

THE THREE ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF PASTORAL WORK: PRIEST, PROPHET AND KING (SERVICE)

By Fr. Jesus Moreno Led

"The Church's deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the Word of God (*kerygma-martyrdom*), celebrating the sacraments (*leitourgia*), and exercising the ministry of charity (*diakonia*). These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable" (*Deus Caritas Est*, n. 25, a; 25 Dec. 2005).

Let us consider the "intimate nature of the Church", that is to say, her being communion, living in communion and making her action visible. To make her action visible we observe three "basic aspects" in carrying out this work.

In the Church we combine our pastoral work so that everyone can share, through Baptism, in **Christ's triple *munus*/responsibility: Priest, Prophet and King**, that is to say in his three-fold function. "The Church has, as her specific mission, to communicate the life of Jesus Christ to all peoples by proclaiming the **Word**, administering the **Sacraments** and practicing **Charity**" (*cf. Aparecida Document*, n. 386).¹

That the Church continues the triple mission of Christ is clear to a Christian. It is enough to remember the following Gospel passage to understand that the Church continues the work of Christ's triple mission or *munus*: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21). The mission Jesus received from the Father is what he entrusted to the Church.

1. CHRIST, PRIEST, PROPHET and KING

We have been speaking of the triple mission or function Christ incarnated and that theology has always treated. Christ's threefold title of Priest, Prophet and King, and his mission were taken up and carried forward by the Church in time. Three forms of mission, ever united and inseparable, regarding which the theology of the Church has defined them as *liturgy, martyrdom and diakonia*. Namely: liturgical action, prophetic action, charitable action. Exercised together these three actions should incarnate the "spirit" of Jesus, of the Gospel, which is the *koinonia* we have already mentioned, as the necessary sphere of the life and action of the Church, her style and natural way, the spiritual area in which the Church must always act. The *koinonia*-communion is not a vague personal feeling, but an inner reality which originates in the intimate but diverse communion of the Trinitarian union and must be expressed in an appropriate, important manner in life and in ecclesial and pastoral achievements.

A. Being a priest, according to the New Testament, means to offer one's whole life to the Father: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). Make of life, of one's entire life, worship pleasing to God, because this was the priesthood of Christ, whose mission, in which every baptized person participates, is continued through the Church.

The permanent offering of Christ became total and definitive in the supreme sacrifice on the Cross. The Cross is the supreme sign of how Christ gave his life as an obedient and pleasing offering to the Father. "Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure'. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God'" (Heb 10:5-7).

Christ is the one and only High Priest,² because he made of his person and his whole life an offering pleasing to the Father. His offering found its full expression in the sacrifice of love on the Cross. Let us carefully read this passage written by the then young theologian Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope emeritus Benedict XVI, because they perfectly illuminate the priesthood of Christ in which all Christians share by Baptism.

In fact, from the perspective of religious law, a simple layman who did not play any role in the worship of Israel was the only true priest. His death, - a shocking entirely profane event from the historical point of view - condemned as a political criminal - was in fact the only liturgy of human history, a cosmic liturgy through which Jesus entered the true Temple, i.e. into the presence of God, not in the limited space of a place of worship, or Temple, before the eyes of the world. "He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption" by his death (Heb 9:11 *ff*).

Let us look at the fundamental change he worked, as described in the Letter to the Hebrews, which contains his central idea: in reality, what from an earthly perspective was a profane event, was the true worship of humanity, because whoever crosses the liturgical space encounters Truth: he gave himself.³

B. The Christian, sanctified by Baptism (which makes one a participant in the priesthood of Christ, i.e. the priest) and anointed in confirmation, is called to proclaim Christ and to live what he proclaims. He is constituted prophet and called to prophesy in union with the Church, and to be living prophecy in every time and place.

To be a prophet consists in: proclaiming and witnessing with one's life to the Word of Christ and one's faith in Him; illuminating the life of people and the reality of the world and of history through the Word of God; denouncing the negative aspects of the world which oppose God's plan of salvation. He must defend, proclaim and uphold the hope and belief that what is good, noble and just will triumph over everything. To be a prophet is to be a witness.

Thus they recognized Jesus when they saw what he did and said and approached him with openness and simplicity of heart saying: "a great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people" (Lk 7:16). Jesus "was a prophet mighty in word and deed before God and all the people" (Lk 24:19). This is how the 'stranger' they had met appeared to the disciples at Emmaus. Although they were dismayed at the way the life of Jesus' life had ended, they could not fail to recognize that he had been a great prophet who spoke in the name of God (*cf.* Lk 24:13-35).

Jesus has constituted us all to believe in Him as Prophets and gave us 'authority' to act as such: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

C. The Christian, sanctified in Baptism, anointed in Confirmation and nourished in the Eucharist, in the Church and with the Church, - the handmaiden who embodies the service of the Lord, - is called to serve all the brothers and sisters out of love, in order to transform society.

To be King,⁴ according to Christ's example, consists in: overcoming self, leaving aside all exclusive personal interests, advantages and putting oneself at the service of others, defending their human dignity as children of God. "Jesus is the Christ. He is king because he was crucified. His crucifixion is his kingship, which is the gift of himself to mankind, it is identifying with his Word, mission and life precisely in the renunciation of one's existence".⁵

"Jesus is 'exalted'". "The Cross is his throne, from which he draws the world to himself. From this place of total self-sacrifice, from this place of truly divine love, he reigns as the true king in his own way – a way that neither Pilate nor the members of the Sanhedrin had been able to comprehend" (Jesus of Nazareth, part two, page 211-12).

To serve is the true way to reign and already shows us something about how God is the Lord, about the 'Kingdom of God'. "The whole of his living and dying is concealed within the word 'for'; as Heinz Schürmann in particular has repeatedly emphasized, it is 'pro-existence'" (living for others). It becomes freedom and Salvation for 'all': not only for the dispersed Children of Israel, but for all the dispersed children of God (cf. Jn 11.52), for all of humanity.⁶

"God reigned from the Cross!". This is the exclamation of the Church before God's surprising way of exercising his sovereignty over the whole of Creation. Because God is love and love is total dedication to others. The icon, sacred image, the Lordship of Christ, is demonstrated in the washing the feet of his disciples (cf. Jn 13). Christ himself gives us the definition of his lordship: "I am among you as one who serves" (Lk 22:27). His throne is the Cross – the greatest expression of love, - his crown is of thorns - mockery of his lordship misunderstood - and his scepter, a cane, his royal mantle is a dirty garment. And Pilate presented him unknowingly as: "Here is the man!". "Here is your king!" (Jn 19:5, 14). This is the 'royal' way ("He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross", Phil 2:8) that leads to the glory of the 'ultimate lordship'. ("Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the Name which is above every name ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father", Phil 2:9, 11). We only confess the glorious lordship of Christ when we serve 'until the Cross', like Him, for our brothers and all.

Every Christian receives the same mission, the same way of being in the world in relation to others: "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (Jn 13:14). "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Mt 23:11).

To be King for the Church and in her, for the Christian, will mean: *washing the feet of others*, putting oneself at her service, being attentive to her needs, being in solidarity with the least, with a preferential option for the poor like Christ, the King *par excellence* and model of kingship. We can certainly realize the regality of the Church and of the Christian by following Saint Paul's advice in his Letter to the Romans:

"For by the grace given me I bid everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him".... Let love be sincere: "love one another with brotherly affection". Regarding respect, judge others as more worthy.... Be patient in trials and pray constantly.... "Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality". Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not wish evil on anyone. Rejoice with those who are joyful, and weep with those who weep.

Live in peace with one another.... Do not hold yourselves as wise. "Repay no one with evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all"... but try to earn the appreciation of others. Do your best to live in peace with everybody. Belovèd, do not avenge yourselves but let God be the one who punishes. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom 12:3, 9, 10, 13-17, 21).

Being the 'greatest' for the Church means no less than humbly serving the world. Being the 'greatest' for the Christian-king means to serve all the others. The best is not measured by importance with respect to others but by service and amenity. The world and Christians find this way of being 'king' curious and surprising.

The Second Vatican Council expressed well the concept of royalty applied to Christ and to the Christian: "Christ, made obedient unto death and because of this exalted by the Father, has entered into the glory of his kingdom" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 36a). Christ manifested his kingship by his amenity and service unto death. Thus, he was really constituted King: simply said: Christ is the man-for-others. Or, as Paul says: "but emptied himself, taking on the nature of a servant, made in human likeness, and in his appearance found as a man. He humbled himself by being obedient to death on the cross" (Phil 2:7-8). The glorification, the manifestation of his profound divine being, was to come later. This is something that the Christian forgets all too easily, due to distraction and the interests of a convenient faith removed from reality. Only when we welcome, ponder on and emphasize this last aspect, which is as true as the Cross and the washing of the feet, but that will be 'to the end'. This is why this end is what sustains us in hope when our service is rejected, ridiculed or persecuted. The 'throne' of the Cross, while we are on pilgrimage in the world, cannot be replaced by the 'glorious throne' of the Book of Revelation or by any of the other depictions and representations of Jesus.

"He communicated this power to the disciples that they be constituted in royal liberty and, by the self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves" (*LG*, n. 36a). The Christian receives the same mission from Christ. He expresses and complies with their new reality of king by freeing himself from the slavery and subjection to the temporal things: glory, fame, money, appearances, dominion over as much as possible.... In this way, the Christian-king overcomes the kingdom of evil.

"Indeed by serving Christ in others they may in humility and patience bring their brethren to that king to serve whom is to reign" (*LG*, n. 36a). There is no doubt therefore that service to others is to reign like Christ and leads them to Christ himself.

To sum up, all the baptized are called to continue the royal function of the Messiah, as announced in the Old Testament and definitively brought about by Jesus:

Bring peace and justice: to mankind, defend the weak, the oppressed, to those who lack dignity, the orphan and the widow. The true function is a great responsibility because it is the work of whoever wants to bring peace and justice to mankind, and the Christian can only exercise this by obeying a very clear criterion: modelling his kingship on Jesus Crucified, the Messiah who 'reigns from the Cross'. Yes, Christians are messianic people only when and if they accept the Cross, like their Lord, who was proclaimed King of the Jews only on the Cross (*cf.* Jn 19:19).⁷

The Christian lives and celebrates all this in the Eucharist. It is the sacrament that realizes the offering, the sacrifice, of Christ. In it, Christ left us the memorial of his passion and Resurrection. It is the memorial of his extreme sacrifice. Today, the Eucharist means for us: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19). 'Do this in remembrance of me' means not only to repeat the same gestures as Jesus (bless, break, give the bread), but has a much fuller meaning: 'do the same as I have done in my life - now represented by the bread, the Body offered; by the wine, redeeming Blood. The Eucharist is not a mere ritual – Jesus would not have meant that – but is the sacrifice of Jesus prolonged today in the sacrifice of his disciples to everyone, performed as a 'royal' service, as kings.

2. The Church Continues the Presence of Christ the Priest, Prophet and King

The **priestly** mission of the Church, her **liturgical** mission, corresponds to Christ's priestly mediation: a mediation that is not merely a form of worship, but existential. The life offered is celebrated in the Sacrament. Thus the Church is priestly just as Christ was. Christ celebrated the Sacraments in the Spirit for the glory of the Father and for the sake of humanity and of the world.

The Priestly Church renders Christ present in herself and in the world, because Jesus Christ provided for his remembrance with words and symbols, gestures and actions, enlivened by the Holy Spirit. Thus the memory of Jesus Christ retains a true character, of something that actually happened, the memory becomes the presence and action of Jesus by means of the Holy Spirit. And this commemoration takes on a festive, celebrative dimension not only of Jesus Christ, but also of the human existential reality by placing it in the Pascal Community framework and that of eschatological hope. This priestly mission, not exclusively liturgical, challenges the whole Church and each one of the faithful to make of their lives a spiritual sacrifice (i.e., sanctified by the Holy Spirit) that is acceptable to God (*cf.* Rom 12:1-2).

And it is mainly in the Eucharist where all the dimensions of the one priesthood of Christ and the participation of the Church and of each Christian, as a member of it, find their bond of union.

The **Prophetic** Mission corresponds to the necessary salvific mediation of the **Word of God**. It retains the aura of **first proclamation** of the Word (**evangelisation**), a dimension of post pedagogical **accompaniment**, that enlightens the life of all believers (**catechesis and on-going formation**), and a **critical** dimension concerning every worldly aspect that is opposed to human dignity, to the child of God in every person and to all that does not correspond to the Church's pastoral work, to the Word of God in the today's world.⁸

This prophetic mission is based on the Word of God which the Church receives in her life, preserves, proclaims and enlivens at every moment of history. That very same Word leads the Church to propose a new world without fear of critical judgment or reality, always so far removed from God's plan, from the Kingdom of God.

The relationship between Christ, the Word of the Father, and the Church cannot be understood as if it were only a past event, because it is a vital relationship into which each of the faithful is called to enter personally. In fact, we speak of the presence of the Word of God among us today: and know that “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Mt 28:20). [...] The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* expresses this mystery in the biblical terms of a nuptial dialogue: 'Thus God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church - and through her in the world – leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness' (cf. Col 3:16), (*Dei Verbum*, n. 8).

The Bride of Christ, a shining example, today as in the past, of listening, repeats with faith: 'speak, Lord, that your Church may hear you'. That is why the Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* begins by saying: “Hearing the Word of God with reverence, and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred Synod endorses it...” (cf. Prologue, n.1). “In fact, this is a dynamic definition of the life of the Church: with these words the Council pointed to a distinct feature of the Church: the Church does not live of herself but of the Gospel, and in the Gospel she always finds a new orientation for her journey. This is a consideration that every Christian must understand and apply personally: only by placing oneself in a receptive attitude to the Word can one become a preacher of it”. In the Word of God proclaimed and heard, and in the sacraments, Jesus says today, here and now, to each one: 'I am yours, I entrust myself to you', so that man can hear and respond in turn: 'I am yours'. Thus the Church exists in a sphere in which, by grace, we can experience what it says in the Prologue of John: “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12) (cf. *DV*, n. 5).⁹

3. PASTORAL CHARITY

The **royal mission of service** or **pastoral organization** of the Church must come about, be incarnated, in the spirit of the kingship of Christ that we saw above. This is basic and fundamental. This spirit of kingship is made visible in what is commonly called **pastoral charity**.

Not only the royal mission of the Church, but the Church's three important missions must always be inspired by **pastoral charity**, by a welcoming attitude, and carried out by pastoral workers. Without it pastoral action would become purely a policy or simply an ideology, but then the Church and the pastoral agents would not be carrying out the mission entrusted to them by the Lord.

At the summit of the charisms of the Spirit and resuming them all, Saint Paul places love: 'But earnestly desire the higher gifts. I will show you a much better way' (1 Cor 12:31: 13:13). More than a charism among many, here is the fullness of the Spirit without whose gift, whatever is most sublime (knowledge, faith, martyrdom, miracles), has no value. Love is the bond of union, the tissue that vivifies the ministries, which links them with the Ministry of the One and Only, of the Servant.¹⁰

Ultimately, pastoral effectiveness depends on the ability to love (pastoral charity) which inspires pastoral action. Love animates hope within history and faith expresses hope.

We can say, therefore, that this pastoral approach can unite and give meaning to every pastoral action, programme and project as well as cancel whatever is unnecessary. Besides we can affirm that through love the world can know God who is love. “He who does not love does not know God; for God is love” (I Jn 4:8).

An authentic evangelization of our peoples means fully assuming the radicality of Christian love, which takes shape through following Christ on the Cross; and, in suffering **for** Christ (*cf. Aparecida Document*, n. 543)¹¹ for the sake of justice; in forgiveness and love of our enemies. This love exceeds human love and participates in divine love, the unique cultural axis capable of building a culture of life. In the Trinity the diversity of the Three Persons does not generate violence and conflict because it is the very source of love and life. An evangelization that places the Redemption at the center, born of crucified love, is able to purify the structures of a violent society and create new ones.... To evangelize through fully given love, as a solution to conflict, must be the 'radical' cultural axis of a new society (*cf. ibid.*, n. 543).

4. PASTORAL PROJECTS

The royal mission of the Church, with its pastoral organization, provides for various needs through (structures, functions), historical and educational missions. Some have been 'planned', 'foreseen', 'proclaimed' by Jesus Christ himself and derive from the New Testament Church (e.g. pastoral ministry, service to the poor, catechists...); others derive from the new needs arising in the life of the Christian community. All these structures assist us in learning the way of life of Jesus Christ. In this way the community is present publicly within his life in every time and situation through pastoral projects. These are the result of intra-ecclesial pastoral communion, aimed at carrying out the mission received from Christ himself.

The pastoral action of the Church has no other purpose than to make the Person and message of Jesus present in every moment of history and in every human community. It fosters the meeting-conversion to Jesus Christ and entry into his community, the Church, of whoever accepts the message. This is what the different pastoral projects seek to achieve.

These projects must always be drawn up with these four principles and goals:

- **Theological** reflection. The projects proclaim the faith of the Church, the mystery of God revealed and offered. Without a good basic theology, no good pastoral projects can be drawn up.

- Reflection on the **actual situation of the Church or Ecclesial Community** preparing the draft in order to take into account its positive or negative aspects, any shortcomings. The pastoral projects must result from reflection on the Church and her concrete action, on her inner Apostolic life.

- **knowledge of the sphere** at which the evangelization is aimed, and the current situation of that reality, as well as in what the sacrament of salvation consists.

- everything needed to fulfill the mission, here and now, **to continue God's plan of salvation**, so as to be faithful to the mission entrusted by the Lord.

That is why it is absolutely imperative that those in charge and the pastoral agents know and are aware of what kind of world they are in, what the social, cultural, political, economic and religious constraints of society are; what values and counter-values those who organize and direct society uphold.

Therefore, the Christian community fulfils Jesus' proclamation when its mediation is practical, incarnate in reality, between the Word of God and the aspirations, expectations, needs ... of people. To do this, practical knowledge is necessary to enable the pastoral action of the Church to evangelise the world and transform its inner life to become a better and clearer servant of mankind. The Church carries out this mediation mission in two directions: starting from the Word of God toward life and returning from life to the Word of God. To achieve this, the Church must carry out a realistic, transparent mediation, which implies serenity, humility, constant reform and courageous faith in the Lord.

5. MISSIONARY ATTITUDE

The life and mission of the Church are not possible without positive openness to the world. The Church has to be outgoing to be Church. This openness and participation of Christians in the world and in history is at the heart of the evangelizing mission of the Church. The Church is either missionary or runs the danger of not being Church. In today's world the missionary dimension of the Church emerges as the most urgent priority.

The Church as a mediator is not an end in itself but leads to the Kingdom of God, for whose service the Church was formed. Her greatness lies in her capacity to be faithful to the Word of God to the human person, to the human and Ecclesial Community. This fidelity entails transmitting the message of salvation in full, perceiving the intuitions and the needs of the contemporary world. It is only possible to carry out this task through Grace and therefore through faith.

Consequently the key attitude of the Church, as a transcendent community which is born of and lives of God and been established to proclaim the love of God, is the **missionary attitude**. This is the responsibility of the Church and the personal responsibility of every Christian sharing in the solidarity communal work of the entire community. This missionary attitude requires the faithful to be present, in a helpful self-sacrificing way, in the vital nuclei of society. Also this attitude and missionary presence in the world is required to ensure that everyone in the Church is an evangelizer. All Christians are called to be active and not passive subjects within and without the Church, to nourish our faith, in order to overcome any shortcomings and contradictions so as to live in theological hope.

Therefore, the pastoral action of the Church has to continue this triple mission of Christ, entrusted to the Church in total fidelity. This is one of the required ways to be faithful to the Lord, if one wants to ensure her roots and preserve the memory and the presence of Christ at every moment of history. This has an important implication: we have to distinguish the basic, fundamental elements of those others who are the expression of a particular cultural context, of a given epoch or of a particular geographical area. These elements are not essential, although very important in the knowledge of reality, and mean that reflection and pastoral action have to exert a critical role over them, especially over those that were useful in the past, but that no longer serve today.

It is the necessary pastoral conversion to which the Document of the Fifth General Conference of CELAM, in Aparecida, calls us, addressing us repeatedly:

Personal conversion awakens the ability to put everything at the service of the establishment of the Kingdom of life. Bishops, priests, permanent deacons, consecrated men and women and lay people are called to assume an attitude of constant pastoral conversion, which involves listening with attention and discerning 'what the Spirit is saying to the Churches' (Rev 2:29) through the signs of the times in which God manifests himself (*cf. Aparecida Document*, n. 366).

The message of Aparecida asks in practical terms: "to enter decisively, with all ones strength, in the ongoing processes of missionary renewal, and to abandon the outdated structures that no longer favour the transmission of faith" (*cf. ibid.*, n. 365). It calls us likewise, to move from "a pastoral care of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary apostolate" (*cf. ibid.*, n. 370).

CONCLUSION: THESE RESPONSIBILITIES CONTINUE...

These three missions of Christ, of the Church and of every baptized person are called 'aspects of pastoral care'. By this I mean, that each of the three aspects is central.

This simply means that all pastoral care, whether fundamental, general or special must always represent: the prophetic, liturgical and royal-service mission. To which we have added a fourth dimension: the missionary and the environment-spirit one in which all pastoral care must 'swim': be communal or *koinonia*. All these dimensions are proper to the Church that lives and acts in the pastoral ministry. One cannot ask which aspect is more important theologically or ecclesially. All are necessary and indispensable. Overlooking one affects the other.

Just as the human being cannot dispense with the basic physiological organs without causing death, in the same way the life of the Church cannot do without any of these dimensions without putting at risk the very survival of the Church. These essential dimensions are three. In each one of them and in the three together, we always have to bear in mind their purpose, which is **mission**; and the pastoral attitude expressed in pastoral charity.

End Notes

¹. I think it would have been better to say '*celebrating the sacraments*' rather than '*administering the sacraments*'. The Sacraments are celebrations of the Lord who acts; celebrations of the faith. The term 'administration' gives the idea that the Sacraments are 'things' and as such, are administered.

². The 'One and only'. The New Testament term would be more appropriate for Christians than the term 'priests' since their 'priesthood' arises from Baptism. To use this denomination correctly, we would have to constantly repeat that the common priesthood and the sacerdotal priesthood differ 'essentially'. "Though they differ essentially and not only in degree, the common priesthood of the faithful and the ministerial or hierarchial priesthood are none the less ordered one to another; each in its own proper way shares in the one priesthood of Christ. The ministerial priest, by the sacred power that he has, forms and rules the priestly people; in the Person of Christ he effects the Eucharistic Sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people. The faithful indeed, by virtue of their royal priesthood, participate in the offering of the Eucharist. They exercise that

priesthood, too, by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, abnegation and active charity” (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 10 b). Perhaps this explanation would not be necessary, nor provoke endless discussion, if the concept and the word 'priest' were applied to Christ alone, as the Only Priest, and not to Christians whose priesthood arises from Baptism. Those called 'priests' today, will be identified as 'presbyters'.

³. J. Ratzinger, *cf. Introduction to Christianity*, Sigüeme, Salamanca, 2005, p. 237.

⁴. The word 'king', applied to Christ and to Christians, has a completely different meaning and significance from that applied to the kings of this world, Heads of State or leaders of some human activities, e.g., of football, fashion, finance, beauty... in human terms it means power, importance, superiority.... The Gospel is quite the opposite. This is why Jesus rejected the title when it was attributed in this sense (*cf. Jn 6:15*). Yet he accepted it when he is humiliated, scourged and crowned with a crown of thorns before Pilate because he came 'to bear witness to the truth' (*cf. Jn 18:37*). To understand 'kingship' in the sense of the Word of God, we should read and meditate on Psalm 72 [71].

⁵. J. Ratzinger, *cf. Introduction to Christianity*, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁶. J. Ratzinger - Benedict XVI, *Jesús of Nazaret*, Planet, Bogotá, 2007, p. 205, (Spanish). English text, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2011, p. 174.

⁷. E. Bianchi, *cf. Una vida diferente* (a different life), San Pablo, Madrid, 2005, p. 69

⁸. J. Ratzinger, *cf. The New People of God*, Herder, Barcelona, 2005, p. 351.

⁹. In order to complete the intrinsic relationship between the Word and the Church, read the second part of Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation.

¹⁰. B. Bobrinsky, *cf. The Mystery of the Trinity*, Secretariado Trinitario, Salamanca, 2008, p. 154

¹¹. The preposition 'for' is rather bold, I think it would have been better to say **suffering with Christ**. An aspect that can be better understood since the Document affirms that **pastoral love participates in divine love**. Therefore, in line with this statement it would have been better to say 'suffering with Christ'.