



## Values of the Order

The Order of St. John Paul II is founded on the Catholic values of (1) spiritual devotion; (2) family and church; (3) promoting human dignity; and (4) service to the Catholic Church.

### **Spiritual Devotion**

The Order of St. John Paul II encourages its members to develop a robust spiritual life. This is done through participating in the Sacred Liturgy and in practicing personal spiritual devotion.

The spiritual life of the Church centers on the Sacred Liturgy, the official public worship of God by the Church as the Body of Christ. The Sacred Liturgy includes, above all, the Eucharist and the other six sacraments. But it also includes other actions of the Church such as the daily prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours, the rites of Christian burial, the rites for the dedication of a church and the rites for those making religious profession. Precisely because every liturgical celebration "is an action of Christ, the priest, and of His Body which is the Church," no other form of worship can take its place: a liturgical celebration, "is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy" (*Sacrosanctum Concillium*, no. 7).

While the Sacred Liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed," and "the font from which all her power flows," the fathers of the Second Vatican Council pointed out that personal spiritual life is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. They recognized the importance of popular devotions in the life of the Church and encouraged pastors and teachers to promote sound popular devotions.

Pope St. John Paul II, our patron, said, "*Genuine forms of popular piety, expressed in a multitude of different ways, derives from the faith and, therefore, must be valued and promoted. Such authentic expressions of popular piety are not at odds with the centrality of the Sacred Liturgy. Rather, in promoting the faith of the people, who regard popular piety as a natural religious expression, they predispose the people for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries.*" (Address to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, September 21, 2001).

### **Family and Church**

The Order of St. John Paul II encourages its members to develop a strong devotion to the family and to the Church. The Catholic married couple, with their children, form an image of the Trinitarian God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Marriage and family life images the Trinity in two ways. First, like the Trinity, marriage is a communion of love between co-equal persons, beginning with husband and wife and extending to all the members of the family. Second, just as Trinity's love is life-giving, a married couple's love conceives and cares for children.

In addition to reflecting the Trinity, the family is a microcosm of the Church. The ancient expression "domestic church" accurately describes the family because it is a small communion of persons that draws its sustenance from the larger Church. Within this domestic church, parents have a special responsibility to teach children the faith and help them to grow in virtue. The family matures as a domestic church by participating in the life and worship of the larger Church, especially Sunday Eucharist. In the Eucharist, members of the family are most fully united to Christ, to one another, and to their brothers and sisters throughout the world.

With God's grace, couples are called to grow in holiness. Fundamentally, the couple lives out the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Love is the heart of the vocation of marriage. It calls spouses to imitate Jesus by their willingness to sacrifice themselves in everyday situations for each other and their

children. Couples must also grow in the moral virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. Two virtues that are sometimes overlooked are chastity and gratitude. Marital chastity means that the couple's love is total, faithful, exclusive and open to life. It protects a great good: the communion of persons and the procreative purpose of marriage. Marriage is a school of gratitude, in which husband and wife are thankful for the gift of each other. They express their joyous gratitude in giving themselves completely to each other. Their gratitude leads them to be open to children and to be generous towards others.

A marriage that is truly in Christ is a sign of the Kingdom that is coming. At the end of time, at the celebration of the heavenly wedding banquet, the love to which the spouses have been called will find its completion when the entire Church is assumed into the glory of the risen Christ.

### **Promotion of Human Dignity**

The Order of St. John Paul II encourages its members to develop a deep respect for and active promotion of human dignity. Human life is a precious gift from God, that each person who receives this gift has responsibilities toward God, self, and others. Society, through its laws and social institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every state of its existence. As our patron, St. John Paul II reminds us, *"Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good."* (The Gospel of Life, no. 87)

A basic principle of Catholic morality and values is that each individual has inherent worth and human dignity. Catholics promote charity work in order to ensure that those who are less fortunate have their basic needs met. The Church has always emphasized that this obligation of helping those who are in misery and want should be felt most strongly by Catholics, in view of the fact that they are members of the Mystical Body of Christ. "In this we have known the charity of God," says St. John, "because he has laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." "He that hath the substance of this world and shall see his brother in need and shall shut up his bowels from him; how doth the charity of God abide in him?" (Mater et Magistra, Pope St. John XXIII, 1961 #159.)

The Order also supports causes that fight to protect the rights of workers and human rights.

### **Service to the Catholic Church**

The Order of St. John Paul II encourages its members to engage in meaningful service to the Catholic Church. People put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in action than in theories. The Church has always sought to respond to the needs of the stranger, the widow and the orphan. She has founded countless schools, hospitals, hospices, child-care facilities and shelters. The Church's vocation, in fidelity to her Lord, is to love all those who are afflicted in any way: to recognize in the poor and their suffering the likeness of her poor and suffering Founder; to do all she can to relieve their needs, striving to serve Christ in them. In loving the poor and serving those in whatever need, the Church seeks above all to respect and heal their human dignity. Service to those in need must take the form of direct action to relieve their anxieties and to remove their burdens, and at the same time lead them to the dignity of self-reliance.

Local Bishops are very much aware of their local situation and will guide the Order on what reforms are most urgent and how they can be achieved. Development demands a spirit of initiative on the part of the Dioceses that need it. Each must act in accordance with its own responsibilities. Each must make itself capable of initiatives responding to its own needs as a society. Each must likewise realize its true needs, as well as the rights and duties which oblige it to respond to them. The development of peoples begins and is most appropriately accomplished in the dedication of each people to its own development, in collaboration with others. The Order is there to help in these efforts.