten gains that they judge he or she can rightly offer as alms, they accept the offer and explain why to the donor. Unless the transaction is confidential, they also may forestall or answer criticism by publicly explaining why.

If a potential donor specifies the purpose for which his or her donation is to be used, good close collaborators accept it only if the purpose is reasonable and they can see to it that the donation will be used in that way. In dealing with things previously donated for specific purposes, they abide by the donor's conditions insofar as possible. If that becomes morally impossible, they obtain a reduction, moderation, or commutation of those conditions from the donor or the appropriate civil and/or ecclesiastical authority.<sup>284</sup>

When raising funds, some close collaborators fail to describe accurately and clearly how the money will be used, spend far more than most donors

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282. No close collaborator, not even a supervisor, can ensure that his or her vague and/or unwritten promises will be carried out; only clear and legally enforceable ones bind *all* supervisors. Realizing that employees will be wronged if promises are not fulfilled, good close collaborators therefore make only legally binding ones.

283. On restitution, see *LCL*, 444–58. Those who donate what they should put to any other use, including making restitution, may intend only good ends but nevertheless do wrong. Even if such a donation can be accepted without formally cooperating in the wrongdoing, the good of the potential donor and the wronged party, as well the clouding of witness likely to result from accepting such a donation, require close collaborators to refuse such donations and to promote restitution and reconciliation.

284. For relevant canonical norms, see *CIC*, cc. 121–23; c. 616, §1; c. 1284, §2, 3°, 4°; c. 1300; c. 1303, §2; c. 1307, §1; *CCEO*, c. 438, §4; c. 926, §1; cc. 929–30; c. 1028, §2, 3°; c. 1044; c. 1046, §1; c. 1051, §1. Canonical authorization for reducing, moderating, or commuting conditions is in *CIC*, c. 1310, *CCEO*, c. 1054; relevant norms of just civil law and the particular law of dioceses and religious institutes also must be met.

expect on the fund raising itself, and/or falsely suggest that the faithful ought to tithe or give some other set portion of their income.<sup>285</sup> Good close collaborators regard each potential donor as a brother or sister in Jesus. They candidly tell potential donors how their gifts will be used and make no secret of how costly fund raising is. Their aim in such transparency is not only fairness to donors but the fostering of authentic Christian communion between benefactors and beneficiaries, like that St. Paul strove to develop between Gentiles and Jews.<sup>286</sup> Also, like Paul, good close collaborators provide theologically sound reasons for giving but leave the amount to each donor's discernment: "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor 9.7).

In all economic affairs, from employing people to fundraising, good close collaborators take into account all the costs and burdens involved in a transaction, including probable bad side effects, such as impairing witness to the kingdom's primacy or to some moral truth or Christian value.

Wrongdoing in their dealings is likely to be scandalous in the strict sense: it is likely to tempt others to commit similar sins. And the other party or parties may well think that in dealing with them they are dealing with the Church herself, so that perceived wrongs are likely to provoke reactions ranging from mild resentment of the Church to resistance to the gospel or abandonment of the faith. Good close collaborators therefore not only are strictly honest but candid in every transaction, so as to avoid creating false expectations or otherwise misleading anyone. They also not only observe the law and fulfill legally enforceable obligations but abide by the Golden Rule and apply it mercifully when dealing with the poor.

Finally, good close collaborators take to heart Jesus' teaching:

"Do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well." (Mt 6.31–33; cf. Lk 12.22–31)

Engrossed in seeking the kingdom and helping others enter it, they meet this-worldly needs but are seldom distracted by worries about them. By trusting God completely with respect to such matters, they bear witness to his wise and loving providence. Since reasonable budgeting, saving, and insuring are in accord with that trust, they are not financially reckless. But whether practicing austerity as diocesan clerics or as religious of a particular institute, they never accumulate more wealth than they reasonably expect will be needed to fulfill foreseeable obligations, and they use any surplus to improve their service, to help other close collaborators improve theirs, or to help the poor.<sup>287</sup>

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285. On these matters, see *DMQ*, 64–68, 444–47.

286. St. Paul's collection for the Christians of Jerusalem provides a model for close collaborators' fund raising. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible 32A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 398–453, comments on the main relevant text, 2 Cor 8–9; he explains that, while "Paul was undoubtedly concerned to provide needed economic assistance to 'the poor among the saints in Jerusalem'" (411), the collection "was also an ecumenical act, an act of Christian fellowship, an enactment of the partnership of Jew and Gentile in the gospel of Christ" (412).

287. See PC 13, PO 17, *CIC*, c. 282, c. 640; *CCEO*, c. 385, §1.

## G: Silence, Communication, Witness, and Self-Presentation

### 1) Communicating only for good reasons, good close collaborators are often silent.

The most important purpose of talking is communication to share thoughts and feelings, so as to build up fellowship, shape worthwhile cooperation, or foster some other genuine human good. People also talk—essentially to themselves—in order to clarify their thoughts and deal with their feelings, and those also can be good purposes.

When small children begin talking, parents and others are likely to reward everything they say with favorable attention and praise. So, children naturally tend to say whatever occurs to them. Eventually they learn not to talk about certain things and in certain situations, and they refuse to talk when sulky. But most children regularly engage in idle chatter that wastes their time, burdens others, and benefits no one. That childish way is put aside by mature adults.

Silence can of course be abused, but in keeping silent, one avoids both saying what one should not and other moral problems the talkative often create for themselves. Then too, reticent people keep in reserve aspects of themselves to be shared in developing intimate friendships, and what they do say has greater impact. Their silence also allows others to express themselves more fully and, not prompted by someone else's cues, perhaps more accurately. Indeed, silence is essential for real conversation: when one person is speaking, others must listen attentively. Interrupting and responding too quickly often manifest inattention or a lack of openness. The unspoken message is: You need to hear what I want to say, but what you wish to say or are trying to tell me is hardly worth hearing.

Good close collaborators bridle their tongues (see Jas 1.26, 3.1–12). They are patient in listening to everyone they serve. Their talking is “only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear” (Eph 4.29). As suggested above, their silence has many benefits, including enhancing the impact of their words communicating what Jesus and the Church wish them to share and precluding talk that would distract from the message or impede its reception. Their reserve forestalls many temptations to lie and reveal confidences. By talking with associates only to build up fellowship and shape cooperation, they avoid burdening these important relationships with superficial sociability or inappropriate content. Reticence also leaves them with the time and inner resources for constant prayer.<sup>288</sup>

Good close collaborators also speak spontaneously when doing so is appropriate. Their presumption in favor of silence does not preclude conversation likely to be beneficial in any way. They avoid both irritable

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288. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 47, AAS 84 (1992) 742, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XIII, teaches: “A necessary training in prayer in a context of noise and agitation like that of our society, is an education in the deep human meaning and religious value of *silence*, as the spiritual atmosphere vital for perceiving God's presence and for allowing oneself to be won over by it (cf. 1 Kings. 19:1 ff.)” The same point is made by the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*, 38, AAS 82 (1990) 496–97, *OR*, 19 Mar. 1990, 5.

outbursts and sulking. When conflicts develop, they wait for the right moment to foster reconciliation with gentle words.

When good close collaborators are together, they strive to maintain the silence necessary for prayer and fruitful work. They avoid—and enlist one another’s cooperation in avoiding—situations likely to lead to harmful talk or idle chatter. Those who reside together try to make their common dwelling peaceful and avoid disturbing one another—for example, they use earphones when listening alone to electronic media.

## **2) Valuing communication, good close collaborators communicate with great care.**

Authentic communication involves sharing something really in one’s mind and/or heart in order to obtain something, provide some benefit, foster cooperation, foster communion, and/or perhaps some or all of these.<sup>289</sup> But people often abuse communicative behavior to conceal their true selves, manipulate others, and live together more or less comfortably without sharing in real communion.

Good close collaborators value genuine communication, because it is essential for spreading Jesus’ kingdom and for initiating and building up the authentic communion of persons that is both a sign and a constituent of the kingdom. They realize that abuses of communicative behavior would damage their witness and impede their cooperation with one another and the services Jesus wants them to provide. While those considerations make such abuses abhorrent, they abhor them especially as infidelity to Jesus, who is pure truth and gives himself completely. Wanting others to know, appreciate, love, and imitate Jesus as they do, and to share like them in the blessings of communion with him and in him, they make him, rather than themselves, the focus of all their efforts to communicate.

Many people do not hear what is really said to them. They hear what they want to hear, what their prejudices lead them to expect, or what their weaknesses cause them to fear. But good close collaborators are good listeners. Patient listening helps them respond better to others as the unique persons they are before God. When listening, they try to put themselves in the speaker’s place so as to share his or her way of seeing things.<sup>290</sup>

They often say, “If I’ve understood what you’re saying, I think you’re telling me that . . .,” and then restate what they believe the speaker is trying to communicate. Or again: “I gather that what’s going on really upsets you, and you’re wondering what to do about it.” Such remarks are meant to verify their own insight and to assure the other party that they are paying attention and trying to understand *him* or *her*, not just the message, as charitably as possible.

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289. In recent years, much serious work has been done on conversation. Gerald Goodman and Glenn Esterly, *The Talk Book: The Intimate Science of Communicating in Close Relationships* (New York: Ballantine, 1988), provides an overview of that field, which might profitably be studied by every close collaborator.

290. Empathy is sensitive awareness of another’s feelings and their objects; it is manifested by gently acknowledging the other’s feelings in a way that he or she will recognize as accurate. Lawrence J. Bookbinder, “Touch Another Heart,” <http://www.touch-another-heart.com/index.htm> (accessed 29 Jan. 2008), provides a brief, helpful treatment of empathy and listening skills.



To be sure, it is not always possible to agree with others, approve what they do, or do what they ask. Still, good close collaborators are eager to understand others and ready to learn about their own defects and mistakes. The way they listen and respond, in words and actions, makes it clear that they genuinely care about those with whom they talk.

Many of this world's very important people regularly disregard communications that challenge their thinking and behavior, and some ignore almost all uninvited messages. This, however, is not the way good close collaborators proceed, including those in high positions. Regarding themselves as servants, they are determined not to be or even to seem aloof and uncaring. They handle messages to them as they hope others will handle their messages: Any communication that seems serious and authentic is promptly acknowledged and appropriately answered.<sup>291</sup>

While humor can be sexually suggestive, irreverent, hurtful, or irrelevant to the serious communication it accompanies, many passages in the synoptic gospels show that Jesus laced his conversations with humor.<sup>292</sup> Good close collaborators seek to use humor as he did, avoiding everything unseemly, cruel, or distracting. In preaching and teaching, they use touches of humor to make important points more memorable; and self-effacing remarks or anecdotes occasionally soften their faithful communication of truths some listeners will find hard to hear. But they use humor only when certain it will enhance communication and are careful to avoid humor that is liable to be misunderstood.

Lying is always wrong. By expressing something at odds with their actual beliefs or other aspects of their inner selves and trying to get others to accept it, liars not only divide their inner and outer selves (and so damage their own unity) but also impede or damage the community that authentic communication would foster.

Lying is at odds in a special way with life in Christ. New Christians must put off their old selves and ways of acting suited to the fallen human condition, and put on new selves "created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another" (Eph 4.24–25; cf. Col 3.9–10). "With his neighbor" should not be taken restrictively: By the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches that one's neighbor is anyone in need (see Lk 10.29–37); and everyone without exception needs the unclouded witness of Christians. Therefore, for the sake of the communion into which Jesus invites everyone, his members must entirely exclude falsehood from their communications. That surely is why he called for truthfulness so perfect that oaths would be unnecessary: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil" (Mt 5.37; cf. Jas 5.12). A lie that would be only light matter for a

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291. St. Paul's letters to the Corinthians provide a splendid model for close collaborators who receive challenging communications from those they are trying to serve. Today, of course, certain close collaborators, like some other public figures, cannot personally receive and respond to every message sent to them. But good close collaborators who need help in handling communications see to it that their helpers let them hear what people are saying and respond effectively and authentically on their behalf.

292. Although not all his opinions are acceptable, Elton Trueblood, *The Humor of Christ* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), provides a helpful treatment.

nonbeliever might well be grave matter for a Christian, because the credibility of the Christian's witness to the gospel is at stake.<sup>293</sup>

Because Jesus' close collaborators act in his person and/or in the person of the Church, their credibility directly affects the fruitfulness of Jesus' teaching through the Church. Because both their witness and their failure to give witness are particularly visible, their credibility is especially important; and since they have given their whole lives over for salvific service, their credibility with respect to other matters affects the credibility of their witness. Untrustworthiness on their part can nurture skeptical doubt and even lend plausibility to ludicrous claims—for example, that the Catholic Church concealed rather than handed on the truth about Jesus. Therefore, the perfect truthfulness required of every Christian is even more urgently required of Jesus' close collaborators, and lying that would be only light matter for other Christians may well be grave matter for them.

Besides never lying, good close collaborators never resort to a mental reservation with the intent to deceive and seek to avoid seeming to lie, acting in ways likely to deceive, and materially cooperating with others' untruthful communications. They are candid in matters related to their service. In describing situations in the Church and reporting on their own work, they are realistic, so that positive and negative elements are accurately represented. They avoid optimistic and pessimistic shading. They also avoid flattery, boasting, and false modesty.

At the same time, they keep certain sorts of information and opinions to themselves. They are consistently silent about matters confided to them, so that, when they refuse to answer a question, that refusal will not reveal what must remain secret. They share information that will damage the reputations of others only when there is a compelling reason (see *CIC*, c. 220), and they share their own secrets and opinions only when confident that doing so will not harm others and is likely to benefit someone.

### **3) Good close collaborators constantly bear clear and powerful witness.**

*Apostolate* refers to every activity of the Church directed toward carrying out her mission, and her mission is the extension of Jesus' mission (see *LCL*, 98–104). Asked by Pilate about his kingship, Jesus says: "For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth" (Jn 18.37). And after rising from the dead, he tells the apostles: "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1.8). Thus, bearing witness is the heart of all apostolate. What Jesus and his Church offer, however, is not a share in something they discovered or invented; nor is it participation in a human project. Jesus as man and his Church received what they offer as a gift from God the Father—the gift definitively given through his self-revelation in Jesus (see Jn 15.15, 17.1–18). Those receiving it can make it available to others only by calling attention to it, making clear what it is, and showing how to share in it by adhering to Jesus. Those who thus help others recognize and accept the Father's gift are Jesus' witnesses.

Every Christian ought to bear such witness, not only by words when appropriate but also and constantly by living a holy life (see *LG* 38–42,

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<sup>293</sup> For a fuller development of some of the preceding points about lying, see *LCL*, 395–96 and 405–12.

AA 6; *CIC*, cc. 210–11). Because close collaborators concentrate on the things of the Lord and their lifestyle frees them of many responsibilities, they have distinctive opportunities to bear straightforward witness. But their failings in what they say and do also can betray Jesus and damage the Church in special ways. This gives them special responsibilities with respect to witness.

Jesus teaches all his disciples to bear witness by living holy lives: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5.16). But he also warns: “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven” (Mt 6.1). Everyone—and so every Christian—is tempted to act a part in others’ eyes in order to win their admiration and gain status. Close collaborators, aware of their responsibility to bear witness and their spiritual and moral shortcomings, are likely to be strongly tempted to try to appear better than they really are—to act the part of a saint rather than struggling to be one.

So how are good close collaborators supposed to avoid engaging in pious practices in order to be seen by others while also doing many of their good works, including some pious practices, for others to see? The answer of course is: by acting with the right motives. When engaging in pious practices that others will notice and doing other good works, they act out of love of God and neighbor. Love motivates them to use their gifts according to the Father’s plan to help others appreciate and share in his blessings. As married people, despite failures when they were younger, sometimes are sufficiently motivated by love for their children to overcome bad habits, live devoutly, and support their spouses in doing the same, so good close collaborators’ love for those they serve similarly motivates them to provide good example, avoid leading anyone into sin (which is scandal strictly so-called), and support their associates in doing likewise. They may well think: “I’ll celebrate (or participate in) Mass as reverently as I can because I owe it to the Lord and to help others appreciate how precious it is.” They never think: “I’ll go to daily Mass because I want others to think I’m holy,” much less, “. . . to see how holy I am.”

Good close collaborators do not perform pious practices or other good works in order to be admired and praised. They do the same when nobody seems favorably impressed or sees what they do. When someone does admire their good works, they turn the conversation to something else and, if circumstances permit, speak of what God has done for that person and everyone’s obligation to thank God for his gifts. Self-interest for them resides in the hope of being rewarded by the Father with a share in his kingdom, and when doing God’s will is likely to offend others, alienate them, and even lead to martyrdom, they gladly pay the price, while those who only play the part hesitate, procrastinate, prevaricate—and tell themselves that such behavior will somehow lead to greater good or, at least, is a lesser evil.

The responsibilities of close collaborators in the salvific service of Jesus morally preclude doing various things that would be morally acceptable for others, and make some things grave matter for them that are

light matter for other Christians. Since they have a special responsibility to bear witness, sins which obscure witness are more serious for them.

As a result, close collaborators often are tempted to sin *discreetly*, and sinning discreetly to maintain the appearance of virtue constitutes hypocrisy.<sup>294</sup> Jesus taught his disciples:

Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

Whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear him! (Lk 12.1–5)

Concealing one's own wrongdoing or an associate's rather than rectifying one's own is never appropriate for a close collaborator and often a completely ineffective way of trying to avoid leading others into sin, even if it temporarily prevents bad publicity (which is scandal loosely so-called). Therefore, like Jesus, good close collaborators abhor hypocrisy. They face up to evil in themselves and others, use appropriate means to deal with it, strive to protect those to be served from being led into sin, and encourage associates who may have been led astray to examine themselves and repent any sin.

Refraining from covering up immorality does not require publicizing every sin one secretly commits, much less revealing others' wrongdoing; but it does mean never lying to conceal anyone's wrongdoing, and disclosing one's own wrongdoing and that of others when some responsibility requires candor. For example, people involved in automobile accidents while driving under the influence of alcohol often lie to avoid legal sanctions and/or embarrassment, but anyone wishing to be a good close collaborator would provide good example by being truthful—and, insofar as other moral obligations permit, completely candid—and then taking any appropriate steps to prevent a repetition. Again, employers often dishonestly deny that their employees have wrongly harmed others so as to protect the interests of their business. When close collaborators wrongly harm those they should be serving, good supervisors give priority to the need of those wronged for appropriate care, and therefore are prepared to admit the wrongdoing.

Many close collaborators do not bear clear and powerful witness by their lives. They may excel in some respects, but they fall seriously short in others. For example, some are chaste and work hard but are ambitious and/or self-indulgent in food, drink, living arrangements, and so on; some

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294. Ananias and Sapphira were not obliged to sell their property or give the proceeds to the Church; their sin was pretending to donate the entire proceeds while keeping some (see Acts 5.1–11). In doing that, they “agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord” (Acts 5.9). Had their charity been genuine, it would have borne witness to the Spirit's enlivening of the Church with divine love. Their hypocrisy suggested that the Church is simply another human community, whose high-sounding ideals would turn out to be pious frauds. Richard J. Dillon, “Acts,” *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 738, makes the point: “Ananias's guilt is no less than denying the holy Spirit's presence in the church by lying to it . . . , thus serving Satan's intolerable challenge to the testimony of the Spirit through the voluntary sharing of goods by believers.”

who seem to have other virtues are harsh with certain sorts of people or regularly quarrel with associates. Only close collaborators who recognize and deal their weaknesses and shortcomings are well integrated; all aspects of their lives reflect confident faith, lively hope, and ardent love of God and neighbor.

Because lay Christians are rightly preoccupied with worldly affairs, fulfilling their personal vocations—which makes their lives holy and so gives sound witness—sometimes prevents them from bearing witness by words. While often able to bear witness to those whom close collaborators cannot reach, they sometimes are prevented from taking prophetic stands by other responsibilities—such as supporting their dependents. For those who must work within unjust social structures, this often rightly involves material cooperation with unjust acts in ways that obscure their holiness and thus weaken the witness of their lives. Sometimes, too, laypeople must oppose injustices in ways that further alienate those responsible for them.

Free, as Jesus was, to accept bad consequences and even to lay down their lives, good close collaborators speak out boldly. Less involved than the laity in worldly affairs, however, they hardly ever need to oppose injustices with the force that people with this-worldly responsibilities sometimes rightly use. Also, too, good close collaborators generally avoid materially cooperating with unjust acts. At the same time, they, like Jesus, befriend evildoers so as to welcome them as brothers and sisters in him.<sup>295</sup>

To live a holy life one not only must do the Father's will but accept whatever evils he allows to come one's way. The gospel is good news precisely because it focuses on the ultimate evils, sin and death, and gives sure hope of overcoming them. Good close collaborators face their own sufferings and come to terms with them. While working energetically to overcome evils that afflict others and themselves, they patiently endure evils they cannot rightly avoid or avoid at all. They bear witness to their hope for the kingdom by suffering joyfully and explaining why, as Paul did: "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom 8.18); and: "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Col 1.24).

Sound witness by words has certain characteristics: "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pt 3.15). This contains a concise set of norms. First, one must be prepared to give the witness, with resources to draw on and readiness and willingness to use them. Second, witnessing explains Christian hope, which shapes the holy life that leads others to wonder and ask for an account; it therefore focuses on the principal object of hope, namely, the prospect of entering into the coming kingdom. Third, love of neighbor shapes sound witness, which

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295. Lk 15.1–2 narrates that tax collectors and sinners were coming to Jesus, and that the Pharisees and scribes were complaining that Jesus welcomed them, ate with them—and thus became their companion. Three parables follow: the lost sheep (3–7), the lost coin (8–10), and the prodigal son and his recalcitrant brother (11–32). The parables manifest the Father's love for sinners and his desire that they repent and enjoy familial communion with him and one another.

effectively enlightens questioners about the gift God is offering them in Jesus while not arousing suspicions about one's motives that could provoke disbelief and lead those who wondered to reject one's account and miss out on God's offer. Thus, the account provided, while making a defense, should be offered with gentleness and reverence.

In providing such witness, good close collaborators are completely immersed in the truth of faith, empathize with those asking challenging questions, and are docile to the Holy Spirit; they never use stock formulae which, though sound in themselves, would not communicate effectively but creatively employ simple and direct language that comes from their hearts and fully takes into account the views of those they address, both true and false. This means affirming questioners' true views and showing their harmony with the fuller truth of the gospel while questioning their views which are incompatible with the gospel to help them realize that the gospel could be true.<sup>296</sup>

Good close collaborators try to see every question's connection to the kingdom and the prospect of sharing in it. They try to call the attention of every questioner to that prospect and give him or her an account of their own hope. Since they are grateful for the gift of faith, absolutely confident in its truth, and eager to make it available to others, they welcome challenging questions and, in responding, are never ashamed, diffident, defensive, irritable, or arrogant but always glad to speak up, confident, patient, gracious, and humbly respectful.

Since Vatican II, it has sometimes been said that close collaborators who bear witness should present the truth but almost entirely avoid mentioning contrary positions and refuting errors. As the New Testament makes clear, however, neither Jesus nor Paul nor any other New Testament figure we know of acted like that. In fact, contrary positions must often be considered and errors refuted to present the truth fully and clearly. Partly that is so because people generally identify and understand important truths, including those of faith, only by considering the significance of counterpositions. Then too, because faith includes paradoxes, believers are accustomed to accepting and holding truths that seem inconsistent with each other; and if close collaborators ignore erroneous positions, some will suppose them to be somehow compatible with faith, and will accept and act on them. Such people can be injured in this way despite their good faith.

Still, in bearing witness, good close collaborators are not preoccupied with contrary positions and errors but concentrate on the truth of the gospel and strive to present it fully and clearly. They focus primarily on the central truths, realizing that other truths presuppose these and that they provide the right reasons for accepting the gospel as a whole. Aware of the Spirit

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296. Someone might object that many close collaborators lack the courage and the ability to be creative in bearing witness. However, to the Twelve, Jesus says: "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" (Mt 10.16). Since hostile reactions are inevitable, those sent must avoid needlessly making themselves vulnerable and make it clear that they intend no harm. Jesus then explains (17–18) that the Twelve will be persecuted and will bear witness under distress, but assures them (19–20): "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

working with them and in them, they hold fast to everything they received from Jesus and reject anything at odds with it (see Jn 16.7–11). In bearing witness, therefore, they also consider counterpositions, and show how their defects are incompatible with faith.

Good close collaborators regard errors within the Church as wounds to be healed. They deal gently and patiently with afflicted members, helping to support their recovery.

When dealing with religious people who do not accept the gospel, good close collaborators presume their sincerity, respect their freedom, and are filled with compassion at their ignorance of Jesus. So, they strive to share with those others the blessings the Father intends for all human beings. That missionary endeavor requires listening to such people, finding among them signs of the Spirit's presence that throw new light on the gospel, and responding to their questions in a way that authentically develops Catholic doctrine.<sup>297</sup>

Some professionals are excellent technicians and decent people but relate poorly to those they serve—for instance, a skillful and conscientious surgeon may be gruff and callous. Good close collaborators see Jesus even in the worst of those they serve, look for and affirm whatever is good in each person, and treat everyone gently and kindly. Conscientious about providing objectively sound service, they also manifest their concern and love for each person regardless of his or her apparent sinfulness or even unbelief, bad attitudes, low status, or other unattractive characteristics. Since this way of acting is an aspect of holiness people appreciate, it confirms verbal witness to God's gratuitous love for every human being.

#### **4) Good close collaborators communicate well with their associates and those to be served.**

Cooperation depends on good communication. The common residences many close collaborators share require their cooperation. More important, in most cases, the service that they provide requires that they cooperate among themselves and have the cooperation of those served. A whole book might well be written about these matters. Only a few specific points will be considered here.

Because difficulties sometimes arise in attempts at communicating, some close collaborators tend to avoid sharing their thoughts and feelings about important matters with associates, especially those with whom they are not fully at ease. Informal conversations are limited to safe topics and superficial, sociable exchanges, while communication about important matters takes place only in formal meetings. Thus, relationships among close collaborators who work and even live together sometimes fail to give clear and powerful witness to the gifts they share, and they cooperate less—and serve less well—than they otherwise might.

Good close collaborators encourage associates who fit this description to overcome their reserve. This means finding and encouraging conflict-free ways of conversing informally about important matters. Psychological

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297. On interreligious dialogue, see John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 55–56, AAS 93 (2001) 306–7, *OR*, 10 Jan. 2001, X–XI; on development in the handing on of revelation, see DV 8.

counseling may be sought about techniques of communicating and conflict resolution that have helped many married couples.

Even when interpersonal harmony exists, some close collaborators shy away from sharing personal experiences important to them. They and those who live and work with them remain ignorant of one another's interior lives and seldom or never pray together informally. Speaking of religious communities, a document of the Holy See points out that some "complain about the poor quality of the fundamental sharing of spiritual goods. Communication takes place, they say, around problems and issues of marginal importance but rarely is there any sharing of what is vital and central to the journey of consecration."<sup>298</sup> Some presbyters say the same of communication with their diocesan brothers. The document cited provides a succinct analysis of the problem and how to deal with it:

This can have painful consequences, because then spiritual experience imperceptibly takes on individualistic overtones. A mentality of self-sufficiency becomes more important; a lack of sensitivity to others develops; and gradually significant relationships are sought outside the community.

This problem should be dealt with explicitly. It requires, on the one hand, a tactful and caring approach which does not exert pressure; but it also requires courage and creativity, searching for ways and methods which will make it possible for all to learn to share, simply and fraternally, the gifts of the Spirit so that these may indeed belong to all and be of benefit to all (see 1 Cor 12.7).

Communion originates precisely in sharing the Spirit's gifts, a sharing of faith and in faith, where the more we share those things which are central and vital, the more the fraternal bond grows in strength. This kind of communication can also be helpful as a way of learning a style of sharing which will enable members in their own apostolates to "confess their faith" in simple and easy terms which all may understand and appreciate.<sup>299</sup>

Good close collaborators learn how to overcome the individualism of their spirituality and share spiritual gifts with their associates and the people they serve. Communication like this nurtures gratitude to God and the network of spiritual friendships essential for authentic communion in Jesus.

Good close collaborators offer frequent words of sympathy, encouragement, praise, and gratitude—words that foster communion. Sensitive to others' difficulties, they express concern and readiness to help insofar as they can. They also share their own sufferings in order to be supported in their efforts to overcome evils or endure them with resignation. They are quick to admit faults and seek forgiveness, and equally ready to overlook the small wrongs of others and forgive serious ones. They respect and love one another even when they disagree significantly and are convinced they must work at cross purposes.<sup>300</sup> When other members of the group have gifts that its supervisor seems to overlook, they call attention to

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298. Congregation For Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Fraternal Life in Community*, 32, EV, 14:423, p. 245; (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1974), 10.

299. *Ibid.*, 424–25, pp. 245–46;

300. On dealing with profound conflicts among close collaborators, see **3–E–4**, above.



them, just as, when appropriate, they call supervisors' attention to the needs and problems of others.

While people who work and even live together but are not close friends generally refrain from offering one another unsolicited advice about personal matters, good close collaborators, seeing their associates as brothers and sisters in Christ, act accordingly. Ideally, they make friends, but at least they love the others as good siblings do; and because everything in any close collaborator's life that another person can notice either contributes to or impedes their common salvific service, there are no private, personal matters in things like this. Good close collaborators therefore regularly give and accept unsolicited advice in order to foster one another's true well being and the quality of their service.

Others who seem to be sinning should be admonished (see Mt 18.15–17, Lk 17.3, 1 Cor 6.1–6, Gal 6.1, 1 Thes 5.14, 2 Thes 3.14–15, Jas 5.19–20). This responsibility is distinct from the responsibility those in authority have to direct and correct others, and is grounded in love of neighbor—of the apparent sinner and anyone likely to be injured by his or her sin. One of course should admonish lovingly and in a way likely to be beneficial—for example, by gentle questioning. Admonishing the weak is an important part of supporting them.

The responsibility to admonish, especially about a grave matter, can be grave. Afraid they will be condemned as judgmental, however, many do not fulfill it. But admonishing does not involve judging others or considering oneself morally superior.<sup>301</sup> Still, the responsibility is conditional: one considers everything and refrains from admonishing if convinced it would be ineffective or at odds with another responsibility.<sup>302</sup>

People who practice the same profession have understandable but morally unacceptable motives to refrain from admonishing one another. So, for instance, awareness of their own shortcomings and vulnerability to criticism leads many to be lax with their fellows. However, good close collaborators not only support one another in striving for holiness but realize that it is essential for their service. They often admonish one another and are receptive to admonitions. Since groups in which admonition is neglected are likely to become lax and lukewarm, good supervisors encourage the practice as an essential element in ongoing formation. Done well in a group accustomed to exchanging unsolicited advice, admonishing generally is beneficial; seldom are there cogent reasons not to do it.

Almost all children and many adults are convinced that one should never or hardly ever report the misbehavior of a relative, friend, or member of one's peer group. But if people's present or prospective misbehavior is likely to seriously injure themselves, others, and/or the common good, those aware of it have a grave duty to inform relevant authorities unless there is a cogent reason not to—for example, a special duty of confidentiality, such as the seal of confession, or moral certitude that admonishing the apparent sinner will suffice or informing the authorities would be pointless. When close collaborators misbehave in ways likely to injure anyone seriously, their action and the injury are

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301. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 642.

302. The statements in this paragraph are explained more fully in *LCL*, 227–32.

likely to have further, and often far graver, bad consequences; lacking a cogent reason for not speaking up, their good associates inform a supervisor and/or other relevant authority about the misbehavior.

A few additional points deserve attention regarding close collaborators' communication with those they are to serve.

All close collaborators should act *in persona ecclesiae* in ways that foster the fruitfulness of the actions a cleric does *in persona Christi*. To succeed in this very important mission, they need the whole-hearted cooperation of those they are trying to serve. Jesus' saving acts will not bear the fruit he desires unless recipients cooperate by gratefully welcoming the divine gifts his acts impart, cherishing them, using them well, and sharing them with others. To obtain this cooperation, close collaborators must communicate well with those to be served.

Vatican II affirms the Church's universality while recognizing cultural diversity. It explains that the Church must make suitable adaptations to the people of each culture, but it warns against two things: clinging to uniformity in nonessentials and giving up anything essential to Catholic faith or practice (see SC 37–40, LG 13, AG 22, GS 44). To the Council's insight that everything God has given humankind in Jesus must be incarnated in a special way in each culture, John Paul II, with his teaching on inculturation, adds a further insight: as the gospel transforms a people and regenerates their culture, they draw on its resources to make their special contributions—which will enrich the universal Church—to Christian thought, worship, and life.<sup>303</sup> Inculturation thus understood involves the cooperation of those who spread the faith with those who receive it in saving not only the individual souls of the latter but their integral human reality, so that all of it will help build up the one Church of Jesus and thereby become material for his everlasting kingdom.

Significant cultural differences exist not only among people in different parts of the world but among groups who live in the same nation and speak the same language but differ in beliefs, values, education, work, and so on.<sup>304</sup> Inculturation rightly understood, therefore, not only is required in non-Western societies but is a permanent need throughout the Church. Faithful Christians in every culture—from that of humankind as a whole to that of their own home—must avoid compromising with its evils but firmly embrace and salvage its goods as materials for building up the kingdom.

Good close collaborators are sensitive to cultural differences and take them into account. They do their best to learn the language of any group they serve; to understand their views, values, ways of acting, and social

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303. For the initial formulation of John Paul II's teaching on inculturation, see *Catechesi tradendae*, 53, AAS 71 (1979) 1319–21, Flannery 2:794–95; for a clear and mature formulation, see *Redemptoris missio*, 52–54, AAS 83 (1991) 299–302, *OR*, 28 Jan. 1991, 13; regarding inculturation and pastoral ministry, see *Pastores dabo vobis*, 55, AAS 84 (1992) 756–57, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XV; regarding the role of consecrated persons in inculturation, see *Vita consecrata*, 79, AAS 88 (1996) 455–56, *OR*, 3 April 1996, XV.

304. Even families can have cultural elements proper to themselves: family members sometimes use words and expressions with special meanings that only other family members understand, formulate new prayers, tell tales based on unique experiences, create original works of art, arrange their home in their own special way, adapt games to suit themselves, and so on.

practices; to discern everything good in the people, their behavior, and their particular culture; to recognize their moral and spiritual defects and needs; and communicate in what are likely to be the most effective ways what Jesus offers and help those served to accept it.

Good close collaborators urge the members of any group they serve to do their part and support them in doing it—in appropriating their faith by personal meditation and discussion, building authentic fellowship among themselves, finding and carrying out their personal vocations, choosing devotions and sacramentals they find helpful, and bearing witness to their families, friends, and neighbors. In such ways, inculturation proceeds and particular groups make their contributions to Jesus' one Church and his kingdom. To help them do so, good close collaborators share all that is essential to Catholic faith while encouraging those served to choose among legitimate options in nonessentials. For example, a good pastor of a new parish does not merely present the parishioners with a plan for their church and tell them about their duty to contribute; instead, he teaches the parishioners about the liturgy and what is necessary to celebrate it well, gets their help in planning the church, and leaves the financing to them.

Inculturation often is impeded or even prevented by excessive secrecy, which also interferes with every other aspect of the Church's life, and so deserves special attention.

Most close collaborators try to communicate well when evangelizing, catechizing, and celebrating the liturgy or helping others participate in it. But when planning and managing the provision of services, many seek to minimize their communication with those to be served, while the inner workings of chancery offices, rectories, provincial offices, and communities are often covered with a heavy cloak of secrecy. Of course, secrecy sometimes is justified. But often it is abused. Sometimes secrecy is used to avoid admitting mistakes and even to hide tolerated or rationalized wrongdoing: "We must avoid scandal." Sometimes it is used for the sake of efficiency in management or to avoid leading people to think they can settle things that they cannot. Then the excuse is: "People wouldn't understand, and we must look after them." Whatever the motive, every abuse of secrecy prevents communication that could foster the cooperation of the people to be served.

While good close collaborators are very careful to keep secret what really should be secret, they work on the presumption that information about planning and managing services is to be shared with those to be served. Their input is sought when the consideration of problems begins, and decisions seldom are made without first consulting anyone who will be affected. In this way, good planners and decision makers obtain information essential for sound discernment of what Jesus prefers them to do. They regularly enlist the cooperation of those to be served as early as possible, thus increasing the likelihood that it will be forthcoming.

Groups served or factions within those groups sometimes express concerns about matters of faith and morals, the service being provided, or conflicts within the group. In responding to such communications, close collaborators have a beautiful and instructive model in many passages of First and Second Corinthians. St. Paul plainly strives to understand his

correspondents' concerns; he thinks prayerfully about them and responds carefully and movingly. Like a good father, he writes with genuine love and affection. He never retreats into generalities or evades difficult matters but straightforwardly addresses each issue and says clearly all that he considers appropriate. In order to build up the real *communio* of any group they serve with Jesus and in him, good close collaborators communicate much as Paul did.

Close collaborators often receive feedback from those they serve and try to serve. Some reactions reflect nothing more than people's likes and dislikes, but others are grounded in reasons, sometimes good ones conveyed by sound arguments. Committed to serving everyone well and knowing that those who are pleased are more likely to communicate, good close collaborators listen with special care to negative feedback. Realizing that they can still learn and improve, they are not defensive. Even when a criticism or complaint is impolite or does not seem constructive, they do not say to themselves, "Since most everyone is happy with what I'm doing, I can safely ignore this person [so-and-so, nitwit, smartaleck]." Instead, they try to understand and profit from all negative feedback.

When it is unclear what the point of view and motives of people providing negative feedback are, good close collaborators ask questions in order to understand the feelings and reasons behind the criticism or complaint. When confident that they do, they evaluate the feedback in the light of the gospel, the Church's discipline, the well being of all those to be served, the true good of the person or persons with whom they are dealing, and their own possible need and capacity to change. Having done that, they address the matter honestly, clearly, and without evasion.

Like Jesus, his good close collaborators sometimes get unsound feedback from those they try to serve. They not only stand fast, as he did, no matter how numerous and passionate their critics may be, but strive to enlighten them and motivate them to give up mistaken ideas and accept what is true and good. But unlike Jesus, close collaborators at times receive negative feedback that is at least partly sound. Unless certain a matter will be appropriately dealt with, good close collaborators give no assurances. If they were at fault, they admit it and do what they can to rectify matters. If a sound criticism or complaint concerns something they can deal with, they promise to do what they rightly can and do it; and if the matter is one someone else should deal with, they try to help the person who is criticizing or complaining receive appropriate attention. But if the problem concerns something that must be tolerated or endured, they candidly say so, explain why, and urge faith, hope, and patience.

Good close collaborators also carefully evaluate positive feedback. To the extent it is sound, they receive it humbly, give God the credit, and express their gratitude. But they gently correct any accompanying misunderstandings or false expectations.

A good close collaborator asks those who provide feedback of any kind to pray for him or her, encourages them to continue taking advantage of the service involved, and serves them according to their needs, not according to how agreeable their feedback is. He or she regularly seeks the Holy Spirit's

help in dealing with feedback, and, when appropriate, consults associates or refers a problem to a supervisor.

**5) Good close collaborators present themselves appropriately.**

As the saying, “Actions speak louder than words,” makes clear, most people are well aware that not only the right words but corresponding deeds are necessary for effective communication. Yet many, including many close collaborators, sometimes overlook the fact that something else also contributes to communication or detracts from it: how one presents oneself. Intentionally or not, even before saying or doing anything, one communicates something to others in this way.

Some elements of self-presentation are generally taken into account. Most people realize that to make a good impression it is important to be clean and polite. Salespersons and others who wish to motivate people typically are sensitive to the impact of facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, body language, and tone of voice. But anything and everything about oneself that people perceive can affect their feelings and judgments, and help or impede their understanding and acceptance of one’s communication and their readiness to act on it. Some perceivable things about people are beyond their control, and others cannot reasonably be changed; but all those that can reasonably be changed are the medium in which people can determine how to present themselves.

Many organizations and public figures get expert help in shaping their self-presentation. Businesses, marketing services, candidates for public office, performers, and many others receive assistance not only in formulating their messages and plans of action but in creating an *image* or *persona* likely to get people to be their customers, employ them, vote for them, become their fans, and so on. Sometimes, the image or persona is deliberately misleading: self-presentation has become a manipulative device rather than an aspect of authentic communication. Like a carefully drafted speech, however, carefully shaped self-presentation can contribute to authentic communication, conveying the truth about oneself and one’s purposes, and helping to motivate others to cooperate by arousing emotions harmonious with sound reasons for doing so.

In many human encounters, the interacting parties largely share the same culture and act in familiar roles. Under those conditions, truthful people who habitually treat others fairly and kindly present themselves well since they spontaneously manifest sincerity and good will. In such cases, good close collaborators likewise present themselves appropriately without coaching by experts and even without being aware of presenting themselves. When they are to act in the roles specific to their service—roles many people do not understand—and especially when preparing to serve people in unfamiliar cultures, however, they need to reflect and practice; and specific formation can be helpful. But even so, their careful self-presentation will not be an artful pretense but a communication as genuine as the spoken witness they give by words in a language that is not their native tongue. Mother Teresa and John Paul II, for example, took care to present themselves appropriately, and their sincerity shone in how they appeared and behaved; their faith in God and love for those to be served were palpable.

Even before the first communities of monks and nuns were formed, some who committed themselves to a consecrated life adopted distinctive dress: “The beginning of monastic life was marked by being clothed in the habit.” Later, “When the first cenobiums were established, the act of incorporation into the monastic community consisted in receiving the habit.”<sup>305</sup> Although it was not until the Council of Trent that universal Church law required diocesan clerics to wear distinctive clothing, the practice of doing so developed gradually during the Middle Ages in response to widespread concerns about clerical dress.<sup>306</sup> During most of the Church’s history, close collaborators’ clothing has been seen as an important aspect of their self-presentation, and in modern times distinctive dress has been required.

Today, the Church’s law provides: “Religious are to wear the habit of the institute, made according to the norm of proper law, as a sign of their consecration and as a witness of poverty” (*CIC*, c. 669, §1); “Clerics are to wear suitable ecclesiastical garb according to the norms issued by the conference of bishops and according to legitimate local customs” (*CIC*, c. 284).<sup>307</sup> These legal norms are not as strict as those in force before Vatican II, and most people realize that there are times when it is reasonable to replace the habit or clerical garb with secular clothes. Yet some close collaborators think the norms should be abolished, and quite a few comply only occasionally and reluctantly.

There are, however, many reasons for close collaborators to wear their clerical garb or habit. Doing so clearly signifies their commitment to Jesus and his Church, and thus points to God and his kingdom: their distinctive clothes make a statement that commands attention and contributes to their witness to the gospel.<sup>308</sup> Police officers signal their authority and availability

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305. Lozano, *op. cit.*, 262.

306. See Herbert Thurston, “Costume, Clerical” *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 4:419–21; J. A. Shields, “Clerical Dress (Canon Law),” *NCE*, 3:947–48.

307. *CIC*, c. 669, §2, requires members of clerical religious institutes who have no habit of their own to conform to the requirements of c. 284. On the legal force of c. 284, see John E. Lynch, C.S.P., “The Obligations and Rights of Clerics,” in John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, and Thomas J. Green, eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Paulist, 2000), 372–73.

308. Vatican II teaches that the religious habit is a “sign of consecration” (PC 17); John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 25, AAS 88 (1996) 398, *OR*, 3 April 1996, IV–V, develops the Council’s teaching: “The Church must always seek to make her presence visible in everyday life, especially in contemporary culture, which is often very secularized and yet sensitive to the language of signs. In this regard the Church has a right to expect a significant contribution from consecrated persons, called as they are in every situation to bear clear witness that they belong to Christ.” The Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory for the Life and Ministry of Priests*, 66 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 70–71, states that ecclesiastical garb is “an unequivocal sign of his [the priest’s] dedication and his identity as a public minister . . . his belonging to God and the Church,” quotes the canonical norm, and explains it: “This means that the attire, when it is not the cassock, must be different from the manner in which the laity dress, and conform to the dignity and sacredness of his ministry.” While women religious of some institutes never wore a veil and the Church’s law does not mention the veil, J. Sheila Galligan, “Bride of Christ and Ecclesial Identity,” *Review for Religious*, 59:5 (Sept.-Oct 2000): 488–99, argues well that wearing a veil as part of her habit makes it clear that a woman religious represents the Church as bride of Christ.

by wearing a uniform when on duty, but clerics and religious signal their constant readiness to provide their proper service by consistently wearing their special clothing. At the same time, it signals their determination not to become involved in relationships inappropriate for them, helps them keep their commitment in mind, and makes it easier to avoid some occasions of sin. Finally, if the distinctive clothing is modest, simple, and serviceable, as it should be, wearing it consistently saves time and money for the things of the Lord and witnesses to detachment from pleasure, status, and wealth—things often prized by people who prefer immodest, fashionable, and/or costly but impractical clothing.

Thus there are excellent reasons for close collaborators to regard their clerical garb or habit as a central element of their self-presentation and to wear it unless there is a cogent reason not to. If proper law or local custom allows options, good close collaborators prefer clearly distinctive clothing. If they have a choice between distinctive outfits, they prefer the simpler and more serviceable; and if there are still choices to make after that, they might choose on the basis of comfort and/or convenience. Comfort and convenience are not reasons to wear secular clothing, however, and most close collaborators only occasionally have other reasons. Seldom, therefore, do good close collaborators acquire an extensive wardrobe of secular clothes. Most have only a few items of secular clothing, which they wear only at home when no outsider is present or while engaging in worthwhile activities that would be impossible or significantly impeded if they wore their distinctive clothing.

## **H: Fostering and Discerning Vocations to Close Collaboration**

### **1) Certain truths about personal vocations will be presupposed.**

In what follows, *candidates* refers to those undergoing formation in a seminary, novitiate, or religious institute's program for members between first vows and definitive profession.

God wills only good, and since whatever God wills to be comes to be, all his creatures are good. Persons are not an exception; insofar as God creates them, they are entirely good. However, many creatures, including persons, do not at once come to be all that they can be. Initially coming to be as individuals for whom communion, with one another and with the divine persons, is possible, created persons cannot enter into that communion—the heavenly kingdom—unless they gratefully accept the gifts God offers that will constitute and perfect it.<sup>309</sup> Those gifts include good free choices, which they can decline to make. Since free choices are self-determining, the available good ones that one does not decline make one a good person. But in declining a good choice God offers, one makes a bad choice and makes oneself more or less bad.

In definitively declining some good choice essential for living in communion with one another and with the divine persons, created persons deprive themselves of that fulfillment. Yet almost all people who, sooner or later, will make the essential choices and enter the kingdom nevertheless

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<sup>309</sup> What I say here is true of people who can accept or fail to accept God's gifts. Many human beings die before they can do that, and baptized infants, at least, enter the kingdom.

decline some other good free choices God offers. Thus they forgo some fulfillment they could have had; and although God may mercifully offer them something still better, in the end they may have deprived themselves of much that they could have become. While living forever in communion with other created persons and the divine persons, they will never be as “great” in the kingdom as they might have been (see Mt 5.19).

Saved by God’s grace through faith, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph 2.10). In proffering a set of good free choices to make during the course of our lives, our heavenly Father calls us, as his very dear children, to become all that we can be. That whole life of good works is one’s personal vocation.<sup>310</sup> Therefore, one’s vocation is not an imposed burden to be accepted reluctantly but a lifelong series of divine gifts to be welcomed gratefully.

Like most gifts, a vocation is not something one chooses for oneself. It is one’s part in God’s all-embracing, providential plan. Gratefully accepting and playing one’s unique part in that plan—walking in the life of good works God prepared for one beforehand—is cooperating with him in fulfilling the purpose for which he re-created us as his sons and daughters in his Son. Most of us at least sometimes ignore God’s plan. Even when we recognize it, we may fail to accept it. Insofar as we abide in Jesus and carry out our vocations, however, we cooperate with him and all his other members in preparing material for the new earth and new heaven. The material includes not only ourselves and our relationships with one another and with the divine persons but all the good fruits of our nature and our personal effort (see GS 38–39; **1–E–3**, above).

We can easily recognize some of the good free choices that God offers us: their alternatives are choices we can see to be wrong even without knowing or taking into account God’s unique plan for our lives. But if one has reasons for choosing one of two or more options and, before thinking about God’s plan, no decisive reason against choosing any of them, one needs to discern which free choice God wishes one to make (see **2–A–5** and **3–B–3**, above). And since carrying out one’s part in God’s plan requires cooperating not only with Jesus but with human persons who are his members, discerning often must be done in cooperation with one or more others. For example, only by discerning cooperatively can a man and a woman find that it is part of their vocations to marry each other.

It would make no sense for God to have a gift for us but never offer it, a plan for our lives but not let us in on it, a life of good deeds for us to walk in but not show us the way. A sincere and determined effort to discern is therefore certain to succeed. But several mistakes must be avoided.

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310. “Good choices” and “good works” here should be understood to include the two sorts that I distinguish in **2–A–3** and **3–A–5**, above: those by which one carries out God’s plan for one’s life, which one must discern, and those by which one deals rightly with the afflictions God permits one to suffer, where the good choice is evident by faith without discernment. In the sections cited, I also use “vocation” in a narrower sense, so that good choices (except those by which one deals rightly with afflictions) are presupposed by one’s vocation, not considered as part of it, if their alternatives can be recognized as morally unacceptable without discerning.



First, it is necessary to avoid unrealistic expectations. God has indeed fully revealed himself and the general features of his plan in Jesus and sent the Holy Spirit to enable us to appropriate that revelation; but Christians who expect the Lord to give them a vision of heaven or make his call ring in their ears are likely to be disappointed.<sup>311</sup> One's vocation "is rather to be understood and discerned from the signs by which God's will becomes known every day to prudent Christians" (PO 11). And Christians are prudent only insofar as their minds are no longer worldly but renewed (see Rom 12.2), imbued with Jesus' outlook, and docile to the Spirit (see 1 Cor 2.12–16).

Second, those with an agenda easily convince themselves that God is calling them to become what they want to be. Thus, a young man who wants to be a priest may think: "Priests are needed, and being a priest strongly appeals to me; so, God is calling me to be a priest." But if he lacks gifts necessary to be a priest, he will never get into a seminary or, if he does, never be ordained unless—God forbid!—some bishop with a corresponding agenda of his own convinces himself that God wants him to ignore the young man's inadequacies.

Third, discernment is impossible if one impatiently tries to do it before the appropriate time. For example, a young woman begins thinking about becoming a religious, tries to discern whether that is her vocation, and remains uncertain. Instead, she needs to gather information about various women's religious institutes and begin by discerning which to contact; if she discerns that she is called to apply to a certain institute and is accepted for formation, toward the end of her novitiate will be time enough for her to cooperate with the institute's formation team in discerning whether she is called to undertake its form of religious life. And even if eventually she is permanently professed, she will need to discern other elements of her vocation as they emerge—always, of course, within the framework of her vows, including obedience to her superiors.

Fourth, false assumptions must be avoided. A man called to be a foreign missionary might suppose that God could not possibly be calling him to leave homeland, friends, and family. But readiness to give up good things is essential for sound discernment. A nurse practitioner may suppose that God could not be calling her to give up her profession and become a contemplative nun. But one must be ready to serve in the way God has in mind and to set aside, if necessary, other excellent ways of serving others. Again, impoverished but intellectually gifted young people may suppose that God could not be calling them to a profession that requires long and costly education. But one may well be called to try to do what seems impossible, and should be prepared to accept failure, confident that God can overcome all obstacles and that, even if he allows something to prevent one from accomplishing what he calls one to *try* to do, responding to his call will be for the best.

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311. Still, while our parts may not be as important as Isaiah's, we should be as ready as he was to respond to God's call: "Here am I! Send me" (Is 6.8).

## 2) Good close collaborators foster vocations to close collaboration.

To prepare the people for his arrival, Jesus sends ahead seventy disciples, giving them an instruction that begins: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Lk 10.2). Matthew does not mention the sending of the seventy, but he tells of Jesus giving his disciples the same instruction when, busy preaching and healing, he has compassion on the crowds, who are like sheep without a shepherd (see Mt 9.35–38).

As abandoned sheep need to be shepherded, many people urgently need Jesus and his saving acts. But since sending out laborers—calling men and women to collaborate closely with Jesus—is a divine act, nothing but praying can, strictly speaking, promote vocations to close collaboration. If Jesus’ disciples were hired hands, they would not care whether there were enough of them to complete the work. But because they share Jesus’ pastoral charity, compassion, and sense of urgency, good close collaborators are concerned about their inadequate numbers. Even before undertaking their assigned tasks, they earnestly pray that God will give more people the gifts and the call to join in the work and carry it on.

As was shown (see 2–A–3, above), helping every one of the faithful to discern and undertake his or her personal vocation is an essential part of the Church’s mission. Priests have a special responsibility in this matter (see PO 6; 2–A–6, above), and John Paul II instructs the bishops:

It is essential to promote a vocational culture in the broadest sense: young people, in other words, need to be helped to discover that life itself is a vocation. The bishop would do well, then, to appeal to families, parish communities and educational institutes to assist boys and girls in discovering God’s plan in their lives and in embracing the call to holiness which God from the beginning addresses to each person.

It is very important in this regard to reinforce the vocational dimension of all pastoral activity. The bishop must ensure that the pastoral care of young people and the promotion of vocations is entrusted to priests and to persons capable of passing on their love for Jesus by their enthusiasm and the example of their lives. It will be their responsibility to accompany young people personally, by their friendship and, when possible, by spiritual direction, in order to help them to grasp the signs of God’s call and to discover the strength to respond to it in the grace of the sacraments and in the life of prayer, which is above all an attentive listening to God who speaks.<sup>312</sup>

In fact, since the fruits of Jesus’ salvific acts flower into holiness in the lives of people through their fulfillment of their unique vocations, all good close collaborators do what they can, within the framework of their own vocations, to bring about and increase sound vocational awareness among the faithful at large and to foster the vocations of those called to close collaboration.

Vatican II teaches that every person has a fundamental right to be free of coercion with respect to his or her state of life (see GS 26, 29, 52), and

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312. *Pastores gregis*, 54, AAS 96 (2004) 894, OR, 22 Oct. 2003, XV (I omit a reference to the Synod’s proposition 52 at the end of the first paragraph).

the Church's law affirms that right.<sup>313</sup> It does not follow, however, that every engaged person has the right to be married, every seminarian the right to be ordained, or every novice the right to be professed. Rather, it follows, for example, that parents should not try to compel children to undertake close collaboration, nor should they try to prevent a child from becoming a priest and/or religious.<sup>314</sup> The ongoing catechesis of the faithful in general about personal vocation should include an explanation of this right to freedom from coercion so as to forestall interference in anyone's effort to discern and respond to God's call.

Those whom God is calling to be Jesus' close collaborators are far more likely to discern and respond to that vocation if convinced that they can fulfill themselves by totally giving themselves and that others' salvation will depend on their service in making Jesus' saving acts present and/or fostering their fruitfulness.<sup>315</sup> Today, however, many young people lack those convictions due to conditions that John Paul II describes.<sup>316</sup> Fundamental among them are a distorted notion of freedom, moral subjectivism, and belonging only half-heartedly to the Church. Those underlying conditions nurture bad tendencies: first, consumerism and selfish possession rather than generosity and sacrifice for spiritual values; second, the degradation of sexuality toward self-satisfaction and away from communion and mutual self-giving. Thus, even the best instruction about personal vocation is likely to have no results without a sound, general catechesis, animated by gratitude for God's gifts, Christian love, and vibrant hope for the kingdom. Within the framework of their own vocations, therefore, all good close collaborators, and especially good supervisors, do their best to provide or support such catechesis for all Catholic children and young people.

For children baptized as infants, catechesis about personal vocation and its discernment appropriately begins soon after First Communion, with examples drawn from Scripture and the lives of canonized saints; the catechesis can be developed as the relevant ideas become understandable and be well rounded before children reach adolescence. God's personal call to holiness will challenge most children before that time, and soon after many begin adopting another way of organizing their lives. Shortly before puberty, however, most children are likely to be open to individual help in discerning the already-present elements of their vocation and beginning to

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313. *CIC*, c. 219; *CCEO*, c. 22: "All the Christian faithful have the right to be free from any kind of coercion in choosing a state of life."

314. Congregation for Religious, *Religiosarum institutio, Instruction on the Careful Training of Candidates for the States of Perfection and Sacred Orders* (2 Feb. 1961), *Canon Law Digest*, 5 (1963): 456, reported that some who defected said they had undertaken clerical, religious life due to pressures to do so in the family's interest or due to superiors' and/or spiritual directors' urgings to proceed or even threats of eternal damnation if they quit.

315. As has been explained (in **1-E-6**, above), those who assume that everyone will be saved cannot choose to do anything for their own and others' salvation; realizing that some will be lost, while also loving and hoping for the salvation of each and every one, motivates prayers and salvific efforts.

316. See John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 8, *AAS* 84 (1992) 668–69, *OR* 8 Apr. 1992, II–III.

consider their future options, including those regarding state of life, in a vocational perspective.

Catechesis that is sound and timely makes it clear that every child is called to holiness by finding and fulfilling his or her personal vocation, whatever it may be. It also instructs children about what clerical and consecrated service and life really are, and shows them how vocations that include close collaboration with Jesus are superior. Those whom God calls to such vocations, then, will be more likely to discern his call and will have sound motives for responding to it.<sup>317</sup> At the same time, if those whose vocations include marriage and parenthood begin before adolescence to discern and respond to God's plan for their lives, they will be more likely to remain chaste or, at least, not become obdurate in mortal sin, so that they will be prepared to pursue holiness in marriage and become the parents of many of the next generation's close collaborators.

Good catechesis about personal vocation includes instruction about discernment. Children should be taught to reflect on their gifts, thank God for them, and consider the opportunities for self-giving that will both fulfill them and provide material for the kingdom. At the same time, they should be assured that God often calls people to things too great for them—and then gives them everything they need to exceed their expectations and overcome their limitations. Good catechesis also frees children of assumptions that would unduly narrow their options for discernment. For instance, boys need to become aware that men can serve the Church as diocesan priests and also as brothers or clerical religious; girls should learn about the diverse apostolates open to women religious. Both should be made aware of contemplative life, the foreign missions, and the forms of consecrated life outside religious institutes.

Profound conflicts in some diocesan presbyterates and religious institutes (see **3-E-4**, above), the sexual wrongdoing of some close collaborators, and other more or less serious shortcomings of many of them tend to deter some from responding to God's call to close collaboration. Good catechesis deals frankly with such matters and explains that, while God allows many evils to afflict his Church, he also promises those he calls to close collaboration the grace they will need to take up their cross, confront evil, and overcome it as Jesus did. In this context, it also makes other relevant matters clear: since wrongdoers' inner hearts are unknown to us, we cannot judge them and must not try to do so; in every age evils afflict the Church, and saints manifest her holiness; wherever and whenever the Church is more afflicted, people have more need, not less, for the services of good close collaborators; and the wholehearted love needed to serve well does not exist in close

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317. Confused and partially mistaken notions of *what* close collaborators are and *how important* their service is surely are partly to blame for the decline in numbers of those applying for admission to seminaries and novitiates. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 11, AAS 84 (1992) 674, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, III, emphasizes the importance of clarification for fostering vocations and forming those called to the priesthood: "Knowledge of the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood is an essential presupposition, and at the same time the surest guide and incentive toward the development of pastoral activities in the Church for fostering and discerning vocations to the priesthood and training those called to the ordained ministry." Something similar is, of course, true of vocations to consecrated life.

collaborators in advance, but the Holy Spirit will give it to those who, aware of their sinfulness and spiritual immaturity, humbly ask for it.

Dioceses and religious institutes rightly try to encourage those who might be called to be close collaborators to consider that possibility and discern. In the past, such efforts often have been disorganized and sometimes competitive. John Paul II urges that they be coordinated in dioceses:

The task of promoting vocations should increasingly express *a joint commitment of the whole Church*. It calls for the active collaboration of pastors, religious, families and teachers, as required in something which forms an integral part of the overall pastoral plan of every particular Church. In every diocese there should be this *common endeavor*, which coordinates and promotes the efforts of everyone, not jeopardizing, but rather supporting, the vocational activity of each institute.<sup>318</sup>

Supervisors who, rather than cooperate, engage in competitive recruiting forget that their primary responsibility is to Jesus and his Church as a whole and are likely to harm their own diocese or institute by attracting some people who are not called by God and repelling some who are. Moreover, the very nature of vocations—they are God’s acts—requires that everyone concerned accept and respect them as divine gifts to those called and those to be served. Thus, along with raising the consciousness of those who seem likely to have a vocation to close collaboration, good supervisors provide them with a full range of information about diverse opportunities for service. A sound cooperative program does not assume that the first possibility that occurs to a person is the only one to be considered but encourages consideration of various possibilities.<sup>319</sup>

Good close collaborators are alert to identify anyone who might have a vocation to some form of close collaboration and ask whether he or she has considered the possibility that God is calling him or her in that way.<sup>320</sup> They

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318. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 64, AAS 88 (1996) 440, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XII (references to the Synod’s proposition 48 omitted). In treating the formation of clerics, the Church’s law (*CIC*, c. 233, §1; *CCEO*, c. 329, §1) declares that the duty of fostering such vocations rests with the whole Christian community, that parents and others involved in Christian education should do their part, that clerics and especially pastors should try to identify and encourage those with vocations, and that bishops should promote vocations and coordinate others’ efforts in doing so. In chapters on the diocesan bishops’ duties (*CIC*, c. 385; *CCEO*, c. 195), it declares their broader responsibility to foster vocations both to clerical and consecrated life, including those to missionary work.

319. The Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, initiated a website “as a one-stop resource for the discernment of one’s vocation” that is one example of a cooperative program for promoting vocations: <http://www.ichoseyou.com>, accessed 29 Jan. 2008.

320. Bryan T. Froehle and Timothy T. Reker, “Introduction to Vocations Research,” in *CARA Compendium of Vocations Research: 1997* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, 1997), xi, state: “Perhaps the most consistent finding in research about priestly vocations is the importance of personal invitation. No other factor has an impact equal to the effect of priests inviting young men to consider the priesthood in a personal, meaningful way.” They say that the same thing is true of religious life. They go on (xi–xii): “Apparently the pattern of personal invitation on the part of priests and religious changed in the late 1960s and has not as yet reversed itself. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the percentage of priests who say they actively encourage young men to enter the seminary dropped from 64 percent to 33 percent. Among religious order priests it declined from 56 percent to 27 percent. Studies of this phenomenon since the early 1970s find little

are prepared to clarify matters on which the person is confused, to answer objections, to encourage and assist with discernment about which possibility or possibilities to investigate, and to support those who have already discerned the state of life to which God is calling them. They also encourage those they serve to help raise the consciousness of others who might be called to close collaboration.

Some good supervisors tell their subordinates and the faithful to let them know of people who seem to have the gifts for close collaboration, and invite such people to meet and discuss the possibility. In a well-coordinated, cooperative program, people who participate in these meetings are offered various options for ongoing discussion.

Rather than accepting volunteers to exercise lay ministries or assist with apostolates, some good supervisors invite suitable people who may be called to close collaboration to do those things. They develop a relationship with those they invite, and that, along with the experience of cooperating in the ministry or apostolate, helps their ongoing discernment.

Pastors have a special responsibility to help “each of the faithful” to discern and undertake his or her vocation (PO 6; cf. 2–A–6, above). If children are catechized appropriately, many will be open to individual help in discerning shortly before puberty. If the Council’s mandate is to be met, so that such help will be available to “each of the faithful,” it obviously will not usually be provided by priests personally, but through others, mainly lay people. For this very important and delicate work, only those with suitable gifts should be chosen, and they should be carefully formed. If a special, formal lay ministry were created and appropriate young men and women were selected and trained for this work with children, it is likely that many of the ministers would discern their own vocations to close collaboration.

There are several things good supervisors do in fostering vocations. First, of course, they tirelessly proclaim the gospel: God is offering everlasting happiness to everyone. At the same time, not everyone readily hears and accepts that offer, and Jesus needs the help of close collaborators to make his saving acts present and available. Second, they make known the needs of those served by their diocese or institute and the gifts of those called to help meet them. They use various means to disseminate this information. Third, they make sure that anyone who inquires about the possibility of serving in their diocese or institute is answered promptly, given accurate replies to questions, and, if possible, personally contacted. Fourth, while the help of experts in communication, such as advertising agencies and public relations advisers, may be sought, good supervisors bear in mind that the nature of vocation makes persuasion appropriate only insofar as it helps people hear and respond to God’s call.

### **3) Vocational prospects deserve disinterested help in discerning.**

Upright people working in personnel offices of ethically sound organizations are absolutely honest with anyone applying for an opening. From the outset, they practice the mutuality involved in genuine cooperation within a just contractual relationship. Still, while friendly and helpful, they

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change in these numbers. Essentially, the young priests and religious of the late 1960s who lost interest in personal invitation have never regained this interest.”

do not try to form a friendship with every job prospect and applicant nor do they try to help each one find a suitable place in some other organization, if not in their own.

Good Catholics interested in marrying are absolutely honest with and kind to anyone they meet whom they might marry, in anticipation of a covenantal relationship and lifelong, loving cooperation with the person they will actually marry. Striving to develop a real friendship with each prospective spouse, they give whatever help they reasonably can even to someone they discern they are not called to marry.

Respecting each potential associate's equal personal dignity, good vocation directors also are absolutely honest.<sup>321</sup> Expecting anyone whom God is calling to priesthood and/or religious life to give himself or herself completely to lifelong cooperation with other close collaborators in service to Jesus and his Church, they practice from the outset the self-giving this involves. They treat each prospect as a brother or sister in Jesus and provide him or her with good care that includes disinterested help in discerning whether to apply for admission to their formation program.

Good supervisors and vocation directors agree on a list of conditions that make someone clearly and permanently unsuitable for any formation program. If it becomes clear that a prospect will never be a suitable applicant, a good vocation director tries to help him or her understand and accept that fact. If possible, that will include ongoing pastoral care and/or spiritual direction to assist the person in dealing with problems and discerning his or her personal vocation as it unfolds.

Unlike personnel officers, good vocation directors do not begin by asking prospects questions. They encourage them to tell their story in their own ways and listen carefully and with empathy, responding candidly to questions explicitly asked and also to any need for information the conversation reveals. They readily use their own vocational experience to illustrate and clarify points, while at the same time drawing mainly on the vocational experiences of canonized saints.

Although many prospects are not aware of it, they need to reflect on the gifts they have received from God, thank him for them, and discern his plan for them here and now—that is, whether he is calling them to apply for admission to this or that program of formation for close collaboration. A good vocation director gives priority to prospects' spiritual need for help in discerning their present vocation. They need that help, and, like Jesus, good close collaborators give priority to meeting others' spiritual needs. Helping

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321. Since I assume that good vocation directors help people discern God's call, whatever it is, I use "prospect" to refer, not to a possible recruit for a vocation director's own institute or diocese, but to anyone who might have a vocation to close collaboration. I use "vocation directors" in a wide sense to refer to all those who share in such work on behalf of dioceses and religious institutes. Insofar as they can, good bishops and provincial superiors personally participate in fostering vocations and the formation of candidates, and they devote substantial resources—the most suitable personnel, competent staff, and adequate funding—to those activities, for they regard them as a very important part of their dioceses' or institutes' responsibility for those to be served. Good close collaborators who are mainly involved in this work find appropriate people to help, including some associates and lay volunteers, and provide them with the training they need. So, I by no means suppose that a single individual could do everything I say a good vocation director does.

prospects in this way also encourages them to cooperate with the vocation director's efforts to discern about them and initiates the cooperative relationship that good supervisors have with subordinates and good close collaborators have with one another. Moreover, giving disinterested spiritual help to prospects teaches them by example their first, and perhaps most formative, lesson as close collaborators: devote yourself to others' salvation and holiness.

After establishing easy communication with prospects, a good vocation director gets them to reflect on and thank God for the gifts they have received, explains personal vocation, and makes sure they understand the essential truths about it (see **1**, above), not least the necessity and importance of cooperation in discerning vocations both to marriage and to close collaboration. The good director also sees to it that prospects understand that close collaboration means giving oneself completely in service to Jesus and his Church—a form of love possible only for those God calls to it—and the ways in which such vocations are superior to others.

While acknowledging that many close collaborators fall far short, a good director points out that God gives those he calls to such service everything they need to serve well. He or she also makes clear how good it is that those called to any state of life discern and respond to their vocations and how disastrous it may be for themselves and others if those not called to a certain state of life nevertheless undertake it.

Good directors inform prospects about the specific needs of those served by their own diocese or institute and about its particular characteristics or charism. They encourage prospects to discuss how they might contribute to the service Jesus wishes that particular diocese or institute to provide. Such a discussion can help a prospect discern that God is calling him or her either to apply to it or to investigate other possibilities.

Many devout young people gratefully reflect on their gifts, come to understand personal vocation, are eager to serve others, and seek to learn God's plan for their lives, yet discern that they are not called to become close collaborators. Often, they are called to marry. Sometimes, however, they are called to celibate chastity but not to clerical or religious life. Good vocation directors keep all these possibilities in mind, respect prospects who discern them, and encourage them to accept and faithfully fulfill God's plan for their lives.

Other prospects who have many of the gifts for close collaboration and are ready to consider the possibility that they are called to it nevertheless may not be ready to enter formation. Since admitting those who are not ready unreasonably burdens not only them but others in formation and those conducting it, good supervisors and vocation directors never admit to formation a prospect who is not well prepared to participate in the program. Instead, they identify and agree among themselves upon conditions that preclude accepting prospects into their formation program at present but not necessarily later.

Some of those conditions call only for delay while living an ongoing good life. This might be the case, for example, if a prospect is too young or too recent a convert, or has recently ended a chastely conducted engagement to marry. Other conditions require both delay and evidence of



perseverance—for example, recent repentance after long neglect of the faith or an illicit sexual relationship, or the recent beginning of recovery from abuse of alcohol or drugs. Certain conditions call not just for delay but for conversion and evidence of perseverance—for example, beliefs and/or habitual practices at odds with Catholic teaching, schismatic rejection of Church authority, neglect of the sacraments and prayer. Still other conditions call for appropriate remedial efforts and evidence of success—for example, physical or psychological health problems, inadequate ability to use the language, seriously defective catechetical formation. Finally, some prospects have responsibilities that must be fulfilled before they can undertake formation—completing military service, paying debts, arranging care for a dependent, obtaining legal residence.

A good vocation director make no promises to such prospects but tries to clarify their situation. If it seems likely that they might eventually become suitable applicants, the good director encourages them, tries to maintain contact with them, and makes reasonable efforts to provide or arrange help in removing obstacles. If the prospects are promising enough, good supervisors also provide personal encouragement.

At some stage, a prospect may implicitly or explicitly ask for assurances that some desire will be satisfied or an existing condition will not change. If this is an attempt to negotiate conditions on his or her commitment, a good vocation director explains that the commitment must be unconditional and why that is so. That aside, no assurances are given of anything unless it is absolutely certain, and if what the prospect has in mind will surely not be realized, the good director candidly says so. Bearing in mind that they cannot bind their successors, good supervisors never bargain or authorize bargaining that would limit a prospective subordinate's future obligation to obey, while good vocation directors warn prospects against expectations that a future supervisor might frustrate. They also point out that marriage, too, requires an unconditional commitment without assurances against unexpected changes.

A prospect occasionally tries to negotiate an exception to a formation program's rules as a condition for undertaking it. If some moral obligation of the prospect compatible with undertaking the program requires the exception, permission is granted, but otherwise not. For instance, if a prospective novice simply wishes to enjoy a final summer vacation with her family, she will not be allowed to report one week late. Good vocation directors try to help such prospects understand that if God is calling them to enter formation, they must respond without receiving the exception they want. If a prospect nevertheless insists, a good director reasonably judges that he or she lacks either a vocation or the commitment required to become a good candidate, and refuses to compromise the program's integrity.<sup>322</sup>

Good vocation directors tell prospects what the application process would involve and how it will help both parties discern whether this person is called to enter the diocese's or institute's program. Of course, they also make it clear that discerning whether someone is actually called

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322. With candidates already in formation who seek similar exceptions to the program's requirements, good formators follow a similar policy.

to become a close collaborator cannot begin until the early stages of formation have been completed.

**4) A good application process facilitates sound cooperative discernment.**

Nobody should enter formation unless both parties are convinced that this is God's will. Good vocation directors explain at the beginning of the application process that both parties need to discern what God is calling them to do, and that sound discernment requires answering each other's questions honestly and with complete candor. The director promises to be candid and asks prospects to promise the same.

It is quite possible that prospects and applicants will know members of the diocese or institute, or people already in its formation program. Good vocation directors do not discourage such relationships and deal carefully and honestly with any issues they raise.

Diocesan bishops and religious superiors designated by particular law are responsible for judging whether persons under their jurisdiction who have prepared for holy orders are to be ordained,<sup>323</sup> and in the case of religious superiors, whether those who have completed formation are to be professed.<sup>324</sup> Good supervisors will have all the information necessary to discern God's call. Ideally, they will have accompanied the candidate and been his or her partner in discernment from the beginning of the process of applying for admission to formation.<sup>325</sup>

In fact, however, those responsible for making the judgment may hardly know a candidate, and the candidate may never have had any individual or unified group as an identifiable partner in ongoing discernment. The presumption sometimes seems to exist that anyone admitted to a formation program will be professed and/or ordained unless he or she withdraws or those in charge find some reason for dismissal. The definitive, formal judgment to proceed may be based on a process in which many people involved in the candidate's formation, or otherwise more or less acquainted with him or her, evaluate and recommend; but no individual or group ever receives and considers all available information, reflects on it with the candidate, and discerns. Instead, the person responsible for making the judgment may review the file or delegate a vicar or a committee, who may not know the candidate well, to do that, and barring the last-minute disclosure of some ground for dismissal, the candidate is approved.

Although supervisors responsible for judging whether people are to be ordained or professed may well be unable personally to accompany each candidate, good ones see to it that some trustworthy individual or small group becomes well acquainted with each candidate as early as possible,

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323. See *CIC*, c. 1029; *CCEO*, c. 472, c. 537, c. 747, c. 750.

324. See *CIC*, c. 642, c. 656, 5°; c. 657, §2; c. 689, §1 (after consulting his or her council); *CCEO*, c. 448; c. 464, 2°; c. 527, 2°; c. 547, §1.

325. In many cases, the ideal cannot be realized, and John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, 48, AAS 96 (2004) 889, *OR*, 27 Oct. 2003, XIV, does not propose it. However, with respect to ordinations, he does consider it necessary to do more than some bishops do: "A genuine personal knowledge of the candidates for the priesthood in his particular church is indispensable for the bishop. On the basis of these direct contacts he will ensure that the seminaries form mature and balanced personalities, men capable of establishing sound human and pastoral relationships, knowledgeable in theology, solid in the spiritual life, and in love with the Church." As much surely is required of religious superiors.

receives relevant information including others' reports on his or her formation, regularly meets with the person, and serves as his or her discernment partner until ordination and/or final profession. If the supervisor is not the discernment partner, then ideally the vocation director will also be the ongoing discernment partner, or at least the director will be a member of the small group engaged in discerning.

Good supervisors set definite standards with respect to prospects' recent sexual activity. In my judgment, a sound standard would be continence with respect to sexual sins involving other persons for at least one year before being admitted to any formation program, and continence with respect to all deliberate sexual sins, including sins of thought, for at least three months before entering a theologate or making first religious profession.<sup>326</sup>

Before beginning the formalities of the application process but after developing as strong a rapport as possible with prospects, a good vocation director informally investigates their backgrounds by encouraging them to talk at length about themselves—their family of origin, school and work experience, friends, hobbies, likes and dislikes, problems and satisfactions, spiritual practices, and so on. After becoming well acquainted with them, the vocation director explains the benefits of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake, what the charism involves beyond the complete avoidance of sexual sins, how to be confident one has received the charism, and that many candidates discern that they have it only during formation. A prospect's comments and questions are fully taken into account. All this provides a context for him or her to respond to the implicit question being raised when the vocation director then clearly states the diocese's or institute's requirements for admission to the program that concern sexual behavior.

Prospects who meet the requirements are likely to say they do. If so, the director need only restate the response, point out the gravity of dishonesty in this matter, and gently request assurance that there was no exception during the required period of continence. Other prospects will say they do not meet the requirement. If so, or if they say nothing, a good vocation director tells them how some prospects put off applying while using appropriate spiritual and psychological helps in order to become eligible to apply. Unless the discussion leads to the prospect's affirmation and assurance that he or she has met the requirement, a good director brings it to a close by encouraging the prospect to strive to do so and to keep in touch.

It may become clear at some point that a prospect, applicant, or individual already in formation has one or more of three sorts of psychosexual abnormalities plainly incompatible with the charism of

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326. Dealing with admission to seminaries, the *Program of Priestly Formation* seems to set a much stricter standard: "Concerning the capacity to live the charism of celibacy, the applicant should give evidence of having lived in continence for a sustained period of time, which would be for at least two years before entering a priestly formation program" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed. [Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006], 24). However, prospects cannot give *evidence* of having lived in continence but only their word to not having committed sexual sins, and I suspect that few if any pretheology seminary programs or novitiates refuse to admit prospects whose only recent sexual sins were solitary acts and/or sins of thought.

celibacy for the kingdom's sake: (1) confusion with respect to gender identity, which leads some people to undergo so-called sex-change surgery, (2) sexual activities and desires commonly recognized by health-care professionals as abnormal, including desire for contact with prepubescent children, (3) sexual behaviors commonly recognized as compulsive though generally regarded as normal in other respects.<sup>327</sup> Because the first two are not likely to be overcome so completely that others can be morally certain they will never lead to gravely wrongful behavior, good supervisors regard them as grounds for permanently excluding those afflicted from formation for close collaboration.

It also may become clear at some point that an individual has experienced homoerotic attraction, committed sins with same-sex partners, or both. If the experiences and sins occurred only during a passing phase several years earlier, they pose no problem. But if an individual who has engaged in homosexual activity regards it as morally acceptable, and *a fortiori* if he or she embraces a lifestyle that involves it, conversion is necessary; unless an individual has undergone conversion and persevered in it for a sufficiently long time, no good supervisor allows him or her to begin formation or continue in it, much less become a close collaborator.

Suppose, though, that an individual who regularly experiences homoerotic attraction not only has abstained from sexual sins involving other persons for as long as the diocese's or institute's standard requires but also regards his or her homoerotic tendencies as an unfortunate disability and psychological disorder.<sup>328</sup> Good supervisors and good vocation directors do not admit anyone to their formation programs unless reasonably confident that he or she, if ordained and/or professed, will relate well to people of both sexes, will sublimate sexual energy in service for the kingdom's sake, and will be peacefully chaste (see **3-C-3**, above). The Congregation for Catholic Education judged that men with deep-seated homosexual tendencies should not be admitted to seminary formation or ordination, because: "Such persons, in fact, find themselves in a situation that gravely hinders them from relating correctly to men and

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327. See American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*: on obsessive-compulsive disorder, 417–23; on paraphilias, 522–32; on gender identity disorder, 532–38. Although compulsive masturbation is not commonly recognized as abnormal, I include it in my third category. Masturbatory behavior by individuals who cannot control it is compulsive; it is carried out without choice, generally several times a day. Such behavior is to be distinguished from masturbation that is a quasi-compulsive sin of weakness, to which individuals who struggle against temptation often reluctantly choose to give in.

328. For sound explanations and defenses of the view that lack of heterosexual attraction is a privation (insofar as it precludes marriage and parenthood) and psychological disorder (insofar as it results from unconscious factors that interfere with self-determining freedom with respect to sexual behavior), see Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., "Compassion and Sexual Orientation," in *The Vatican and Homosexuality*, ed. Jeannine Gramick and Pat Furey (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 105–11; Jeffrey Keefe, O.F.M.Conv., "A Sharper Focus on Homosexuality," in John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S., *The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 65–77.

women.”<sup>329</sup> It seems that anyone who regularly experiences homoerotic attraction and is tempted to act on it has deep-seated homosexual tendencies, and that those persisting tendencies are incompatible with affective maturity—that is, sound and well-integrated emotional dispositions toward people of both sexes.<sup>330</sup>

Moreover, good supervisors and vocation directors admit to their formation programs only those they are reasonably confident will not be seriously tempted by close and prolonged association with others in formation or by appealing and vulnerable individuals they would encounter in the course of service. In 1961, an instruction of the Congregation for Religious argued against approving for vows and ordination those afflicted with “tendencies to homosexuality or pederasty, since for them the common life and the priestly ministry would constitute serious dangers.”<sup>331</sup> If not only the institutes to which that norm was addressed but dioceses had conformed to it, homosexuality in formation programs and sexual abuse by close collaborators would surely have had far less impact subsequently.

Nevertheless, like some people who regularly experience heteroerotic attraction, some prospects who regularly experience homoerotic attraction have been completely chaste in thought as well as in behavior for a year or more. Suppose such a prospect also meets the following conditions: he or she (1) is solidly convinced of everything the Catholic Church believes and teaches, including her teaching on sexual morality; (2) devoutly practices the faith with regular prayer, reception of the sacraments, and a life free of mortal sin; (3) is in general psychologically healthy, especially in respect to self-control, and socially well adjusted; and (4) is not strongly tempted to act on the homoerotic urges and has been, at least for several months, *peacefully* chaste.<sup>332</sup> Although this person has regular experience of homoerotic attraction, it seems to me that someone who is peacefully chaste cannot reasonably be regarded as having “deep-seated homosexual tendencies,” and that, other requirements being met, good supervisors and vocation directors would admit the prospect to their formation programs.<sup>333</sup>

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329. “Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders,” 2, *OR*, 7 Dec. 2005, 3; Benedict XVI approved this instruction and ordered it published.

330. See Guy Mansini, O.S.B., and Lawrence J. Welch, “In Conformity to Christ,” *First Things*, 162 (Apr. 2006): 13–16.

331. Instruction *Religiosorum institutio*, loc. cit., 471; John XXIII approved this instruction and ordered it communicated to “superiors of institutes of evangelical perfection.”

332. See Groeschel, op. cit., 310–11. Abstinence from sexual sins involving other persons for a year or more and complete continence with respect to all deliberate sexual sins, including sins of thought, for three months or more before beginning first theology or making first vows (which I suggest above as general standards for other cases) are lower standards than complete continence for at least one year and *peaceful* chastity for at least several months (which I suggest in 3–I–4, below, as necessary for ordination and/or definitive profession and propose here as the standard for admitting to formation prospects who experience homoerotic urges). The higher standard is not unfair but necessary for reasonably judging that, despite the disorder of homosexuality, individuals can participate in formation without morally endangering themselves or others, and will eventually be able to serve well people of both sexes, and children as well as adults.

333. It seems to me that any sexual incontinence whatsoever by such candidates during formation should be considered incompatible with their continuing in the program.

The process of application for admission to a formation program may include a professional psychological assessment. If so, good supervisors see to it that it meets several conditions.

First, applicants are never asked to undergo a psychological assessment before cooperation in discernment is well established, celibate chastity has been discussed, they have affirmed that they meet the standards of sexual continence for admission to the formation program, and the vocation director can reasonably expect them to meet other requirements. Not only are pointless psychological assessments prevented in this way but also—and far more importantly—the risk is minimized that the assessment will motivate applicants to sin gravely.

Leaving it entirely to a psychologist likely to have little or no rapport with an anxious applicant to ask about past sexual behavior would be scandalous in the strict sense: it would probably tempt some candidates to lie. But this would be a sin in grave matter, and genuine repentance requires restitution—in this case, admitting the lie to one’s discernment partner—which would be very difficult. So, applicants who lie in order to gain admission to a formation program may well become obdurate in a sin in grave matter. Indeed, having lied, they are likely to continue lying, perhaps even to their spiritual directors. Even if the subjective conditions for mortal sin are not met, the result would be the ordination and/or profession of people whom God did not call; this might perhaps lead to disastrous consequences for such people, to say nothing of some of those entrusted to their service.<sup>334</sup>

Second, a psychological assessment is included in the application process only insofar as it is appropriate to obtain factual information necessary for sound discernment. Its specific objective is determined beforehand; the assessment is designed to meet that purpose, and the use of the results is limited by it. This stipulation is necessary to prevent needless and possibly misleading assessments as well as misunderstanding and misuse of the results of sound ones.

Third, applicants are not asked to undergo a psychological assessment without fully understanding why it is necessary for discernment and the specific reasons that call for it. Candid answers are essential for sound assessments, and only assessments that are sound contribute to sound discernment. Assuming that the applicant already understands why he or she must be truthful in the application process as a whole—namely, that it is cooperation in discerning whether God is calling the applicant to undertake formation and calling the diocese or institute to accept him or her—a good

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334. Conrad W. Baars, *How to Treat and Prevent the Crisis in the Priesthood* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), 34, suggests that the usefulness of psychological assessment may be exaggerated: “Investigation of the candidate’s background by a knowledgeable rector [I would substitute: discernment partner] is superior to psychological testing.” James J. Hennessy, “Psychological Testing in Vocational Selection,” in *Psychology, Counseling and the Seminarian*, ed. Robert Wister (n.p.: National Catholic Educational Association Seminary Department, 1994), 115–139, carefully and cogently shows that great caution is needed in using and interpreting psychological tests in judging whom to admit to seminary formation. In any case, a psychological assessment surely is more likely to be sound and helpful *after* rather than *before*, much less *in place of*, a careful investigation by a knowledgeable discernment partner.

explanation of the need for a psychological assessment will give the candidate strong reasons for answering questions candidly and working with the psychologist to make the assessment sound.

Fourth, applicants are not asked to consent to an assessment until they have been fully and clearly informed about the possible unwanted consequences. Obtaining consent that is not well informed violates applicants' right to privacy. That right can be safeguarded only by explaining, not in vague generalities but in clear and specific terms, what matters will be investigated, what sorts of questions will be asked, any aspects of the experience a reasonable person would be likely to consider burdensome, who will have access to the results, and what uses may be made of them.<sup>335</sup>

Fifth, the psychological assessment must be done by a mental health professional who not only is well trained, experienced, and duly licensed but shares the beliefs and values presupposed by and embodied in the formation program, and understands the traits characteristic of good close collaborators with diverse gifts and limitations. It dishonors applicants called to close collaboration to subject them to psychological examination and evaluation by someone who does not share their beliefs and appreciate the gifts that make them acceptable candidates. Moreover, this condition reduces the likelihood of unsound assessments.<sup>336</sup>

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335. *CIC*, c. 642, §1, prescribes that the "health, character, and maturity" of applicants for admission to religious institutes "are to be verified even by using experts, if necessary, without prejudice to the prescript of can. 220." That prescript includes: "No one is permitted . . . to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy" (*CIC*, c. 220). With respect to those applying for admission to seminaries, the U.S. bishops also try to take the right to privacy into account: "Psychological assessments should be administered using methods that do not violate the applicant's right to privacy and confidentiality," and their fn. 38 is: "See *CIC*, c. 220; *CCEO*, c. 23 (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., 52, p. 23). However, that effort to safeguard privacy is inadequate. Every *method* of psychologically assessing a competent and law-abiding adult violates his or her right to privacy unless he or she consents to the assessment after understanding and considering the possible unwanted consequences of undergoing it. Sharon Euart, R.S.M., "Canon Law and Psychological Testing for Admission to a Seminary," in Wister, ed., op. cit., 189–90, explains the relevance of *CIC*, c. 220: "While the right to one's privacy is not absolute, and at times may yield to the right of the church to assess suitability for holy orders, the applicant has the right to know in advance the extent to which his interior life will be probed and the matters he will be asked to disclose. Moreover, he has the right to assess the guarantees for protecting his right to confidentiality that are set forth by the seminary. The rights to privacy and confidentiality demand that certain parameters be established prior to administering of psychological tests. . . . [I]t is important that seminaries obtain from the applicants the proper releases for disclosure prior to initiating any testing procedures. Such releases should be granted with the explicit, informed and free consent of the individual and should ensure the applicant that the information will be kept strictly confidential. The release should also indicate that the candidate is knowledgeable about the types of assessments to be administered, the purpose of the assessments, who will have access to the reports, the use that will be made of the results, and what happens to the reports after their initial use." These strictures plainly are equally relevant for the process of admission to a religious institute's formation program. Also see John A. Liekweg and Phillip Harris, "Legal Considerations: Civil Law and Confidentiality Issues," in Wister, ed., op. cit., 195–243, regarding the civil law rights of privacy, confidentiality, and access to records; and legal responsibilities to report information under certain conditions.

336. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 5th ed., 51, p. 23, states: "Seminaries as well as dioceses and religious communities must

Sometimes psychological assessment is meant only to identify those afflicted with such serious psychological disorders—e.g., pedophilia—that they should never be admitted to any formation program. The limitations of screening like this are so severe that good formation programs make no use of its results in dealing with applicants who are accepted.

Sometimes, besides identifying applicants who have gifts appropriate for close collaboration, a psychological assessment is meant also to identify matters they may need help with during formation. If so, good supervisors have assessors review their recommendations with applicants and their discernment partners, so that a plan can be agreed on for dealing with the relevant matters. A similar procedure is followed with applicants who need help beforehand if they are to enter formation; they choose whether to seek the suggested help.<sup>337</sup>

When a psychological assessment leads to the rejection of an applicant, good vocation directors provide or arrange whatever help they reasonably can so that the person can deal with problems and discern what God is calling him or her to do next.

Good directors also make sure that all documents required for admission to the formation program are received, examine them carefully for clarity and completeness, and verify their genuineness unless that is morally certain.

Every diocese and religious institute has a set of standards by which some prospects and applicants can be judged unsuitable for its formation program. Even when there are almost no promising applicants, it is a serious mistake to lower the standards and then welcome into formation almost everyone who completes the application process. Good supervisors and vocation directors bear in mind something Pius XI explained very clearly:

Let us seek out quality first of all, because then, if we may use such an expression, quantity will automatically be present by itself. This will be the concern of divine providence. It is not our task to look for numbers, since it is not given to us to inspire vocations in souls. In this truth there is contained the whole of the theology of a vocation: it comes from God and only God can give it.<sup>338</sup>

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be assured that those who conduct psychological evaluations for them are well versed in and supportive of the Church's expectations of candidates for the priesthood, especially expectations concerning celibacy and permanence of commitment." Hennessy, *op. cit.*, 123, explains that "assessment is not a 'value-free' activity, and the examiner must have an understanding of the values of the institution requesting the assessment. Because the assessor chooses the tests and other procedures that will be used, and then analyzes and interprets the findings, the selection of an assessor who does not have specific understanding of those values will lead in all likelihood to poor recommendations, and eventually to costly errors in selection."

337. Gabrielle L. Jean, S.C.O., "Whence Come the Candidates?" *Review for Religious*, 49 (May-June 1990): 343: "I would not advocate involvement in a screening program unless there is a willingness to share the information with the candidate. A good policy is to provide a feedback interview to discuss the test findings with the examinee."

338. Allocution of Pius XI to the General Chapter of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (14 Sept. 1932), quoted in Congregation for Religious, Instruction *Religiosorum institutio*, *loc. cit.*, 459.



Lowering standards to meet needs is likely to do grave harm to those wrongly admitted to formation and those with whom they will come into contact. It is unreasonable to expect such consequences to be prevented by grace: “The call of God to enter upon a religious or priestly state must be considered so necessary that if it is lacking the very foundation on which the edifice rests must be called wanting. For God by his grace neither moves nor assists anyone he does not call.”<sup>339</sup> No matter how few the promising prospects and applicants, good supervisors and vocation directors admit only those whom they confidently discern God is calling them to admit.

### **I: Participants in Formation and Requirements for Its Soundness**

#### **1) Formation prepares one for commitment, life, and service as a close collaborator.**

“The spiritual formation and doctrinal instruction of the students in a seminary are to be arranged harmoniously and so organized that each student, according to his character, acquires the spirit of the gospel and a close relationship with Christ along with appropriate human maturity” (CIC, c. 244). Plainly, good novitiates have similar objectives.

In this canon *formation* and *instruction* translate different Latin words: *formatio* and *institutio*. *Formare* means to shape, fashion, form, compose, direct; *instituere* means, among other things, to teach, instruct, train, educate. Both words are sometimes translated as *formation*. The Vatican II document concerned with what English translations call “priestly formation” is said in Latin to be a plan of priestly *institutionis*, while the apostolic exhortation John Paul II issued after the synod of bishops’ session on the same subject is said to be about priestly *formatione*.

Such variations suggest that English lacks a completely adequate word for the preparation of candidates for close collaboration. Much of any such program is aptly called instruction, training, or educating. But those words fall short of expressing the fostering of candidates spiritual progress and their preparation to become part of either a diocesan presbyterate or a community of religious. For those elements, *spiritual formation* seems apt, because spiritual progress involves ongoing conversion, and becoming a close collaborator involves the profound and permanent transformation of ordination and/or profession. And because spiritual formation is so important, *formation* seems preferable to any other English word for what programs do as a whole to prepare candidates for close collaboration.

Since *formare* means to shape, fashion, form, compose, or direct, analogy with creative work in the fine arts clarifies one aspect of what a good formation program does. A beautiful vase begins as a lump of clay. The clay is dug up, purified, kneaded, spun about on a wheel, shaped as a vase, fired, painted, and refired. In formation programs God is the potter,

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339. Pius XII, *Sedes sapientiae*, AAS 48 (1956) 357, in Sacred Congregation for Religious, *Sedes Sapientiae and General Statutes*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University, 1957), 4. Pius also warns vocation directors not to “entice or admit anyone who does not exhibit really true signs of a divine vocation. Similarly, let them not promote anyone to the clerical ministry who shows that he has divinely received only a religious vocation; nor restrict or misdirect to the secular clergy those who have received from God the religious with the sacerdotal vocation” (5).

and he transforms those he chooses as candidates into good close collaborators. If the clay were self-conscious, its experiences would be terrifying and painful, but in the end, the vase would be aware of its own beauty and grateful for the process required to create it. Good candidates willingly suffer and, in the end, are glad they did.

But of course good formation programs do not literally shape or form candidates. Only some parts of even the poorest formation programs require passivity. Like those who train to be champions in a sport, candidates for close collaboration are formed mainly by their own thought and reflection; self-determining, free choices; and actions persistently carrying out those choices. Since everything good is God's creation, however, without him nobody can have any good thought, make any good choice, or even begin any good performance. Therefore, while good formation mainly is self-formation, everything good in it is God's work; when good candidates are ordained or professed, it is God who has accomplished all they have done (see Is 26.12). They should thank him for all of it and for his goodness, which is so great that he regularly makes his gifts our merits (see DS 1548/810, 1582/842), and in this case makes his formative work the candidates' self-formation.

Since close collaboration involves cooperation not only with Jesus but with other collaborators and those served, the choices and actions that form close collaborators include choices to cooperate with others and the cooperative actions and interactions that carry them out. Candidates in formation together help form one another. They also are helped by "formators," who are already close collaborators, to form themselves as individuals and as members of both a particular diocese or institute and the great community of Jesus' close collaborators serving the even greater community of his Church. Because formators serve as models and also instruct, they function in some ways like the parents of adolescent children and young adults, but their function is also like that of coaches insofar as they help candidates train for a specific role.

All those involved in any sound formation program should clearly understand and constantly bear in mind that a good outcome first depends on God, next on candidates themselves, and last on the formators. After discussing various agents of presbyteral formation, John Paul II concludes:

We must not forget that the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self-formation. No one can replace us in the responsible freedom that we have as individual persons.

And so the future priest also, and in the first place, must grow in his awareness that the agent *par excellence* of his formation is the Holy Spirit, who by the gift of a new heart, configures and conforms him to Jesus Christ the good shepherd. In this way the candidate to the priesthood will affirm in the most radical way possible his freedom to welcome the molding action of the Spirit. But to welcome this action implies also, on the part of the candidate, a welcome for the human "mediating" forces which the Spirit employs. As a result, the actions of the different teachers become truly and

fully effective only if the future priest offers his own convinced and heartfelt cooperation to this work of formation.<sup>340</sup>

Again, in treating the work of those responsible for the formation of religious, John Paul II teaches:

God the Father, through the unceasing gift of Christ and the Spirit, is the educator *par excellence* of those who consecrate themselves to him. But in this work he makes use of human instruments, placing more mature brothers and sisters at the side of those whom he calls. Formation then is a sharing in the work of the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions the inner attitudes of the Son in the hearts of young men and women. Those in charge of formation must therefore be very familiar with the path of seeking God, so as to be able to accompany others on this journey. Sensitive to the action of grace, they will also be able to point out those obstacles which are less obvious. But above all they will disclose the beauty of following Christ and the value of the charism by which this is accomplished. They will combine the illumination of spiritual wisdom with the light shed by human means, which can be a help both in discerning the call and in forming the new man or woman, until they are genuinely free.<sup>341</sup>

In sum, the primary cooperative activity of good candidates and formators is to ask God for his gifts, and the main work of formators is to help candidates to form themselves by making the appropriate set of self-determining free choices.

In a sense, the whole of any good Christian life is formation—a preparation for life in the heavenly kingdom—and so every organized effort to foster Christians' holiness can be regarded as a formation program.<sup>342</sup> But even though formation of seminarians and novices is part of their Christian lives, it should specifically prepare them for close collaboration with Jesus in a particular diocese or religious institute.

Good formation programs help candidates *do* several important things well: discern whether or not they are called to be a priest and/or a religious; if they are, rightly accept ordination and/or make definitive religious profession; once ordained or professed, begin to live as a member of a brotherly or sisterly group of close collaborators and cooperate in service with other members of the group.<sup>343</sup> Moreover, by fostering candidates' self-

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340. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 69, AAS 84 (1992) 778, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XVIII.

341. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 66, AAS 88 (1996) 441–42, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XII.

342. Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, *Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate*, 44–48, EV 9:236–240, pp. 226–33; OR, 18 July 1983, 7, mainly deals with spiritual formation for the whole life of religious and treats the formation program as one phase. The agents of formation and their relationship with one another are clearly indicated (47): “God himself, working through the Holy Spirit of Jesus”; the religious himself or herself who “accepts in love the responsibility for personal formation and growth, welcoming the consequences of this response which are unique to each person and always unpredictable”; and members of religious institutes “who are particularly qualified and appointed to help their sisters and brothers in this matter.”

343. For religious, the formation for service is mostly after first vows, usually much of it before final profession. *CIC*, c. 652, §2, specifies the objectives of formation in a novitiate: “Novices are to be led to cultivate human and Christian virtues; through prayer and self-denial they are to be introduced to a fuller way of perfection; they are to be

formation and equipping them with tools for ongoing study and for dealing with the problems they will encounter in their work, a good formation program prepares those who complete it to continue forming themselves throughout their lives as close collaborators.

## **2) Good supervisors and formators help those in formation to be good candidates.**

Pius XI provided guidelines for bishops regarding those to be entrusted with the work of priestly formation:

Give the best of your clergy to your seminaries; do not fear to take them from other positions. These positions may seem of greater moment, but in reality their importance is not to be compared with that of the seminaries, which is capital and indispensable. Seek also from elsewhere, wherever you can find them, men really fitted for this noble task. Let them be such as teach priestly virtues, rather by example than by words, men who are capable of imparting, together with learning, a solid, manly and apostolic spirit.<sup>344</sup>

Pius might well have given similar advice to the superiors of religious institutes regarding the personnel to be assigned to their formation programs.

Unfortunately, during the years of confusion and division after Vatican II, some supervisors were either unable or unwilling to follow such advice, and many devout and faithful candidates encountered formators with serious defects. Although most were professionally competent, some were not entirely faithful and firm in their commitments, as their behavior eventually made clear, and some lacked gentleness and generosity.

Realizing, however, that sound and effective formation has no greater need than models who are not only competent but exemplary and lovable, good supervisors use all three attributes as criteria for selecting formators. Candidates in good programs receive guidance and encouragement primarily from the inspiring example and kind treatment of formators who, like St. Paul, can offer themselves as models (see 1 Cor 11.1).

Before Vatican II, many formation programs consisted mainly of courses of instruction and strictly enforced rules of behavior. Even now, of course, some candidates welcome lessons to memorize and clear rules to follow, and teaching and rules of behavior remain necessary. By almost completely abandoning such firm structures, some formation programs became almost shapeless for a time.<sup>345</sup> But neither lessons nor

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taught to contemplate the mystery of salvation and to read and meditate on the sacred scriptures; they are to be prepared to cultivate the worship of God in the sacred liturgy; they are to learn a manner of leading a life consecrated to God and humanity in Christ through the evangelical counsels; they are to be instructed regarding the character and spirit, the purpose and discipline, the history and life of the institute; and they are to be imbued with love for the Church and its sacred pastors.” Seminary formation of diocesan priests includes these elements or their analogues: candidates will be consecrated by freely accepting ordination; they are to be instructed regarding the character, spirit, purpose, and discipline of the diocesan priesthood; and they are to be prepared for life in the community of their dioceses’ presbyters.

344. Pius XI, *Ad catholici sacerdotii*, III, AAS 28 (1936) 37, PE, 216:66; Vatican II makes the point (see OT 5) referring to and quoting from Pius XI; also see John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 66–67, AAS 84 (1992) 772–75, OR, 8 Apr. 1992, XVIII.

345. Of course, the changes that came about in diverse formation programs varied greatly. For an account of one example in the United States, see Joseph M. Becker, S.J.,

rules are the most important instruments of formators. Rather, as John Paul II teaches: “The chief instrument of formation is personal dialogue, a practice of irreplaceable and commendable effectiveness which should take place regularly and with a certain frequency.”<sup>346</sup> A good formator listens to candidates, acknowledges their concerns and feelings, and affirms everything sound in their thoughts and aspirations. In this way, he or she can gently help them gain insight into what they must do to form themselves and persevere in doing so despite inevitable difficulties.

While each formator often engages in personal dialogue with a candidate or acts alone in working with a group of candidates, good formators, including spiritual directors, do not act as individualistic gurus. Adhering to a single program of formation, they cooperate with one another, reinforce one another’s example and teaching by their solidarity, and provide common witness by their *esprit de corps*.<sup>347</sup> In forming candidates for the service they are to provide, good formators, whenever feasible, cooperate with one another in providing such service to some group in need of it, engage candidates in helping to provide it in any appropriate way, and thus give them a kind of apprenticeship.

In a two-parent family with more than one child, parents and children form distinct subcommunities. Similarly, formators share purposes distinct from those of candidates and vice versa, and so the two groups inevitably form distinct communities. Still, as parents and children together are united in familial communion, formators and candidates together constitute one formation community, whose common good plays a more important role in its members’ lives than the family’s common good does in the lives of family members. This is so because, unlike good parents who foster their children’s growth toward separating from the community into which they were born, good formators support candidates in preparing to enter a permanent community in which they will be fellow members with the formators. Thus, while conscientiously fulfilling their special responsibilities, good formators strive to accentuate the unity of the formation community and soften the distinction between candidates and themselves. This means neither regarding nor treating candidates as inferiors, and fairly sharing with them the benefits and burdens of common life.

By contrast, formators who treat candidates as subjects rather than partners are unwittingly encouraging them to proceed as individualistically as they can through the formation program, conceal one another’s defects or, at best, ignore them, and, in general, act as if cooperating in doing God’s will were not their common responsibility. But good formators encourage

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*The Re-formed Jesuits*, vol. 1, *A History of Changes in Jesuit Formation During the Decade 1965–1975* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992).

346. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 66, AAS 88 (1996) 442, OR, 3 Apr. 1996, XII; this point plainly applies as well to the formation of diocesan presbyters.

347. Dealing with seminaries, Vatican II, OT 5, prescribes what is equally relevant to the formation of religious: “Administrators and teachers must keep in mind how greatly the outcome of students’ formation depends on their own way of thinking and acting; under the rector’s guidance, they should undertake the tightest community of spirit and action among themselves, and constitute along with the students a single family in answer to the Lord’s prayer ‘that they may be one’ (Jn 17.11).”

candidates in the camaraderie of spurring one another on and bearing one another's burdens, without which their sociability would remain superficial. Treated as partners rather than as subjects, good candidates accept and fulfill conscientiously the responsibilities of self-formation, while regarding what formators do as welcome help rather than demands and impositions. They also work together whenever appropriate, help one another, and recognize their need for one another's help, which they humbly ask for and provide generously—for example, by tutoring, encouraging, praising progress, calling attention to apparent defects, and celebrating accomplishments.

Cooperation within a formation program depends on mutual understanding about the purposes to be achieved and the responsibilities of each party. Upon entry, candidates may have mistaken ideas about what to expect and what is expected of them. The real expectations often are made clearer by what formators do and the program's structure than by formal statements. In any event, good formators try to make their real expectations as transparent as possible as quickly as possible. At the same time, they encourage candidates to articulate their expectations and correct any that are unreasonable. Reasonable ones are of course met whenever possible.<sup>348</sup>

Good candidates in good formation programs usually say good things and behave well. When they fall short, they readily accept correction, take it to heart, and steadily become well formed. There are two sorts of poor candidates. Some say inappropriate things, behave badly, and become surly when corrected. They do not even consistently pretend to become better, for they lack the necessary motivation, self-control, or both. But others badly want to be ordained and/or professed, have considerable self-control, and quickly learn how to behave and talk as they would if they were gradually being well formed, even though they are not. Formators and discernment partners observe how candidates behave and hear what they say but they cannot read their minds or detect their hearts' secrets. Thus poor candidates of the second sort may succeed in their deception and so get ordained and/or professed despite lacking a vocation to the life and service for which the program was meant to form them.

Of course, many candidates are neither unqualifiedly good nor unqualifiedly poor. God has called them into the formation program and may well call them to become close collaborators. Yet they entered the program with some inappropriate motives. They dislike some things required of them—for example, certain academic assignments. They are strongly inclined to handle those elements by doing the bare minimum to get by, and thus miss out on all or most of their potential benefits. They try to participate well in other things (such as early Mass or Morning Prayer) but would sometimes do something else (such as sleep in) if they thought it would not count against them.

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348. The sound standards set by law (*CIC*, c. 660, §1) for programs forming religious are equally relevant for diocesan seminaries: "Formation is to be systematic, adapted to the capacity of the members, spiritual and apostolic, doctrinal and at the same time practical." Unfortunately, supervisors sometimes make overly idealistic, formal statements of formation programs' goals. When good candidates cannot reasonably be expected to meet those goals, good formators make it clear that their expectations are more realistic than the formal statements might lead a conscientious person to think.

In choosing to do good things and avoid doing bad ones, many adolescents frequently have extrinsic ends in view, and all the while wish they were free to do the bad things and omit doing the good—that is, wish they were unconstrained by extrinsic ends so they could do as they please. Even if they avoid mortal sins, their agenda is determined by what pleases them and mitigates bad feelings. Their self-centered attitude and agenda are incompatible with discerning and accepting any vocation whatsoever. Yet many a candidate enters formation with more than a residue of this adolescent willfulness and yearning for freedom.

Good formators try to help and encourage everyone who enters formation to become a good candidate. Spiritual directors have a special role, but all formators play their part on every suitable occasion—for example, when dealing with candidates individually, when preaching homilies, and when giving conferences or courses of instruction.

By clear and consistent teaching but even more by a consistent example of self-giving and self-discipline, good formators attempt to show candidates that, unless doing God's will is what pleases one, freedom to do as one pleases is only an apparent good. They seek to have every candidate understand accurately and clearly what vocation really means, the specific goods that make each element of the formation program inherently worthwhile, and how each element contributes to the program's over-all purpose. They encourage candidates not merely to conform to the program for extrinsic ends, while regretting having to frustrate contrary feelings, but to choose and act for the program's inherent goods, while setting aside any contrary feelings as irrelevant.

Even if they do not use the expression, good formators foster the ongoing *conversion* of candidates. As Jesus elicited Zacchaeus' repentance by asking him to be his host in Jericho (see Lk 19.1–10), they appeal to candidates' self-esteem by pointing out that Jesus greatly honors anyone he invites to be his close collaborator. They also introduce candidates to the asceticism essential for any Christian who takes up a personal cross to follow Jesus: the discipline of never taking a break and putting it down. Like coaches who challenge those who want to become team members to pay the price of training—"No pain, no gain!"—they never apologize for the hardships of asceticism but challenge candidates to disregard them for the sake of moral and spiritual growth.<sup>349</sup> In this way, although discipline is not imposed, candidates practice severe self-discipline in forming themselves.

Early in any formation program, candidates need to be confronted with a truth that statistics and striking examples make clear: God calls many people into formation but not to the life and service for which it is meant to prepare. Some eventually discern God's call to withdraw. Others become incapacitated or die before completing the program. Still others are dismissed and must discern what God wishes them to do next. But if candidates who will never complete the program wholeheartedly undertake formation as their vocation during their time in it, they receive and benefit

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349. See Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*, 36–38, AAS 82 (1990) 495–97, *OR*, 19 Mar. 1990, 5, on asceticism in the formation of religious; the points made are equally relevant to the formation of diocesan presbyters.

from all the gifts God wishes to give them by means of the program; and those gifts will help them prepare for what he has in mind for them next. Moreover, as good elements of their Christian lives, all the good things they do and patiently suffer while in formation are worthwhile in themselves and material for the heavenly kingdom (see GS 38–39, **1–E–3**). Therefore, whether or not called to the life and service for which a formation program prepares, good candidates are detached about the outcome, free of anxiety, and able to live each day with joyful hope.

Candidates who do not realize that formation can and should be good for them, regardless of the outcome, are likely to cling to their own agenda about getting ordained and/or being professed. Not rising to the challenge of formation, they will become bad candidates. Like the rich young man in their unwillingness to detach themselves from their previous lives but unlike him in sticking around rather than going away sad, bad candidates who persist in their ways never transform themselves. They act hypocritically and lie to their formators, perhaps even including spiritual directors. If they manage to get ordained and/or professed, their lack of formation is likely to become evident. For, unless converted, they soon abandon the outward behaviors they temporarily adopted in order to pass muster during formation and begin to do as they please.

By contrast, candidates who undertake formation as their present vocation, confident that responding to the Father's call will be good for them, strive to do his will at all times and rise to the challenge of Jesus' invitation. Detached about the outcome, they are authentic and candid in speaking with formators, since they want whoever will discern on behalf of the diocese or institute to be able to make an accurate evaluation of them. They understand the point of the program's requirements, and seek to fulfill them in such a way as to obtain the maximum benefit rather than merely being seen doing what they must. In their daily examination of conscience, they find not only the shortcomings others might notice but those nobody else could observe.

Along with being detached from the outcome of the formation program, however, good candidates keep its specific purpose in view and resist distractions. Like Jesus' disciples who left everything to follow him, they leave behind all previous interests and relationships except to the extent that these are morally obligatory or helpful to their formation. Instead of using recreation and vacation time as time off from formation, they devote as much of it as possible to activities that are consistent with other elements of their formation and contribute in some way to its over-all purpose. Similarly, unlike poor candidates who become overly absorbed in one thing or another—field education, sociability within the formation community, studies, or whatever it might be—they resist being distracted from the program's fundamental purpose by particular elements of it.

In sum, candidates who understand formation to be their present vocation meet the requirements of the program for the right reasons, become good candidates, and make rapid progress. They become fully engaged in their spiritual exercises, deeply interested in their studies, and fascinated by the entire formation experience as it unfolds. They are not distressed if the appropriateness of some of the requirements remains unclear to them, for



they trust God's wisdom and love. They know that even the best formation program is bound to be imperfect in some ways and likely to include a few absurdities, and they do not complain about such things. Rather, they discern how God wants them dealt with, and confidently expect the good he will bring out of the defects. Even if they are never ordained or professed, the genuine conversion they experience will bear fruit in them as long as they live.

### **3) Good formators help candidates prepare to be good close collaborators.**

Although even the worst priest can make Jesus and his saving acts present, all close collaborators have another purpose, one not so easily achieved: to foster the fruitfulness of Jesus' acts—to help bring about the salvific benefits for which he became man, lived, died, rose, sent the Spirit, and even now continues to work. To serve that great purpose, good close collaborators try to make Jesus himself available to people, not least by trying to be living images of Jesus. Close collaboration therefore calls for Jesus' virtues, and good formation programs help candidates acquire them.<sup>350</sup>

Virtues are abilities of a certain kind. The optimum exercise of some abilities—for example, the ability to reason and make free choices—requires that many conditions be fulfilled, but other abilities are ready for immediate use. Virtues are ready abilities to make good choices and carry them out well. One acquires most virtues by paying attention to others' example and direction, imitating them, and carrying out their instructions: one tries repeatedly to do the thing, takes account of each attempt's defects, and corrects them—until practice makes perfect.

Practical skills—driving a car, say, or singing in a choir—also are ready abilities acquired in the same way. However, skills and virtues also differ in two ways.

First, one can develop skills regardless of one's reasons for engaging in the behavior that develops them. But one develops virtues only if one chooses to do good actions for the sake of the intelligible goods that make the actions inherently choiceworthy, rather than as means to an extrinsic end or merely to satisfy an emotional need. Thus, someone who receives gifts develops the virtue of gratitude by judging that givers' generosity deserves recognition, choosing to thank them so as to give that recognition and build up inherently good relationships with them, and carrying out that choice in an appropriate way, taking into account the circumstances on each occasion.

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350. That seminary formation should help candidates acquire virtues is stated explicitly by John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 27–30, AAS 84 (1992) 700–707, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, VII–VIII. Without using the word, he makes the point even clearer in *Vita consecrata*, 65, AAS 88 (1996) 441, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XII: “Since the very purpose of consecrated life is conformity to the Lord Jesus in his *total self-giving*, this must also be the principal objective of formation. Formation is a path of gradual identification with the attitude of Christ toward the Father. If this is the purpose of the consecrated life, the manner of preparing for it should include and express *the character of wholeness*. Formation should involve the whole person, in every aspect of the personality, in behavior and intentions. . . . For formation to be complete, it must include every aspect of Christian life. It must therefore provide a human, cultural, spiritual and pastoral preparation which pays special attention to the harmonious integration of all its various aspects” (footnotes omitted); also see *CIC*, c. 652, §2.

Unless one recognizes and appreciates people's generosity, one will never acquire the virtue of gratitude, no matter how often one thanks people in hopes of acquiring it. Nor will one acquire gratitude by regularly thanking givers so that they will continue giving or to avoid embarrassment or criticism for being ungrateful.

Second, in developing a skill, all appropriate emotions are inherent in one's interest and effort, and are fostered by the experience of practicing. For example, people who take driving lessons already have the emotions required for driving; otherwise, they would not be trying to learn to drive. Learners need deal only with emotions that interfere with driving well; and the problems they present are obvious. But people can be interested in developing virtues without having the emotions involved in acting virtuously. For instance, candidates in formation can be interested in developing the virtue of gratitude toward God without adequately appreciating his gifts and feeling the need to manifest appreciation. Thus, one develops virtues only if one nurtures the appropriate emotions and strives to identify and deal with emotions that, perhaps in subtle ways, impede sound judgment, upright choice, and the appropriate execution of one's good will. For instance, candidates develop gratitude toward God by bearing in mind their own unworthiness and the gratuitousness of his blessings, and then counting those blessings.

Good formators do several things to help candidates develop virtues, including assuring them that they can become holy, providing good example, clarifying relevant truths, and teaching them how to deal with their emotions. Let us look at each.

Candidates who are serious minded and sincere are likely to be or become acutely aware of their shortcomings, and to be daunted by the prospect of undergoing the transformation involved in acquiring Jesus' virtues. Good formators assure them that God certainly will not withhold from those he calls to be close collaborators what is needed to be good ones—to become saints by accepting and fulfilling their vocation in an exemplary manner. If they are truly called by God and pray for Jesus' virtues, firmly believe that God will answer their prayers, and dispose themselves as well as possible, they will receive as divine gifts everything needed to become good and holy.

For many centuries, people were initiated into close collaboration by receiving instruction and formation while living with a holy person, sharing in the life of a community, or serving a kind of apprenticeship.<sup>351</sup> In modern times, candidates have been formed in special programs, generally conducted in communities dedicated solely to formation by people specializing in this work. The formators and the candidates often form subcommunities, with the formators having more privacy, freedom, and comforts than the candidates, who are required to be more open, submit to stricter discipline, and live more austere. Some of those differences are necessary or, at least, reasonable because conducive to the common good of the formation community as a whole. But the less

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351. On the formation of clerics prior to seminaries, see A. Viéban, "Seminaries, Ecclesiastical," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 13:695.

formators and candidates share a common life, the fewer the opportunities formators have to provide good example to the candidates.

Good formators therefore promote community with candidates and nurture virtues in them by themselves developing them, exercising them in activities shared with, or observed by, the candidates, acknowledging and earnestly striving to overcome their own shortcomings, and bearing witness to the help they received, not least by thanking God for their progress. Good formators are always prayerful. They accept formation work as their present vocation and have no ambition for advancement. They work together harmoniously, carefully obeying the Church's law and following the plan provided for their work. They are temperate and modest. They are available to candidates, whom they selflessly serve, and they work harder and live more austere than they expect candidates to do. When a candidate feels anxious about acquiring virtues, they can say: "I know how you feel, but do not be afraid; God surely can do for you what he is doing for me." Thus, besides encouraging candidates to pray for virtues, they earnestly join the candidates in praying for them.

Another important part of helping candidates acquire virtues is to help them identify and reflect upon any inappropriate or inadequate reasons they have for being interested in close collaboration, and deal appropriately with those reasons, and integrate them into a sound, vocational perspective.

It is not uncommon for people to have inappropriate reasons, along with appropriate ones, for entering formation. Some poor people are attracted by the prospect of economic security. Some people with psychological problems are attracted by the prospect of help from the structure or the community. Some ambitious people see priests and religious as the elite corps of the Church; aware perhaps that they are unlikely to achieve status elsewhere, they want to be close collaborators. Some are attracted to celibate chastity as a respectable form of single life because they are reluctant to accept the responsibilities and risks of marital and parental fidelity, or realize that they are unfit for marriage because they lack heterosexual attraction or have other defects.

When candidates show they have inappropriate reasons like these, good formators lead them to reflect and give up illusory aspirations while finding acceptable ways of meeting their real needs. In this way, those who entered the formation program for inappropriate reasons but whom God is really calling to it are helped to rectify their intentions and recognize their present vocation; while many of those who entered without a vocation to do so become aware of their real calling and depart, with minimal adverse effects on themselves and others in the program.

Most candidates enter formation because they think they may be called to close collaboration. But many, probably most, have reasons that, while good in themselves, are somehow inadequate. This is true even of good candidates. Some enjoy dealing with people and want to help others, and see close collaboration as a way of doing that. Some are trying to please devout parents or close collaborators who have been good friends. Good formators explain to such candidates that, while both a general desire to help others and others' desires for oneself can be good reasons to consider entering formation, a possible calling to close collaboration is indicated chiefly by

other signs: intimacy with Jesus and correspondence between one's gifts and the requirements of a specific form of service. Unless candidates who entered formation for inadequate reasons find adequate ones for continuing, good formators encourage them to withdraw.

Many candidates whose reasons are appropriate in respect to the matters mentioned nevertheless lack well-integrated reasons bearing on all three of the goods at stake: friendship with Jesus, the salvation of those to be served, and their own holiness. Rather, they focus on one or two of these. Beginning with each candidate's sound ground of interest in close collaboration, good formators lead him or her to understand that the love of God, of those to be served, and of self imply one another and ground all the reasons for commitment to close collaboration (see **3-A-2**, above). They thus help candidates continue in formation for adequate reasons, and integrate all their reasons within a sound vocational perspective.

Along with praying perseveringly, trying seriously to meet a good program's requirements with detachment from the outcome, and having appropriate and well-integrated reasons for undertaking the program, candidates also need to deal with their emotions in order to develop the virtues of a good close collaborator. Good formators help them become aware of their emotions, deal with inappropriate ones, and nurture those in harmony with their good reasons. While some other aspects of formation are more important, emotional formation calls for lengthier treatment here because it is less understood and more likely to be neglected.

Most candidates need help in understanding emotions. Like sensory cognitions and imagery, they are psychic entities. They are generated by innate or learned dispositions toward concrete objects of sensory experience, imagination, and memory. Together with sensory experience, emotions elicit and shape behaviors that respond more or less well to the experienced conditions. Thus, they belong to human beings insofar as they are animals. This is not to say emotions are subpersonal or unimportant. Though differing from other animals by being rational and self-determining, human persons are animals through and through, and human acts involve animal behavior: moving one's body or parts of it, making noises, and so forth.

Because emotions belong to human persons as animals, any emotion grounded in a natural disposition motivates behavior that usually fosters or protects what is good for any animal: life, bodily integrity, and healthful functioning. Since animals can enjoy those goods only with other animals of their kind in an ongoing life process, emotions motivate behavior for the benefit not only of individuals but also of the others with whom an individual's vital interests are concretely intertwined.

Good formators teach candidates how to become aware of their emotions. Not all emotions are feelings of which we are conscious; in fact, such feelings are only a small subclass of emotions. When one *feels* joyful, afraid, angry, and so on, one is experiencing a strong emotion (for example, the joy of completing some very difficult task) and/or an emotion that is being frustrated. But most emotions do not bring about such conscious experiences. Instead, they motivate one to say or do something spontaneously (for example, when the car ahead stops suddenly, *fear* of rear-ending it causes a driver to brake hard), or they incline one toward an

option for choice (*desire* for the items on a buffet inclines one toward picking this or that). Indeed, one often becomes conscious of strong emotions because there is no way of acting on them (*anger* at a mugger who got away) or because one has chosen not to act on them (*desire* to eat when one is fasting). Thus, one can become aware of many of one's emotions—"get in touch with one's feelings"—only by reflecting on one's spontaneous remarks and behavior, and the options that come to mind.

Good formators explain to candidates how emotions become repressed. In themselves, emotions are a natural function and, as such, are good. But someone experiencing emotion may perceive something connected with it as dangerous or repulsive, so that the emotion itself evokes a negative emotional reaction, such as fear or disgust. If such a negative reaction causes the original emotion to be hidden, it has been repressed, and then, being unconscious of it, one cannot deliberate and freely choose what to do about it. A repressed emotion has been at work when, surprised by something he or she says or does, a person thinks: "I don't know what got into me, why I said (or did) that." People sometimes can retrieve repressed emotions by honest self-examination, but they may need the help of an insightful friend, spiritual director, psychological counselor, or psychoanalyst.<sup>352</sup>

A good formation program helps candidates deal reasonably with their emotions. That may mean either acting on them or not acting on them but praying for help with them, talking about them, concealing them, arousing other emotions to offset them, turning attention from what generates them, or using some other psychological technique of coping.

Emotional motives are necessary to make choices, including commitments, for emotions bring to mind and make appealing each possibility that can be chosen—make it a "live option." People's thinking and choices greatly affect their sensory experience and emotions for good or ill. But since emotions belong to human persons as animals, emotional love naturally is centered on oneself and one or a few others. For all young humans, these others are parents (or parent substitutes) and those with whom the young share food and shelter. For mature humans, the others usually are primarily a spouse and/or children. Maturing and marrying therefore usually involve a major shift in emotional focus: people leave father and mother, and cleave to a mate.

Partly because marriage frequently is delayed in contemporary affluent societies, adolescents often emotionally leave their parents long before they marry, but having no ongoing emotional focus except themselves in the interim, they are self-absorbed. Typically, they are anxious for approval and resent criticism. They insist on their rights and want others to help them get what they want, but are jealous of their freedom and lack the submissiveness to authority required for untroubled cooperation. They socialize with many

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352. See Terruwe and Baars, *op. cit.*, 33–61 (the repressive process), 63–87 (types of repressive neuroses), and 89–138 (therapy of repressive neuroses). When martyrs choose not to act on their fear of death and close collaborators choose not to act on their sexual desires, they are not repressing their emotions. Nor is it repression when martyrs deal with fear by imagining the joy of the kingdom and close collaborators deal with sexual desire by turning their attention away from imagery that arouses them. Neither is it repression deliberately to conceal from others emotions of which one is conscious.

friends but do not care enough for any to make significant sacrifices for them. As long as this self-absorption persists, the emotional motives of such individuals cannot be integrated with sound reasons for undertaking a vocation to close collaboration or anything else. Good formation programs help candidates become aware of their emotional self-absorption.

Many and perhaps almost all those who enter formation are interested in close collaboration partly as a result of self-interested emotional motives. They imagine themselves playing a “starring” role, as they have seen close collaborators do when providing services. Or they enjoy the daydream of dealing with people who are respectful and grateful for their service. Or, convinced that God is calling them to be priests and/or religious and assuming that their feelings are sufficient to settle the question of where to apply, they make application to this or that diocese or institute due to self-interested feelings arising from limited experience and uninformed imagination without ever giving thought to God’s preference in the matter.

Many also enter formation without appropriate emotional motives. Though strong in faith, they may focus on Jesus’ divinity and lack affection for him. They may dislike certain kinds of people and hope to avoid serving them. They may lack intense enthusiasm for the kingdom, perhaps taking it for granted that practically no one—certainly not themselves—will end in hell.

Only if they have the appropriate emotional focus will candidates have sound and adequate emotional motivation for completing formation, rightly committing themselves to close collaboration, and faithfully fulfilling that commitment. Like those who marry, they must leave father and mother or emerge from self-absorption. Instead of cleaving to a spouse, however, good candidates become acquainted with Jesus, as a real human being, and cleave to him. They sense Jesus’ presence and feel close to him. He becomes as real to them as father, mother, or anyone else, and more cherished than any. They are awed by Jesus’ beautiful moral character, and yearn to become as much like him as they can. They understand the kingdom and share his passion for helping people enter it.

Of course, close friendship with Jesus is good in itself, and the prospect of enjoying it is a fundamental reason for undertaking close collaboration (see **3-A-2**, **3-B-2**, and **3-C-1**, above). Deep personal love for Jesus also is the strongest and surest guarantee of love of those to be served—even when they seem most unlovable—for he regards all of them as actual or potential members of himself: “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25.40).<sup>353</sup> Therefore, good formation programs foster intimate friendship with Jesus and encourage candidates to imitate him and share his enthusiasm for helping people enter the kingdom.

Concerning the spiritual formation of seminarians, Vatican II teaches: “As they are to be configured to Christ, the priest, by holy orders, may they get used to adhering to him as friends in the intimate sharing of the whole of life” (OT 8). Commenting on the Council’s teaching, John Paul II says:

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353. Without deep personal love for Jesus, one would not be motivated to love others by his self-identification with them. So, love for Jesus is also a necessary condition for the spirituality of communion called for by John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, 42–43, AAS 93 (2001) 296–97, OR, 10 Jan. 2001, VIII.

“First, there is the value and demand of *‘living intimately united’* to *Jesus Christ*.”<sup>354</sup> He also teaches much the same thing with respect to consecrated life. While Jesus’ transfiguration is significant for every Christian, it has special relevance to those called to the consecrated life.

[They] can echo in a particular way the ecstatic words spoken by Peter: “Lord, it is well that we are here” (Mt 17.4). These words bespeak the Christocentric orientation of the whole Christian life. But they also eloquently express the *radical* nature of the vocation to the consecrated life: how good it is for us to be with you, to devote ourselves to you, to make you the one focus of our lives! Truly those who have been given the grace of this special communion of love with Christ feel as if they were caught up in his splendor: he is “the fairest of the sons of men” (Ps 45.2), the One beyond compare.<sup>355</sup>

Thus, good formators encourage candidates to nurture their intimate, human friendship with Jesus, especially by *lectio divina* (see **3-B-2**, above), appropriate participation in the Eucharist (see **3-B-4**, above), and personal prayer (see **3-B-7**, above).

As John Paul II also teaches, it is “the Father who, through the Spirit, fashions the inner attitudes of the Son in the hearts of young men and women.”<sup>356</sup> Good formators therefore encourage candidates to pray to the Father for that formation, and those who wish to become good candidates do perseveringly pray for it. They also ask the Spirit and the Lord Jesus to bring it about: “Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto thine.”

Those who are eager to be good candidates have no trouble grasping how important it is to set aside any agenda of their own and become meek, as Jesus was, so that they will be ready to accept their complete vocation—all the good works and all the sufferings in the Father’s plan for their lives. This is how Jesus accepted his vocation, saying: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work” (Jn 4.34) and: “Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?” (Jn 18.11). Good candidates realize, too, how important it is that they become humble, as Jesus was, in order gratefully to recognize and accept *as God’s gifts* their own vocation and spiritual progress, their opportunities to serve, and everything they will eventually share with those they will serve—as Jesus recognized that he had been sent by the Father and was grateful for everything the Father had given him to deliver to us: “I thank thee, Father” (Mt 11.25, Lk 10.21) and “All things have been delivered to me by my Father” (Mt 11.27, Lk 10.22).

At the Annunciation, Mary was troubled, and the angel reassured her. Not knowing how Joseph and others would take her miraculous motherhood, she surely realized that her vocation would not be easy. Yet by

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354. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 46, AAS 84 (1992) 738, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XII. “Demand” here does not mean that the requirement of intimacy with Jesus is imposed; the need flows from a seminarian’s personal vocation. Canon law recognizes the uniqueness of each individual’s spirituality and personal relationship with Jesus by prescribing that seminary formation should be “so organized that each student, according to his character, acquires the spirit of the gospel and a close relationship with Christ” (*CIC*, c. 244).

355. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 15, AAS 88 (1996) 389, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, III.

356. John Paul II, *Vita consecrata*, 66, AAS 88 (1996) 441, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XII.

her unqualified *fiat* she embraced it courageously with perfect meekness. At the Visitation, she plainly was aware of her own grandeur—"All generations will call me blessed" (Lk 1.48)—but with perfect humility she at once acknowledged that all her excellence was God's gift: "For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name" (Lk 1.49). Like Mary, good candidates expect hardships and suffering yet meekly submit to God's plan and, appreciating the excellence of the life they are undertaking, they humbly recognize both their vocation and their undertaking of it as God's gifts.

In sum, good formators help prepare candidates by helping them acquire Jesus' virtues. A key element of that is fostering their emotional focus on Jesus so that all their emotions are shaped by that relationship. Another element is fostering candidates' integration of their reasons for acting in a sound vocational perspective. Constant and persevering prayer for virtues, inasmuch as they are God's gifts, is indispensable.

While focusing on virtues, good formation programs include instruction and training—in some cases a great deal of it. The formators have much planning work to do, but here, too, candidates must form themselves by studying and practicing. To this end, good formators encourage the candidates' intellectual curiosity and individual initiative. Good candidates become so involved in the subjects they are studying and skills they are developing that these things could become distractions from prayer. But they resist that temptation and integrate everything into their preparation for good close collaboration with Jesus.

It may happen that some promising candidates cannot meet one or more of a program's academic or training requirements within the time allowed. For example, a final examination may show that an otherwise good candidate has not adequately understood some essential matters treated in a required course of study. If supervisors do not provide for such cases, good formators then reluctantly dismiss a candidate who fails to meet a sound standard; but others lower the standard to what almost all candidates will achieve and allow those who even then fail to retake the examination and pass them, regardless of whether they meet the requirement, because they are so deserving in other respects.<sup>357</sup>

Good supervisors anticipate such cases and insist that formators never pass any candidate who fails to meet sound requirements regarding

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357. A formator who does that may rationalize by recalling the case of St. John Vianney, the Curé of Ars, but that abuses the memory of that great saint, who by good tutoring and hard work became such an excellent preacher, catechist, and confessor that John XXIII, *Sacerdotii Nostri primordia*, AAS 51 (1959) 570, PE 264:76–77, offers him as a model of studiousness: "Throughout his life, he preached and taught catechism. The Council of Trent pronounced this to be a parish priest's first and greatest duty and everyone knows what immense and constant labor John Vianney expended in order to be equal to carrying out this task. For he began his course of studies when he was already along in years, and he had great difficulty with it; and his first sermons to the people kept him up for whole nights on end. How much the ministers of the word of God can find here to imitate! For there are some who give up all effort at further study and then point too readily to his small fund of learning as an adequate excuse for themselves. They would be much better off if they would imitate the great perseverance of soul with which the Curé of Ars prepared himself to carry out this great ministry to the best of his abilities: which, as a matter of fact, were not quite as limited as is sometimes believed, for he had a clear mind and sound judgment."



knowledge and skills, but may give such a candidate as many extra months or years as he or she needs to meet all the requirements.

**4) Good programs help candidates live in peaceful, celibate chastity.**

Good formation programs include instruction and testing appropriate to ensure that candidates adequately understand the commitment made by those who complete the program and alternatives to that commitment, sound reasons and appropriate emotional motives for making the commitment, how candidates can discern God's will in the matter, and how to prepare to meet challenges to the commitment.<sup>358</sup> Most of the general content of the necessary instruction has been treated in chapter two or earlier in this chapter, and some of the specifics will be treated in subsequent chapters.<sup>359</sup> But formation to live in celibate chastity deserves special treatment here because of its complexity. Formation for chastity is not an isolated element in good programs. Good formation is an organic whole, and sound instruction aims to make it clear how celibate chastity is an integral part of the lives of good close collaborators.

Recall again that good candidates who undertake close collaboration commit themselves unconditionally to Jesus and give themselves totally in salvific service (see **3-A-1**, above). Whether they do this in becoming clerics or religious or both, they proceed out of love of Jesus, those they will help him serve, and themselves. They intend to contribute to the kingdom and share in it by doing the Father's will, enjoying intimacy with Jesus, imitating him as perfectly as they can, and working closely with him. In making that commitment with wholehearted love, they freely accept celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. They regard marriage as a good they forgo because it is incompatible with the good they rightly prefer. Thus, their promise of celibacy or vow of chastity, rather than expressing the intention to reject marriage, expresses free acceptance of being unmarried as a side effect of their affirmative commitment (see **3-A-2**, above).

Among the reasons why good formation programs ensure that candidates understand marriage well is that people preparing to forgo marriage must understand it if they are to forgo it reasonably. For many candidates, Christian marriage is the alternative to close collaboration and, considering it as such, good formation makes clear the various facets of the good of marriage and its burdens.<sup>360</sup> Rather than having romantic illusions about married life, well-formed candidates will realize that, like

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358. Referring to seminarians, *CIC*, c. 247, §2, prescribes: "They are duly to be informed of the duties and burdens which are proper to sacred ministers of the Church; no difficulty of the priestly life is to be omitted." A similar prescription for novices would be appropriate.

359. Although elements proper to particular dioceses and religious institutes, especially the distinctive charisms of the latter, are very important, a work such as this cannot deal with them.

360. St. Paul realistically calls attention to some of these burdens (see 1 Cor 7.3–5, 10–11, 25–28, 32–34), but does not mention what is arguably the greatest: the difficulty of living, year after year, in very close quarters with someone who, like oneself, has many imperfections. Nor does Paul mention an important fact: Most good Christian married couples at times either cannot engage in intercourse or must abstain from it; some of those periods of continence are lengthy, and the difficulty of continence often is intensified either by the loneliness of being apart or the stimulation of being together.

good close collaborators, Christian spouses who faithfully fulfill their marital commitment must deny themselves, take up their cross each day, and follow Jesus.

To help candidates grasp the reasonableness of forgoing the good of marriage, a good formation program will not only focus on the reasons for undertaking close collaboration but will make at least four other things clear. First, most of the capacities exercised by married Christians in fulfilling themselves as good spouses and parents, including most more or less distinctive and complementary capacities of men and of women, can be rightly exercised by single people and are in fact exercised by good close collaborators.<sup>361</sup> Second, while human happiness or fulfillment requires that one genuinely love others, close collaboration with Jesus meets that requirement at least as well as any other vocation. Third, fulfillment does not require realizing all one's potentialities. Nobody fulfills himself or herself except by accepting and carrying out his or her personal vocation, and every vocation involves realizing some possibilities and forgoing others. Only as a communion of saints, united in Jesus, will all those who faithfully fulfill their vocations share in the well-rounded realization of human possibilities (see Eph 4.13–16). Fourth, because every Christian is obliged to forgo nonmarital sexual acts, inasmuch as they are at odds with the good of marriage, the promise of celibacy or vow of chastity does not directly bear on those acts.

Celibate chastity obviously involves forgoing the good of marriage. But good formation programs will make it clear that, while marital intercourse is part of this good—a part in which and by which it is realized and experienced in a special way—that good is not limited to spousal love and companionship. It usually includes parenthood and, for Christian couples who marry validly, always includes participation in being a sign of the communion of God with humankind and of Jesus with his Church (see *LCL*, 596–605). So, accepting celibate chastity is accepting the Christian not-good of being without a sacrament in which most of the faithful can participate as well as the natural not-goods of being a man or a woman childless and “alone” (Gn 2.18).<sup>362</sup>

Of course, a good formation program will also carefully clarify several things regarding the commitment, including celibate chastity, that candidates are preparing to make: (1) the sound reasons for which those with the charisms for some form of close collaboration should undertake it (see **3–A–2**, above) and the emotional motives that harmonize with those reasons; (2) how celibate chastity really is superior to marriage (see **2–D–2** and **3–A–2**, above); (3) that some who do not yet have the charism of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake will receive it if they earnestly pray for that gift and cooperate with the graces they receive during formation; (4) that some who

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361. See Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Directives on Formation in Religious Institutes*, 40–41, AAS 82 (1990) 497–98, *OR*, 19 Mar. 1990, 5.

362. Candidates should be warned about the dangers to celibate chastity (see OT 10, PC 12), and some who have abandoned close collaboration say they were motivated more by loneliness and/or lack of fulfillment in parenthood than by sexual frustration. So, candidates need to understand these potential motives for infidelity and be prepared to deal with them.

have this charism are not called to the diocesan presbyterate or religious life but to some other form of consecrated life (see **2-D-4**, above); (5) that it would be a grave sin to undertake close collaboration without moral certitude that one has the charism; and (6) that some without the charism for celibate chastity are called to single life.<sup>363</sup>

A good program will help candidates who have a vocation to close collaboration but have not always been continent to become peacefully chaste. Partly this means helping them become good candidates and undertake celibate chastity rightly, but especially it involves helping them cleave to Jesus, nurture intimate friendship with him, and acquire his virtues.<sup>364</sup> Candidates also will be helped by receiving sound teaching not only about celibate chastity, along the lines outlined in the earlier paragraphs of this section, but also about how good close collaborators foster fidelity to their ongoing vocation (see **3-A-5**, above), resist challenges to fidelity (see **3-A-6**, above), form and carry on spiritual friendships (see **3-C-1**, above), reject rationalizations of sexual immorality (see **3-C-2**, above), live out their acceptance of celibate chastity (see **3-C-4**, above), and deal reasonably with erotic desires (see **3-C-5**, above). Good programs also provide spiritual direction and other personal help so that candidates will learn how to overcome sin in general (see *LCL*, 216–26), clearly understand why all sexual acts that violate the good of marriage are grave matter (see *LCL*, 657–68), and know the special mistakes to be avoided and steps to be taken in dealing with sexual sins (see *LCL*, 669–78). Formators may encourage otherwise promising candidates struggling with incontinence to form a mutual-support group similar to other groups that engage in twelve-step programs.

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363. When Paul says that “it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion” (1 Cor 7:9), he seems to overlook a large group of Christians: those aflame with passion who cannot rightly marry soon, if ever. The group includes most adolescents, singles who wish to marry but have not found a suitable marriage partner, permanently separated spouses, and people whose only erotic inclination is toward something other than heterosexual intercourse. Paul surely was aware of such people, yet he insists that Christian life has no place for sexual sins (see 1 Cor 6:9–20, 7:1, 9; Eph 5:3–12; 1 Thes 4:1–8) and teaches that Christ’s grace liberates Christians from sin’s slavery (see Rom 5:2; 6:12–14, 22; Tit 2:11–14; cf. Mt 11:30, Jn 14:23, 1 Jn 5:3). Of course, some people do not believe that even Christians in the state of grace can entirely avoid mortal sin. Yet the Council of Trent teaches definitively: “If anyone shall say, ‘Observing God’s precepts is impossible for a human being, even one justified and in the state of grace,’ anathema sit” (DS 1568/828); for explanation of the grounds of the definition, see DS 1536–37/804.

364. John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 44, AAS 84 (1992) 734–35, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XII, emphasizes the role of love for Jesus in developing the affective maturity necessary for celibate living, and, while the document concerns only seminary formation, the point is equally important in the formation of religious: “Education for responsible love and the affective maturity of the person are totally necessary for those who, like the priest, are called to *celibacy*, that is, to offer with the grace of the Spirit and the free response of one’s own will the whole of one’s love and care to Jesus Christ and to his Church. In view of the commitment to celibacy, affective maturity should bring to human relationships of serene friendship and deep brotherliness a strong, lively and personal love for Jesus Christ. As the Synod Fathers have written, ‘A love for Christ, which overflows into a dedication to everyone, is of the greatest importance in developing affective maturity. Thus the candidate, who is called to celibacy, will find in affective maturity a firm support to live chastity in faithfulness and joy’” (Proposition 21).

At what point is it reasonable to expect candidates to be peacefully chaste?

The proposal was offered earlier that anyone admitted to a theologate, a one-year novitiate, or the final year of a longer novitiate should have been completely sexually continent for at least three months. Some candidates who meet that standard, or even a higher one, will subsequently commit sexual sins. Provided they have a firm purpose of amendment and are otherwise good candidates, they may prudently continue—and may be prudently encouraged to continue—in the formation program up to a certain time. A Church document published in 1961 identifies that time:

No one should be admitted to perpetual vows or promoted to Sacred Orders unless he has acquired a firm habit of continency and has given in every case consistent proof of habitual chastity over a period of at least one year. If within this year prior to perpetual profession or ordination to Sacred Orders doubt should arise because of new falls, the candidate is to be barred from perpetual profession or Sacred Orders . . . unless, as far as profession is concerned, time is available either by common law or by special indult to extend the period for testing chastity and there be question of a candidate who . . . affords good prospects of amendment.<sup>365</sup>

One year of complete continence before diaconal ordination or definitive profession seems to me a reasonable, minimum, exceptionless requirement. No shorter period is likely to include (a) the cycle of seasons, with their impact on moods, (b) the psychological challenges of various sorts of work, (c) celebrations of many kinds, (d) vacations without the formation program's usual moral support, and (e) encounters with many sorts of people in diverse situations.

But one year is a minimum. It may take longer than a year for a perfectly continent candidate to be morally certain he or she has the charism of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake. Candidates who were not perfectly chaste in the past but who receive the charism do begin to experience a definite trend toward peaceful chastity: fewer and less intense temptations, less anxiety, growing facility in dealing with temptations, and increasing confidence. But progress may not be entirely steady. Difficult stretches may last several days or even a few weeks. The trend can, however, become clear during the course of a year. The experience is analogous to recovering from serious physical injuries. At first, one is uniformly miserable; then one usually, but not always, feels and functions better; at last, the trend is clear: one is definitely on the mend and confident that, with time and perseverance in rehabilitation, one will be completely well. Still, given the favorable situation of candidates in a formation program—looking forward to definitive profession or ordination, with the moral support the program offers—only those candidates who actually experience at least a few months of peaceful chastity can be confident of remaining peacefully chaste (see **3-C-3**, above).

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365. Congregation for Religious, Instruction *Religiosorum institutio*, 470. On 23 Jan. 1961, John XXIII approved “this Instruction and ordered that it be communicated to superiors of institutes of evangelical perfection” (486). An editor's note adds that the Instruction, although privately circulated and never published, was regarded by the Congregation as “a matter of public law” (486).

### 5) Good formators help candidates discern soundly and act conscientiously.

Good spiritual directors do everything they can to help those they direct make progress toward holiness (see **3–B–6**, above). Usually, when people not in a formation program receive spiritual direction, they have freely chosen it. The agenda and frequency of sessions are determined by mutual agreement. There are no deadlines. In formation programs, however, spiritual direction generally is a required element of the program; the choice of spiritual directors generally is limited; the formation plan shapes the agenda for direction; and candidates must receive timely help in discerning whether they are called to close collaboration and to undertake a specific form of it.

In the past, a candidate's spiritual director almost always was his or her regular confessor as well.<sup>366</sup> Today, well-trained women can provide good spiritual direction, and may do so in formation programs for women religious. In cases in which a person other than a confessor provides spiritual direction, a regular confessor remains desirable. He appropriately provides help with issues related to sins confessed, including their implications for the candidate's responsibilities with respect to the formation program and the commitment to which it leads. Even when candidates have a regular confessor who also provides spiritual direction, they at times rightly obtain other competent spiritual guidance.

Spiritual directors must safeguard the confidentiality of spiritual direction, and other formators must respect it. Good formation teams nevertheless are of one mind on the purposes and content of the program and cooperate smoothly. It is essential that spiritual directors and other formators who work together be well acquainted and view one another positively as colleagues. Other formators may share with a candidate's spiritual director information about him or her that they think deserves consideration in direction.

Spiritual directors make a distinctive contribution to formation in three ways. First, they deal with candidates individually, with the specific responsibility of spiritual formation (see **3–B–6**, above). Second, because they may neither divulge nor use anything learned about a directee during their sessions,<sup>367</sup> candidates can disclose their most secret concerns to them and receive guidance and help in making judgments of conscience and in discerning. Third, good spiritual directors gain candidates' trust and come to

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366. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 120, p. 50, provides: "Each seminarian is encouraged to have a regular confessor, who ideally is also his spiritual director, with whom he can be completely honest, fully manifesting his conscience, and from whom he can receive ongoing guidance. This is not meant to limit the penitent's liberty, since he is always free to approach other confessors, whether in the seminary or outside it." The document also recommends (132, p. 52) that seminarians be informed that spiritual direction "is not an optional possibility but a seminary requirement; a recognition that seminary spiritual direction is concerned not only with the personal spiritual growth of seminarians but also with their preparation for service in the Church as priests . . ."

367. However, with respect to matters not subject to the seal of confession, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 134, p. 52, sets a limit: "The only possible exception to this standard of confidentiality would be the case of grave, immediate, or mortal danger involving the directee or another person."

know them well. Often they can help those they direct acquire insights otherwise unavailable to them, and recognize and cooperate with proffered graces they might otherwise overlook or be unwilling to accept. Confidentiality allows good directors to explore with candidates the possibility that they might be called to something other than the service for which they are in formation—for example, to a different diocese or institute, to the foreign missions, or to another state of life.

At the same time, all good formators do their best to contribute to every candidate's spiritual formation. Spiritual directors typically provide more help with certain matters, especially discernment and personal prayer, but every good formator in some way helps candidates with the matters spiritual directors deal with, apart from the sacrament of penance. Thus, there is no need for special treatment here of most of the responsibilities of spiritual directors.<sup>368</sup>

No one can have assurance of discerning God's plan unless he or she is ready to accept it, regardless of what it is, and carry it out. Not all candidates are called to undertake close collaboration, but God has a plan for each and every one of them, a complete life of good deeds, prepared in advance (see Eph 2.10), to be discerned over the course of his or her life (see **2-A-3 to 2-A-6**, above). Good formators do their best to help each candidate understand this personal vocation and learn how to discern soundly. By prayer, example, the use of saints as models, other instruction, and conversation, they encourage candidates to set their hearts on doing God's will, begin or continue discerning what he is calling them to do, and respond faithfully to that call. Thus, candidates who realize and/or are found by their discernment partners not to be called to close collaboration are helped to discern how God wishes them to proceed; while those who are called, along with their discernment partners, confidently discern that. The discernment partners of candidates who are called thus have sound grounds for approving their profession or ordination.

Ideally, candidates have been well catechized before entering a formation program, and often they have had sound spiritual direction, so that they already accurately understand vocation and rightly discern that God calls them to undertake formation. Some of these expect to complete the program, God willing, and to be ordained and/or professed. Good formators at once begin helping such candidates prepare for their commitment and service. Others, while confident that they belong in the program, are unsure whether or not they are called to complete it. When identified by good formators, such candidates are assured that they can do well in the program and encouraged to proceed as follows: (1) patiently accept their uncertainty, and trust that the Holy Spirit will eventually remove it; (2) assume they will complete the program and do their best in it for a specified time, such as a year; (3) at the end of that time, discern whether they are called to continue for another specified time; and (4) if they are, go on in the same way, without anxiety, until the time comes to discern whether to accept ordination and/or make definitive profession.

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368. The special responsibility of spiritual directors—and confessors, if different—who discover cogent reasons why a directee should not be ordained or professed will be treated shortly.

Other candidates, less mature spiritually but wanting to be ordained or professed, are unreasonably confident that they are called to close collaboration. A good formator does not assume, much less tell them, that they lacked a calling to enter formation, but tries to help them understand what a vocation to close collaboration is and to clarify and soundly evaluate their reasons and emotional motives for wanting to become close collaborators. If they discern that God is calling them to continue in formation, whether or not they remain confident of completing the program, they will be able to do well in it. Otherwise, they will realize that the program is not for them and will be in a position to discern what God is calling them to do.

Still other candidates are neither spiritually mature nor confident that they are called to close collaboration. Good formators will focus first on helping them understand accurately what a vocation to undertake formation is and to clarify and soundly evaluate their reasons and emotional motives for entering the program. If they discern that God called them to enter formation, they will be able to do well in the program, regardless of whether they become confident of completing it. If they discern that God was not calling them to enter formation but only permitted them to undertake it, they also will be able to discern his real plan.

As they get to know candidates who are beginning formation, formators sometimes become aware of something that would have prevented someone's admission to the program had it been known in advance. If the candidate acted in bad faith, good formators dismiss him or her at once, for other candidates' good and the program's integrity.<sup>369</sup> Even if a candidate acted in good faith, there still may be cogent reasons for immediate dismissal; but if not, good formators will encourage him or her to join them in discerning God's will in the matter. If it is that the candidate continue in the program, they help him or her deal with the problem and, if appropriate, extend the time for completing the program. If however the problem is such as to rule out the candidate's completing the program, good formators at once make that clear and try to help the individual discern God's will and set about carrying it out.

Candidates approaching ordination or profession sometimes express doubts about proceeding. The first thing to do is to help them clarify their state of mind. Any thoughtful person who considers the unknowable future and is not presumptuous about his or her perseverance is bound to feel at least a bit uneasy about making a lifelong commitment. If a candidate's "doubts" simply express such feelings, a good formator will encourage him or her to have confidence in the Holy Spirit's ongoing help, seek his reassurance, and proceed despite the feelings. It may be, though, that a candidate manifests real uncertainty about whether God is calling him or her to make the commitment. Then, a good formator points out that an unconditional and lifelong commitment cannot rightly be made without confidence and the sense of joy and peace that even candidates who feel some uneasiness can and should have; and, unless the grounds for the

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369. In dismissing such candidates and others, good formators strive to promote their spiritual welfare and protect their reputations.

candidate's doubts are removed, good formators will do everything they rightly can to deter or prevent him or her from proceeding.<sup>370</sup>

Formators may become aware that a candidate nearing the end of the program still has a grave defect: unsound motivation for wanting to be ordained or professed, adherence to false doctrine, opinion at odds with constant and very firm Church teaching, lack of piety, untruthfulness, disproportionate anger, grave unfairness or disrespect toward others, efforts to dominate others, disobedience to legitimate and applicable legal norms and/or reasonable directives, lack of reasonable concern for others, unreasonable refusal to help others, lack of peaceful chastity, immodesty, laziness, a psycho-moral disorder, or a pathological condition likely to be incompatible with the life and service the candidate has been preparing to undertake.

Some formators belittle any defect's significance, emphasize all the conditions for proceeding that the candidate has met, and rationalize allowing or even encouraging him or her to proceed. If the ordination is to the diaconate or the profession is temporary, the rationalization may be that there is still time to deal with the matter before presbyteral ordination or permanent profession. If it is a question of ordination to the presbyterate or permanent profession, the argument may be that it is now too late to deal with the matter. But good formators will try to dissuade a candidate with any grave defect from proceeding and will use every legitimate means necessary to prevent him or her from being ordained or professed. That may include calling the attention of the relevant supervisor to the problem and his or her grave responsibility in the matter. If a supervisor requests, commands, or even tries to compel the formators to approve or recommend ordination or profession of someone they believe unfit, they never comply.

In dealing with unfit candidates, good spiritual directors and confessors adhere to the same principles as other good formators. Besides being limited by the seal of confession or the confidentiality of spiritual direction, however, they have a special, affirmative responsibility, which is clearly articulated in the 1961 Church document from which I quoted earlier:

Confessors have the grave duty of warning, urging, and ordering unfit subjects, privately and in conscience, with no regard for human respect, to withdraw from the religious and clerical life. Although they may appear to have all the dispositions required for sacramental absolution, they are, nevertheless, not for that reason to be regarded as worthy of profession or ordination. The principles governing the sacramental forum, especially those pertinent to the absolution of sins, are different from the criteria whereby, according to the mind of the Church, judgment is formed on fitness for the priesthood and the religious life. Consequently, penitents who are certainly unworthy of profession and ordination can be absolved if they show proof of true sorrow for their sins and seriously promise to drop the idea of going on to the religious or clerical state, but they must be effectively barred from profession and ordination.

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<sup>370</sup>. Confidentiality sometimes makes it impossible for a formator to prevent a candidate from proceeding.



Likewise spiritual directors are under obligation in the non-sacramental internal forum to judge of the divine vocation of those entrusted to them and are also under the obligation to warn and privately urge those who are unfit to withdraw voluntarily from the life they have embraced.<sup>371</sup>

Although this document is addressed only to religious superiors, all spiritual directors and/or confessors plainly have a grave moral obligation to make full use of their moral authority to dissuade any and every unfit candidate from proceeding.

In fulfilling this responsibility, they are likely to be challenged especially by candidates who do not have moral certitude that they are peacefully chaste. Some directors and confessors offer unsound arguments to rationalize allowing, or even encouraging, candidates to proceed even though they are still committing sexual sins. Here are four such arguments and responses to them.

Some candidates are very prayerful, charitable, and excellent in every respect, but they simply cannot stop masturbating. Since they use no pornography and entirely avoid fantasies, that has no more sexual significance than urinating or defecating, and I am convinced it also has no real moral significance. It seems to me unreasonable to treat meaningless behavior as if it could be incompatible with the degree of holiness required for ordination or profession.

Candidates who really cannot stop masturbating may well be holy. But while holiness is necessary, it is not sufficient for ordination or profession. Far from being meaningless, uncontrollable masturbation without fantasies is a clear symptom of compulsion, which calls for psychological treatment. If such candidates proceed, their illness may worsen, and their lack of self-control may have disastrous consequences for them and the Church.<sup>372</sup>

Some candidates have not had sex with another person or looked at pornography since entering the program. They also have worked on the problem of masturbation and are making good progress. Their overall pattern is one of chastity. As the months have passed, they are falling less and less often. I am confident they will eventually be peacefully chaste.

But these candidates' pattern is not, strictly speaking, one of chastity. While striving to be continent, they are sometimes incontinent; and the trend is toward continence rather than peaceful chastity, which presupposes perfect continence. The argument, "As the months have passed, they are falling less and less often," suggests that these candidates are trying to taper off masturbating. In reality, no one falls into sin; we sin by giving in to temptation. Moreover, to try to taper off any specific practice of sinning is to intend to commit the sin less frequently, which still is to intend to commit

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371. Congregation for Religious, Instruction *Religiosorum institutio*, 463.

372. Even if the psychopathology does not worsen, masturbatory behavior cannot be entirely meaningless. Classing it with urination and defecation overlooks its incompatibility with the nuptial meaning of the body. If such candidates receive and cooperate with appropriate psychological help and sound spiritual direction, they can stop masturbating. Only then are they in a position to begin discerning whether they have the charism of celibate chastity for the kingdom's sake.

the sin. So, those trying to taper off do not even have the firm purpose of amendment essential for genuine contrition.<sup>373</sup>

Despite frequent and distressing temptations, this candidate has been doing his best to quit masturbating and has fallen only a few times during the past year. In all other respects, he is a fine seminarian, well prepared for ordination to the diaconate. Moreover, occasional sins, even if mortal, are compatible with a moral virtue, and I feel sure that the grace of the sacrament will help him greatly, so that he will be peacefully chaste once he is ordained.

Holding that moral virtues are more deeply fixed in the personality than free choices, St. Thomas thought that someone who has acquired a virtue can sin against it without losing it.<sup>374</sup> Even if that is so, however, those trying to avoid a specific sin obviously have not yet acquired the relevant virtue if they still experience frequent temptations and sometimes give in. In fact, every Christian has sufficient grace to avoid mortal sin entirely, and it is easy for those with acquired virtues to resist temptations against them.<sup>375</sup> Therefore, even if this candidate has generally been doing his best, he certainly has not yet acquired the virtue of chastity. Being only imperfectly continent, he cannot now know whether he ever will be peacefully chaste, and there is no reason to assume that the grace of the sacrament will make up for his lack of virtue.<sup>376</sup>

Before entering the novitiate, this novice learned to guard her eyes and imagination; since then, she has experienced sexual temptation only when trying to go to sleep. Even then, she usually resists, but since she needs her sleep, she occasionally tires and gives in. When that happens, her behavior is hardly a voluntary act, for she is not making a *fully* deliberate choice to do

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373. For instance, alcoholics often promise to cut down on their drinking, yet continue getting drunk. Only those with a genuine purpose of amendment (“Never again!”) sooner or later stop drinking entirely. On unsound gradualism, see *CMP*, 419–24, 687; *LCL*, 206–8, 670–71. Someone might argue that traditional moralists approved the sort of gradualism criticized here, at least in dealing with venial sins. But although one can deal only gradually with venial sins as a whole, trying to taper off even a specific sort of venial sin is self-defeating.

374. See *S.t.*, 1–2, q. 55 (the nature of virtues); q. 63, a. 2, ad 2 (that acquired moral virtues are compatible with sins contrary to them).

375. St. Thomas, *S.t.*, 3, q. 62, a. 6, ad 3, maintains that “with the very least grace one can resist any and every concupiscence and merit life eternal.” See also John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S., *The Truth about Homosexuality: The Cry of the Faithful* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), 115–22.

376. John Paul II, Message to the Pro-Major Penitentiary, 6, *Inseg.*, ??; *OR*, 20 Mar. 2002, 7, explains: “The Sacrament of Penance is the principal instrument for the discernment of vocations. In order to pursue the goal of the priesthood, one needs the mature and sound virtue that guarantees, in as much it is humanly possible as far as possible [sic], a well-founded possibility of perseverance in the future. It is certainly true that the Lord can in an instant transform a sinner into a saint as he did with Saul on the road to Damascus. However, this is not the usual way of divine providence. Accordingly, those responsible for allowing a candidate to continue on his way towards the priesthood must be ‘*hic et nunc*’ certain of his present suitability. If this is true for every virtue and moral habit, it is clear that it is even more necessary with regard to chastity, since by receiving Orders, the candidate will be bound to perpetual celibacy.”

what she *fully* realizes is morally wrong.<sup>377</sup> Thus, she has not committed a mortal sin against chastity for over a year, and I am certain she will be chaste.

People sometimes do behave without the awareness that sufficient reflection requires. For example, an irritable father trying to be gentle with his teenaged daughter nevertheless loses his temper and unthinkingly imposes a very severe punishment for a minor infraction; but then calms down and cancels the punishment. Similarly, someone striving to be chaste might masturbate unthinkingly—for example, before being wide awake, in response to desire aroused by a dream. That behavior might not even be a voluntary act, and would not be a mortal sin. As such people achieve the virtues for which they are striving, however, even unthinking behavior that is inappropriate grows less and less likely. In contrast with unthinking behavior, the novice's behavior carries out her giving in to temptation after resisting. This is at least a *somewhat* voluntary act that she *somewhat* knows to be wrong. Even assuming her responsibility is limited, her somewhat voluntary acts are, at least, venially sinful. They show, even more plainly than the unthinking masturbatory behavior of someone striving to be chaste, that this candidate has not yet acquired the virtue of chastity. Thus, it remains to be seen whether she has the charism of celibate chastity.

As a candidate approaches the end of formation, definitive discernment is necessary. A good candidate and his or her good discernment partner discern together (see **3-E-1**, above) whether Jesus is calling the candidate to be his close collaborator. If their discernment is that this is not the case or if their discernment does not agree, the discernment partner helps the candidate discern what God is now calling him or her to do.

Now, too, the relevant supervisor, who may or may not be the candidate's discernment partner, must decide how to proceed (see *CIC*, c. 653, §2; c. 657; cc. 1029–30). For the good of the diocese, the salvation of those entrusted to the clergy's care, and unfit candidates' own spiritual welfare, good diocesan bishops never ordain or approve the ordination of any candidate for membership in the clergy of their diocese unless morally certain God is calling them to do so. So, too, without that certitude, good religious superiors never accept any candidate for profession and/or ordination for their institute. The needs of dioceses and institutes never justify taking a risk on a candidate whom a bishop or superior is not confident Jesus is calling to be his close collaborator. Bishops and superiors are God's stewards and will have to give an account of their stewardship in this matter as in all others.

#### **6) Good close collaborators regularly engage in ongoing formation.**

Some close collaborators take a skeptical view of ongoing formation. They may even dismiss it as a waste of time. This attitude has various roots. Seminary and/or novitiate marks the end of formal education for many, and some simply do not want to go back to school. *Formation* may recall the least attractive aspects of their time as seminarians and/or novices, when they were subject to the direction and criticism of formators on whose ultimate judgment of them so much depended. Others have sat through

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377. See Joseph J. Farragher, S.J., "Masturbation," *NCE*, 9:438–40.

many sessions of so-called ongoing formation without hearing much that was new and relevant to their needs.

Medical doctors, lawyers, and people in other fields sometimes try to get by with what they knew when they entered practice. But those who are conscientious set aside time for informal study to keep up with developments and may take refresher courses, because they realize that otherwise they will soon be failing to provide good service to their clients. Similarly, since personal vocations unfold over an entire lifetime, good Christians periodically make time to prepare to meet newly emerging responsibilities, and the Church's law requires some ongoing formation of all religious and priests.

The canon on the ongoing formation of religious has a broad focus: "Through their entire life, religious are to continue diligently their spiritual, doctrinal, and practical formation. Superiors, moreover, are to provide them with the resources and time for this" (*CIC*, c. 661). This canon very reasonably indicates that each religious is responsible for his or her continuing self-formation and superiors should facilitate that. John Paul II explains the ongoing formation of religious by considering the different stages of their lives. At each stage, they must remain faithful and, according to the special charism of each institute, creatively integrate various dimensions of religious life: spiritual, apostolic, human and fraternal, cultural and professional.<sup>378</sup>

With respect to priests, the focus of the canon is limited to continuing education:

Even after ordination to the priesthood, clerics are to pursue sacred studies and are to strive after that solid doctrine founded in sacred scripture, handed on by their predecessors, and commonly accepted by the Church, as set out especially in the documents of councils and of the Roman Pontiffs. They are to avoid profane novelties and pseudo-science. (*CIC*, c. 279, §1)

The second section of the canon envisages a formal program set up by each diocese and clerical institute, and directs priests to participate in it. John Paul II addresses the question from a wider and more profound perspective. He explains that

one can speak of a *vocation* "within" *the priesthood*. The fact is that God continues to call and send forth, revealing his saving plan in the historical development of the priest's life and the life of the Church and of society. It is in this perspective that the meaning of ongoing formation emerges. Permanent formation is necessary in order to discern and follow this constant call or will of God.<sup>379</sup>

Thus, priests themselves are primarily responsible for their own ongoing formation; and, John Paul also points out, seminaries need to prepare future priests for that.<sup>380</sup>

Because some close collaborators misconceive their prayer or their work, or simply do one or both badly, they experience tension between them. But good close collaborators do not have one compartment for interior life and another for ecclesial service. Instead, they regard both prayer and

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378. See *Vita consecrata*, 69–71, *AAS* 88 (1996) 444–47, *OR*, 3 Apr. 1996, XIII.

379. *Pastores dabo vobis*, 70, *AAS* 84 (1992) 780, *OR*, 8 Apr. 1992, XIX.

380. *Ibid.*, 71, *AAS* 782–83, *OR*, XIX.

the other elements of their vocations as essential and complementary to one another. Loving Jesus wholeheartedly and eagerly participating in his salvific work, they know they can neither cooperate fruitfully with him unless they remain one with him nor grow in his love without doing their best to help him provide his salvific service. One reason they do *lectio divina* and other spiritual reading, seek spiritual direction, and make an annual retreat is to be better prepared to meet the new challenges they are likely to encounter. They cherish their unique relationship with God (see **3-B-1**, above), constantly foster fidelity to their commitment (see **3-A-5**, above), examine their consciences daily, and, looking ahead, prayerfully prepare to fulfill impending responsibilities. Even if they never talk about ongoing formation, throughout their lives they do everything pertaining to it that they should do. If a supervisor's approval or help is needed, they ask for what they need and explain why. Good supervisors encourage such requests and, having made sure they understand what is needed, discern as soon as possible how to respond. Rather than assuming that each subject is entitled to an approximately equal opportunity for ongoing formation, in discerning they consider each request on its own merits and in light of the common good.

Good close collaborators obey all their supervisor's legitimate directives to contribute to or participate in any ongoing formation activity provided for them; but they respectfully ask to be excused if they believe their involvement would be of little benefit to themselves or anyone else.

Because committed participation is essential for the fruitfulness of ongoing formation, good supervisors seek their subjects' opinions in planning it.<sup>381</sup> This may include circulating a tentative plan for comment and, toward the end of a program, inviting written criticism by participants. The comments are carefully considered and used in subsequent planning. If participation in an activity is required, good supervisors clearly explain why.

In many places, close collaborators struggle with recurrent problems that their supervisors have never squarely faced and may not even know about. That reflects a communal failure of communication and of ongoing formation. Good supervisors welcome, indeed invite, information about problems the group may need to work on, and good close collaborators call such problems to their supervisors' attention and strongly urge them to do whatever is necessary to solve them. In a good diocese or institute, much ongoing formation, whether called that or not, takes place in this constant process of identifying problems and working together to solve them.

As close collaborators undertake their first assignment or one in which they have had no previous experience, good supervisors join them in praying for the graces they will need. If possible, they also make an experienced and well-qualified person available to provide advice and support. A good supervisor thanks close collaborators nearing the end of their last formal assignment for their good work and joins them in thanking

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381. Congregation for the Clergy, *Directory for the Life and Ministry of Priests*, 89 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), 92: In organizing ongoing formation, "the Bishop, while performing an irreplaceable and undellegatable role, will know how to seek the collaboration of the council of priests, for it is an organism which, by its nature and purpose, is a suitable aid, especially in certain tasks such as that of drawing up a plan of formation."

the Lord for all the blessings they received and passed on to those they served. Those no longer given a formal assignment are encouraged to continue serving Jesus and his Church in whatever ways they can.

In preparing for death, good close collaborators strive to bear perspicuous witness to the kingdom by manifesting holy hope in their final communications, their behavior while dying, and their funeral arrangements. Mindful of their sinfulness and God's mercy, they earnestly pray for the grace of final perseverance (see *CCC*, 2016). Having tried to "follow the Lamb wherever he goes," (Rev 14.4), they confidently hope to awaken to the sight of Jesus' smiling face, to feel his hand in theirs as he helps them up, to receive his welcoming embrace, and to hear him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; . . . enter into the joy of your master" (Mt 25.21, 23).

