

**Total Plan for Complete Evangelization
- PLANTEC -**

The Six Secrets of the Kingdom

Discover the components of the complete gospel
and powerfully practice the art of total evangelization

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In memory of Mom

Mom died today, or rather yesterday, but I feel as if she died today. The thing is, I always want Mom to be alive, and I remember her in full possession of her mental faculties. And that's how I always want to remember her, very human and at the same time divine. Mom would not be our mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, relative, or friend without her strengths and weaknesses, without her successes and mistakes, very sure of herself and always depending on Dad. Giving advice to her children, grandchildren, and those close to her, but doing the opposite herself. Scolding, demanding respect and asking for understanding. Complaining that they shouldn't mess up her life, because that outraged her greatly, but not thinking herself about avoiding making life difficult for others. She never lost an argument and won all the fights, but then she would side with the defeated and the loser.

I don't feel empty because of her departure; I feel free. I have freed myself from doing anything that would hurt her and from thinking about what she needed to have a good quality of life. With Mom's passing, I don't regret losing a loved one. On the contrary, today I appreciate more than ever what she left us: her genetic heritage, her character, and her temperament. Today I feel that each of us carries a piece of her. Although in some of us it is more clearly evident.

By faith, the same faith that my mother passed on to me when she taught me my first prayers, I am certain that my mother is in heaven, enjoying eternal life with Jesus Christ in his kingdom. She is now in a place where there is no pain, no sadness, no anguish, and no worry. Today, Mom is seeing everything, because here we only see partially, but in the next life we will understand everything. Today, God has revealed himself to her in his fullness, and Mom is seeing him as he is (1 John 3:2). With love and gratitude, I receive all your feelings of friendship and generosity. You are a great comfort to our whole family. Thank you very much.

Presentation:

Evangelizing is establishing the kingdom of heaven among us. The kingdom of heaven is a vibrant entity and a spiritual organization, made visible in the church, moved by the Holy Spirit, and called the body of Christ.

When the members of the congregation fulfill the work of evangelism, the body of Christ, which is the church, is strengthened, grows, and reaches maturity.

When people who call themselves Christians neglect evangelism, the visible body of Christ weakens, diminishes, and loses its presence in the world.

In order for the reign of Jesus Christ to be a clear and undulating flame in human time and space and for his kingdom to shine brightly, strongly, vitally, and vigorously, we Christians must remain active every day and, in every place, proclaiming the divine message entrusted to us by the Master of Galilee.

One of the ways in which the evangelizing message announced by John the Baptist, then proclaimed by Jesus and later by his disciples, was transmitted is preserved in the sacred writings that the church has zealously and lovingly preserved throughout its history and which are made public when we evangelize.

There are six systems that form the body of the Christian message presented in the Bible. This message is formed by an organism woven together by invisible threads and points connected by spiritual transmitters. For some, this system has been hidden, because even though they have read and heard the Gospel and belong to a church, it has not yet been revealed to them. For others, the parts that make up the kingdom of God are unknown to them because they have not approached the biblical text with the same spirit as Christ and the disposition of his disciples.

To know for sure, to know in depth and to fully understand the intentions of the sacred authors, one must scrutinize with honest seriousness and bold spiritual determination the following six points, which are mysteriously found throughout the biblical books, like a hidden treasure that can only be found by those who dare to seek it with decisive intentionality, firmness, and determination, and, ultimately, with total dedication of their lives.

Because when it comes to evangelization, it does not only refer to a certain availability or willingness to serve God's work, but to giving oneself completely to the mission of evangelization, understanding and applying the following six components of the kingdom:

1. - Kerygma is the impact of the encounter with Jesus.

It is the impetus to PROCLAIM: "We proclaim to you what has been from the beginning, what we have seen and heard. We have seen it with our own eyes and touched it with our own hands. He is the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).

2. - Didaskalia is the pedagogy of Christian knowledge.

It corresponds to the teaching of TEACHING: "Teach the new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you" (Matthew 28:20).

3. Parenesis is the understanding of Jesus' message.

It refers to the enthusiasm of PREACHING: "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15).

4. - Charisma is the integrity of the Word of God.

It relates to the experience of TESTIFYING: - "You are witnesses of all these things" (Luke 24:48). - "You will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere" (Acts 1:8).

5. - Diaconia is the unfolding of Christian leadership.

It has to do with the confidence to FOLLOW: - "Follow me" (John 21:19). - "As for you, follow me" (John 21:22).

6. - Koinonia is the sign of Jesus in the world.

It consists of the discernment to SEND: - "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). - "As you sent me into the world, I send them into the world" (John 17:18).

This material covers a complete program for understanding the elements that make up total evangelism. It is a resource for training, equipping, and empowering people who are willing to invest their lives in spreading the precious name of Jesus (John 15:21). It is a look at the Word of God from the spiritual perspective of the experience of the sacred authors.

Some time ago, when I was surprised by the invitation to work in Christian ministry, during the discernment process, I asked myself: What would be the office or area of ministry that God was calling me to? Where would I have to go? What would I do? Waiting, without an answer, with little insight and without exploring enough, I decided to accept the proposal.

Later, I discovered that when Jesus calls, there is only one job, one place, and one task: to evangelize. What we have called churches, functions, ministries, or pastoral fronts are fragments of a whole, which is the work of evangelization. The only task Jesus asks of us is to communicate his name to those who do not know him (Acts 9:15), just as he made God's name known (John 17:26).

A name that, since the beginning of Christianity, has been obscured by the enemies of truth (Acts 4:18), sometimes suggesting and, many other times, strictly ordering not to teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 5). The name that to this day continues to be rejected, whether by explicit enemies or by the indifference, unbelief, or coldness of believers themselves.

However, just as yesterday, today there are still people who persist in proclaiming, teaching, worshiping, receiving gifts, serving, and communing with the Word of God. Our job is to talk about Jesus, while at the same time going out to meet God who comes to seek us.

The evangelizer facilitates the encounter between God and people; he is a worker who helps the relationship to mature and nourishes believers so that they can, want to, and are enthusiastic about taking up the challenge of persevering to the end.

Evangelization is the source of living water for the Church and the splendor of divine light. The evangelizer is a source of blessings for others and for himself, because he receives God's grace, contains grace through his witness, and gives grace through the transmission of Jesus' message.

Evangelization is the light of the word that comes from Christ and reaches us to make us walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8). Working with Jesus has been a wonderful experience. The work of evangelization, in addition to dignifying the person, is a human responsibility (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

Some tasks produce more fruit than others, although sometimes, despite our efforts, not even those who work see the harvest, because the dedication and effort invested in a project is not always consistent with the results. However, when we work in Jesus' work, we can be sure that excellent productivity will always be achieved (2 Corinthians 9:10). Without our merits, God's promises to make us victorious are fulfilled.

Purpose:

The objective of this work is to demonstrate that the main message of the Bible is the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God.

That our work is to announce the coming of the kingdom of heaven through total and complete evangelism.

That the church, being the assembly of believers in Christ, is neither the message nor the content of the work that Jesus claims to have completed: "I have brought you glory here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

What was that work? Was it not the work proclaimed by the precursor of redemption, John the Baptist: "The time promised by God has finally come! The kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe in the Good News!" (Mark 1:15).

This same theme was announced by Jesus after John's arrest, which led him to begin his public life: "From then on, Jesus began to preach: Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17).

At the end of his ministry, Jesus concluded by saying, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Jesus sent his disciples to preach the gospel of the kingdom (Luke 9:2) to continue his work: "Go and proclaim to them that the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 10:7).

The apostle Paul affirms that we are in the kingdom of Christ because we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:12-13).

Meanwhile, the church is only the means or platform from which the gospel of the kingdom must be proclaimed. The Word of God, which is Jesus, is the content of the gospel of the kingdom, which in itself becomes a means, for Christ is our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Christ is the head, and the church is the body.

Thus, Christ and the church form one and the same means, which serves to proclaim the message of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God is not a place, but a spiritual state of human beings. Nor is the church a place; it is an assembly gathered in communion and made up of those who live in the dimension of the kingdom of heaven and whose purpose is to proclaim the establishment of the kingdom of God in every human being.

The world is not the earth, nor the physical universe; it is the force that counteracts the natural course of God's reign among humanity. Thus, the church proclaims the kingdom of heaven, which is above, on high, and the world propagates the kingdom of hell, which is below, in a lower state.

The church and the kingdom of heaven are similar, as long as the members of the church seek holiness (1 Peter 1:15) and, in addition, strive to live a virtuous life (Titus 2:12) and promote the proclamation and message of the Good News of salvation (1 Corinthians 9:16), in a vivid and permanent action of spiritual lifestyle.

Introduction:

The central message of the Bible is that the kingdom of God is within us (Luke 17:21), much like when I say that the message is not in the Bible. Jesus affirms that the kingdom of heaven has come near (Matthew 3:2), although he emphatically emphasizes that his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36).

The purpose of Jesus' clarification that his kingdom is not of this world is because, in order for a person to enter the kingdom of God, a profound change of heart and life is necessary (Matthew 4:17) and a transformation that is achieved through the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2), which affects their entire being and their surrounding environment.

In other words, a change and modification from the biological brain to the spiritual brain is necessary. The fact that the kingdom of heaven is among us should not be confused with physical, material, and biological life. The kingdom of heaven is "life of goodness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). Cultivating the inner life consists of loving Jesus and allowing God to come and dwell in our lives (John 14:23). The central theme between the body of Christ, which is the church, and the kingdom of God, is evangelism.

Evangelism is not simply going out and bringing a message to unbelievers. Evangelism is the power of the church to develop, sustain, and maintain its jurisdiction of the kingdom of heaven in the invisible and visible existence of creation.

The opposite of evangelism is disangelism. It is the power that the world usurps to develop, sustain, and maintain its jurisdiction of the kingdom of hell in the invisible and visible existence of creation. That is why we need to understand that evangelism is the indisputable and arduous mission that involves every believer in Christ.

But what is the message that must be conveyed? The answer is that the message we spread must be the same as the one Jesus spread.

The purpose of this material is to encourage us to discover what Jesus preached. What was the theme that Jesus recommended his disciples to convey when he gave them the Great Commission? What is the theme of the gospel? In other words, what is the content of the Good News?

According to the Holy Scriptures, Jesus commanded his disciples to spread the kingdom of God and his reign on earth when he said to them, "Go and proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 10:7).

Therefore, the theme of evangelism is the good news that the kingdom of God is among us (Matthew 4:17). What Paul recounts in his writings is what happened to him and how he preached the gospel. But Paul does not say what he preached. The gospel of the kingdom is the establishment of a way of life in accordance with God's will and purpose.

The apostle Paul himself is convinced that his life has meaning only if he completes the task assigned to him by Jesus.

He repeatedly says that he has been chosen for "the mission of telling others the Good News about God's wonderful grace" (Acts 20:24).

This grace is the gospel of the kingdom of God, which Jesus himself preached and which Paul continued to preach as an apostle (Acts 20:25), also calling it the Good News about Jesus (Galatians 11:16). Paul preached only the gospel of the kingdom (Acts 19:18).

The renowned apostle constantly bore witness to the kingdom of God and tried to convince his listeners about Jesus using the Holy Scriptures as a means and resource of communication (Acts 28:23). In other words, the Scriptures speak of Jesus, but it is not that the Bible is Jesus. The message is a call for us to allow the kingdom of God to be real in our lives.

1. KERIGMA:

Kerigma is a Greek expression that translates as "proclamation." In our Christian context, it is the proclamation of the saving message of Jesus Christ to humanity. The message of salvation must be received by each person individually.

Every human being must hear this message as good news. Every person who is in a delicate condition of eternal death because of their sins, upon receiving, accepting, repenting, and trusting in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, attains eternal life, not because of their merits, but because of the redemptive work of Jesus through his death on the cross, who, dying for our sins, rose again to give us eternal life (John 17:3).

The proclamation, the making known and receiving of the message of eternal life revealed by Jesus, communicated by his disciples, and testified to here and now by new believers, is what is called kerygma (Greek: κήρυγμα, pronounced kerigma). Therefore, the overall plan of evangelization begins with kerygma, just as the disciples of Jesus did. Here are some examples of the original Christian kerygma: Luke 24:46-47; John 20:31; Acts 2:22-24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30-31; 10:39-43; 13:37-39; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

To gain a better understanding, we have prepared 13 lessons on the topic of kerygma. Each lesson includes a test to evaluate your learning and understanding so that you can move on to the next lesson and accumulate points toward certification at the end of the book. Remember that there are 6 steps of 13 lessons in each course: Kerygma, Didaskalia, Parenesis, Charisma, Diakonia, and Koinonia.

First exam: Select one of the four options. If the option you selected is incorrect, you will remain at the beginning of the same lesson so that you can review it again. If the option is correct, you will receive 10 points and can move on to the next lesson, and so on for the following lessons.

What is kerygma?

Option 1 is a plan of salvation.

Option 2 is the proclamation of Good News.

Option 3 is an outline for evangelism.

Option 4 is a method of evangelism.

1.1 Do you believe that if you die today, you will have eternal life?

To the question: Do you believe that if you die today, you will live in eternal life with God? The understandable answer, often expressed by many people, is No. Most likely, some people will say: I don't know. Others will say: I'm not sure.

Some time ago, I was talking with an elderly minister who had been a bishop in active ministry for 20 years. During our conversation, he told me with concern, unease, and unfortunate nervousness, "I am a little tired and sick, and my great concern is that I am not sure if the faith I have is the true faith." Today, 75% of those who call themselves Christians do not know, nor are they sure, that when they die they will live in eternal life with God. These Christians endure uncertainty, even though the Bible itself guarantees that we will have eternal life. These words were written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you may have life through his name (John 20:31).

Another biblical passage confirms with certainty that it is true that we will have eternal life: I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13). Although the Bible is clear in its affirmation that we will have eternal life, the doubt lies in not knowing how we will have eternal life.

To answer the question of how they will have eternal life, the following lessons of the kerygma have been written.

But before moving on to the following lessons, I will present three ways in which people view existence and how they try to perceive life:

- For some people, life has no meaning. Life is chaos. Suicide sometimes occurs because of a lack of meaning in life. But also, those who lack enthusiasm, those who are depressed and lazy, deep down, suffer from the meaninglessness of life.

- For other people, life only has meaning here. In this earthly and physical world. Their concern is to hold and store material things. Their value is measured by having and possessing in a pragmatic and hedonistic way. But when the evening of their day comes, they are immersed in deep sadness and a dark emptiness. - On the other hand, there are those who live in the truth that life has meaning here and now, and in the hereafter as well. They know that eternal life begins here. Jesus, our Master, said: "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

The insecurity and uncertainty about eternal life are due to the lack of the explanation we will give in the following lessons.

Second Test: To the question: Do you believe that if you die today, you have eternal life?

Option 1 All human beings answer yes.

Option 2 All who call themselves Christians say yes.

Option 3 Only those who trust in Christ have eternal life.

Option 4 No one can be sure of eternal life.

1.2 What must you do to live eternal life?

Some believe that eternal life is achieved through one's own merits. This has given rise to certain religious practices that use spiritual, psychological, and emotional techniques to achieve and maintain a divine relationship in order to attain eternal life.

There are religious positions that teach that after a person dies, something must be done, such as prayers, rituals, and worship, for the soul to go to eternal life. It would be the result of the efforts of those who remain alive and not of those who are already dead, who could have done much in life.

For Christians, there is the biblical message of eternal life. We start from the premise that deeds, the evil or good use of human free will, do affect the final destiny of eternal life with God. In the Bible itself we find: My brothers, what good is it to claim you have faith if you do not have works? Can that faith save you? (James 2:14). The above statement shows that works or good deeds are the result of saving faith.

When a person does something good, it is because they already have, understand, and live in eternal life, and that is why they do good works, as fruits of having eternal life. So, what must a person do to live in eternal life? They must know, accept, and follow the divine plan of salvation, which was revealed by Jesus himself. We will try to explain what the divine plan of salvation is like. In a simple, clear, and effective way, you will understand everything. The teaching method consists of using the fingers of the hand. Let's get to work!

Please proceed to the next lesson after answering the quiz that will take you to the next lesson.

Third Test: What must you do to live eternal life?

Option 1 Do very good works to earn merit.

Option 2 Have someone pray for you when you die.

Option 3 Know, accept, and follow God's plan of salvation.

Option 4 I cannot know, nor does anyone else know; only God knows.

1.3 Evangelize with your fingers.

Your fingers are enough to illustrate all the elements that make up the plan of salvation. I learned this teaching method and model pedagogically when I was certified twice as a teacher in James Kennedy's Explosive Evangelism ministry.

To make the plan of salvation easy to understand, we are going to use only the fingers of our hand. Each finger represents an element of the plan of salvation. We are going to give each finger a name, which you should memorize and repeat naturally.

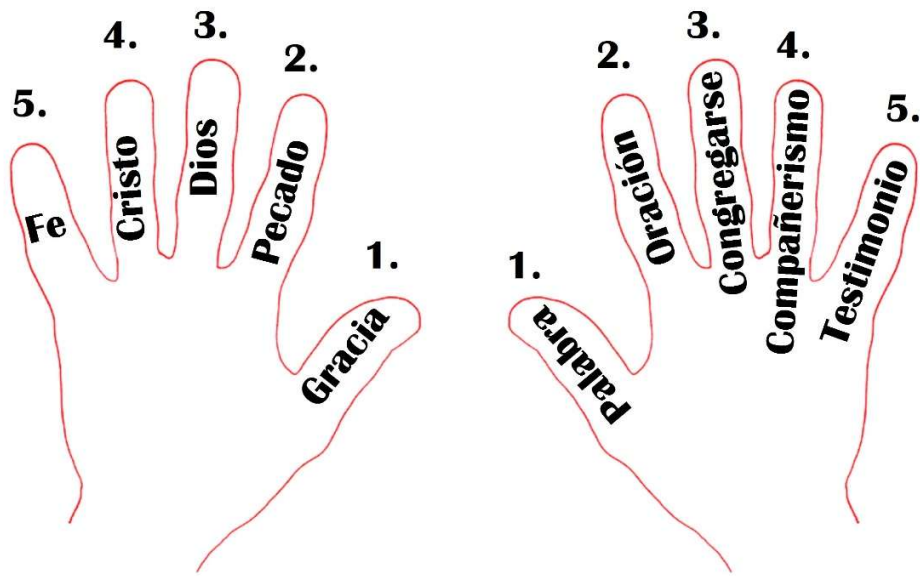
What you must believe:

The finger pointing to heaven is grace. The index finger is the finger that judges. God is the greatest. Christ is next to God, and faith, the smallest finger, is like a mustard seed.

What you must do:

Read the Bible every day, pray often, make it a habit to gather together, have Christian companions, and bear witness.

In the next 10 lessons (4 through 13), the plan of salvation, called the kerygma, is presented in a simple and very effective way. It is the message that the early Christians used to lead people to salvation.



Fourth Exam:

How many elements make up the plan of salvation?

Option 1: 10 elements.

Option 2: 7 elements.

Option 3: 2 elements.

Option 4 All of the above.

1.4 Eternal life is by grace.

To the question: Do you believe that if you die today, you will go to live with God in eternal life? The frequent answer is: No. The most common answer is I don't know.

But this response is due to the lack of the following explanation:

Eternal life is a gift. It is not earned or deserved by our own merits. Someone gives us that gift, free of charge, at no cost to us. And like any gift, all we have to do is receive it.

The Bible says: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

If it is a gift, it is free. Salvation, or going to heaven or eternal life after our earthly life, is free.

The Bible itself affirms this: God saved you by his grace when you believed. You have no merit in this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast of being saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We have often been taught to achieve things on our own merit, and that is right, because it helps us to push ourselves to achieve what we want. But there are certain things that we possess that would be impossible to achieve on our own. How to choose the place where we were born, the family we were born into, or the very circumstances of our lives, our anatomy, and our genetics have been inherited.

The same is true of our salvation or eternal life.

So, if someone asks you, "Do you believe that if you die today, you will go to live with God in eternal life?", the answer is yes.

And they may refute you: "Oh, you think you are very holy, very deserving of eternal life! The answer is: I do not think I am holy or deserving; it is that someone gave me that gift. Do you want to know who gave me that gift?"

I'll answer that, but first I must clarify the following question: Why can no one earn eternity through their own efforts or merits?

Fifth Examination:

What does it mean that eternal life is by grace?

Option 1 We must give many thanks to God.

Option 2 We must earn many merits to receive it.

Option 3 It is a gift that is received by paying something in return.

Option 4 It is grace because it is a free gift from God.

1.5 We have all sinned.

What a person, and especially a believer, must do is recognize their current condition as a sinner. This is very difficult to admit in this day and age, when the term "sin" is rejected and replaced with "mistake" or "error," and it is proclaimed that nothing in this life is perfect.

However, the Bible says: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). That glorious purpose established by God is eternal life. But there is something that prevents us from reaching or advancing toward the summit of eternal life. That obstacle is called sin.

Sin is every thought, word, deed, and omission that separates us from God. Sin is anything that transgresses God's will in exchange for doing our own will.

When we willingly cling to doing what we want, what we desire, what we aspire to and seek without counting on God's purpose, we fall into the tremendous tragedy of a will wounded and clouded by sin.

If we do our own will, it is impossible for us to find and follow the right path that leads us from this life to eternity with God and in conformity with His kingdom. This difficulty in finding certainty is due to sin, which is the rejection of God's purpose for our lives.

The measure and standard for knowing whether we are right or wrong has been established by God Himself when He commands us to rise to the level of being perfect, just as our Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

The stereotype of God is as follows: for whoever obeys all of God's laws except one is as guilty as one who disobeys them all (James 2:10).

So sin is to transgress any aspect of the law established by God, even if it is only one point that is not fulfilled, it is already considered an infraction.

Therefore, to attain eternal life, one must be perfect; to be perfect, one must be sinless; and one is sinless if one fulfills the entire law, and no one has reached that level.

Then who can be saved? It is impossible for us...

We will clarify this if you move on to the next lesson after answering the following quiz.

Sixth Test:

What does sin prevent me from achieving?

Option 1 Personal goals in this life.

Option 2 The glorious goal established by God.

Option 3 Achieving happiness in this world.

Option 4 It prevents me from being flawless.

1.6 God is love and justice.

There is no doubt that God is love (1 John 4:8), and that is why He does not want to punish us. But the Bible also says that God is just and will in no way hold the wicked (guilty) innocent (Exodus 34:7). And Ezekiel 18:4 states: This is my rule: the person who sins is the one who will die.

The dilemma that, on the one hand, God loves us and therefore should not punish us and, on the other hand, He is a just judge who cannot declare the guilty innocent, is within the conscience of all human beings.

This is a dilemma that human beings must resolve, but due to their weakness and lack of strength caused by sin itself, they have no choice and no solution.

Humanity has no way out; it is trapped in the uncertainty of wanting and not being able to do anything to escape sin, to draw near and live divinely with God, allowing Him to dwell in them: Everyone who loves me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (John 14:23).

Faced with the problem that God loves us and does not want to punish us, but God is also just and must punish sin, God himself had to respond to our blessed doubt and problem.

The choice we must make to find our way was decided by God Himself, for human beings have no hope without God. On their own, people will never find the way out. All of humanity, after leaving Eden (Genesis 3:24), is trapped and has no way out.

The Bible says: In the present time, he has offered Jesus Christ to demonstrate his righteousness. In this way, God is just and, at the same time, the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

The solution is in God. Our God is a just Father who does justice. He is the God of those who suffer and are crucified, and He is committed to delivering them from pain and from the pain caused by sin, the root of all the evils that humanity bears.

This is the reason for the presence of Jesus Christ in the world. To understand this better, let's move on to the next lesson after the exam:

Seventh Examination: What is the consequence of sin?

Option 1 Eternal death.

Option 2: Imprisonment for a time.

Option 3 Bad luck.

Option 4 Illness.

1.7 Jesus Christ, the solution to the dilemma.

Throughout human history, some people have had difficulty understanding why, at the end of time (Galatians 4:4-5), God declared the guilty innocent, since He placed the entire weight of the sin of all human beings on one person, His Son Jesus Christ.

Some sincerely wonder, after realizing all that God has done for human beings: Why did God declare the wicked or sinner innocent, when He had previously said that he should die?

The dilemma to be resolved is this: on the one hand, God must punish us for our sin, but on the other hand, God wants to save us and bring us to eternal life. He resolved that dilemma in the person of Jesus Christ.

Consider the following illustration: You commit a crime and are brought before a judge to receive the punishment you deserve for your violation of the law. When the judge is about to pass sentence, a friend of yours appears and asks the judge to condemn him, that is, your friend, instead of you. Do you think the judge would agree to his request? Of course not.

But when Jesus Christ appeared as our friend, the righteous Judge condemned him as a sinner, because God himself took the blame for the problem of sin.

Divine justice could not overlook sin. So God paid the penalty for sin, which means He took the blame. In this way, God obtained the right to justify the sinner.

To explain this situation, Paul says: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the

righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a sinless life, but died on the cross to pay for our sins.

We find the explanation in the following Bible passage: All of us have gone astray like sheep; we have turned away from God's ways to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all (Isaiah 53:6).

Jesus bore our sins in his body and paid for them on the cross, now offering us eternal life as a gift. And that gift is received as a key, called saving faith. That gift is received by saving faith. But to understand this, we must move on to the next lesson after the exam.

Eighth Test:

Why is Jesus Christ the solution to the dilemma of death or eternal life?

Option 1 Because he lived in the world as a human being.

Option 2 Because, being in divine form, he became man.

Option 3 Because while he lived in the world, he performed miracles.

Option 4 Because he died and rose again to pay for our sins.

1.8 Faith is the key to eternal life.

Faith is the key that opens the door to heaven. Saving faith is unique, but even though there is only one faith, people have created other kinds of faith that have nothing to do with the genuine and unique saving faith. Many people confuse saving faith with the incipient temporary faith that is mere intellectual knowledge, others have a faith based on symbols, there are those who practice an occasional faith, and there are also those who rely on an emergency faith. The distinct difference is that saving faith is based solely on trusting Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. Saving faith is resting solely in Christ and in what Christ did. It is not in what each of us clumsily strives to do, creating an imaginary fallacy of false life. The expression in Acts 16:31 is not advice, it is a command: Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved. We find the same idea in the following sentence: Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me has eternal life (John 6:47).

With these truths, we have been able to understand the purpose of faith: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" (Romans 10:9-10). Divine righteousness is attained through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. The verbal confession of genuine faith in Jesus and believing with all your heart in the Redeemer of the world is the most sublime act a human being can perform. It is the apex of faith, the pinnacle of Christian life. Christ is the path that all living beings must

walk. It is a heroic journey and one of certain sanctification. Not all human beings leave their comfort zone to embark on the path indicated by the Holy Scriptures. Many find it difficult to leave the false security of the mortal nest offered by civilization. Few decide to travel the path that leads to eternity with God. So today, in this place and at this time: do you accept the decision to receive the gift of eternal life? Those who receive this gift begin to walk in grace. That gift is received through faith in the person of Jesus Christ and in what He did for you, which was to die on the cross and rise again, to forgive your sins. So, personally, you must:

1. *Accept Christ as your Lord and Savior.*
2. *Acknowledge that you have committed sins.*
3. *Repent of those sins.*
4. *Confess your sins to Christ and receive forgiveness.*
5. *Continue walking and growing in God's grace.*

To grow in grace, you must practice certain means of grace, which will help you strengthen and nourish your decision to be a true Christian and sustain you for the rest of your time in this physical, earthly life. After the examination, if you move on to the next lesson, you will understand it better.

Ninth Examination: What faith is the key to eternal life?

Option 1 Temporary faith.

Option 2 Occasional faith.

Option 3 Saving faith.

Option 4 Symbolic faith.

1.9 The Bible as a means of grace.

You are now a new believer in Christ Jesus.

Today is the date of your spiritual birth: They are not born of blood, nor of natural desire, nor of human will, but they are born of God (John 1:13).

Therefore, you are welcome into God's family: But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

Now what?

Like a newborn child, you must grow, develop, learn to walk, and reach maturity. So you must feed yourself, train yourself, practice, and exercise according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is the manual for life, describing God's purpose for our lives and telling us what we must do and how we must live in order to perform throughout our existence with the power of God.

In fact, we are told: You study the Scriptures thoroughly because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! (John 5:39).

The ultimate purpose of the Bible is to show us Jesus. It leads us through its pages to encounter the only Savior. So the theme of Scripture is salvation, and salvation is through Christ, therefore Scripture is filled with Christ.

Therefore, Christianity is not about you, or me, or anyone else; it is about Jesus. Hence, after receiving Christ, if we continue to ignore the biblical writings, we will remain ignorant of Christ.

When we turn to the Bible, we do so only to discover and recognize Christ.

The success or failure of the Christian life depends on our understanding and acceptance of the Word of God, which is Jesus Himself. The Divine Word is described in the various genres and styles of the Holy Scriptures.

In conclusion, the Bible is a means of grace because it helps us grow in the spirit, keeps us strong, focused on eternal life, and helps us live a life of witness.

However, the Bible is not the only means of grace.

Let us move on to the next lesson to discover other means of grace and Christian practice, but first we must take the test.

Tenth Exam: Why is the Bible a means of grace?

Option 1 Because it is the manual that guides us in our lives.

Option 2 Because it shows us Jesus as the only savior.

Option 3 Because it recounts many heroic episodes.

Option 4 Because it helps us grow, be strong, and stay focused.

1.10 Prayer as a means of grace.

Prayer is another means of grace available to us to continue the hero's journey, for Scripture says:

Keep asking, and you will receive what you ask for; keep seeking, and you will find; keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; everyone who seeks finds; and to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8).

Prayer is a dialogue between you and the Other, who guides you so that you do not stray from the path. That is why it is necessary to devote time each day to being in relationship with God, alone, in intimacy and personal conversation: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God (Philippians 4:6).

To leave no doubt about the effectiveness of prayer as a means of grace, Jesus himself teaches us: You who are parents, if your children ask you for a piece of bread, do you give them a stone instead? Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! So if you, who are sinful, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him (Matthew 7:9-11).

And for those who have not received the Holy Spirit, it is guaranteed: So if you, who are sinful, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:13).

Talking to God is praying.

You can talk in private: When you pray, go into your room, close the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you in public (Matthew 6:6).

You can speak in public: Again I tell you, if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Matthew 18:20).

Prayers can be short, specific, directed, spontaneous, participatory, and varied. In short, there are different styles and models of prayer, but the important thing is to pray in sincere dialogue with God.

For a better understanding, after the exam, move on to the next lesson.

Eleventh Examination: Why is prayer a means of grace?

Option 1 It is an intimate time of conversation with God.

Option 2 It is the means of asking and God's means of giving.

Option 3 It is a short and specific time to be alone.

Option 4 It is a style of sincere encounter with God.

1.11 The congregation as a means of grace.

The Church is a sacrament of salvation.

The Church is the community that Christ uses to distribute God's grace and is the visible sign of the life of God's children among the multitude of human beings.

The Church is the body of Christ and is the figure God uses to carry out his work of universal salvation, which is why it is a means of grace.

The person who is evangelized is born again and becomes a believer incorporated into the local church, as described in biblical practice: those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church on that very day, about three thousand in all (Acts 2:41).

Hence, when a person regularly attends a local church and is a faithful congregant, God guarantees that Christian a balanced spiritual life, and the new believer becomes a disciple who is available and teachable.

The local church, as a sign of the presence of God's grace, nourishes the believer with the instruction of God's Word. It also allows the believer to worship God with the attitude that the Lord himself asks of us: For God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

For their part, new believers should begin to connect with a church that has genuine Christian characteristics: all the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer (Acts 2:42).

Furthermore, when new believers join the church, they should perform the ministry that God has entrusted to them based on their own identity and calling. For it is God Himself, through His Holy Spirit, who empowers (1 Corinthians 12:1) each person within the church to be an active and useful member in the work of evangelism.

It is the same Spirit of God who equips the membership to serve Christ in his church in various ways (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). In short, the church is God's living and vibrant organism on earth; it is a body with many parts, and each part has its defined functions (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).

As you move on to the next lesson, you will understand fellowship better. In the meantime, give the test.

Twelfth Test: In what sense is the congregation a means of grace?

Option 1 It brings all believers together in the same faith.

Option 2 It allows believers to worship God in spirit.

Option 3 It helps believers to be balanced in their lives.

Option 4 It is an instrument for proclaiming the work of salvation.

1.12 Fellowship as a means of grace.

When new believers begin to maintain close relationships with other believers, it is a dynamic that helps them grow in faith. Fellowship with one another is the visible sign of God's presence in the midst of his church. Fellowship was the experience that identified the early Christians: what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3).

One of the most important aspects for a person's spiritual growth and perseverance in the practice of their faith is having good companions in interpersonal contact in the local church.

Why did Jesus establish the church? For the active fellowship that should exist among believers, so that they may grow healthily and maintain a permanent enthusiasm. Maintaining a living fellowship is a supreme request made to us by Holy Scripture: And let us not neglect to meet together, as some do, but let us encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near (Hebrews 10:25). In addition, fellowship helps to maintain a constant force of power, through the qualities and talents of each member. Believers should share their gifts and learn to recognize the charisma that God has given them so that they can work in their own ministry. In Ephesians 4:11-13 we find three fundamental aspects:

1. Ministry: Now Christ gave the following gifts to the church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers. 2. Responsibility: Each minister, with his or her gifts, has the responsibility to prepare God's people to carry out God's

work and build up the church, that is, the body of Christ. 3. Maturity: This process will continue until we all reach such unity in our faith and knowledge of the Son of God that we are mature in the Lord, that is, until we reach the full and complete measure of Christ.

If we value the above process, the result is what Ephesians 4:14-16 says: 1. Then we will no longer be immature like children. We will not be tossed about or carried away by every new teaching. 2. We will not be led astray by people who try to deceive us with lies so clever that they seem like the truth. 3. As a result, we will speak the truth in love and thus grow in every way, both collectively and spiritually, until we become more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, which is the church. 4. Christ himself makes the whole body fit together perfectly. And each part, by fulfilling its specific function, helps the others to develop, and then the whole body grows and is healthy and full of love. If your heart is already burning, move on to the next lesson after the examination.

Thirteenth Examination:

In what way is fellowship a means of grace?

Option 1 It is a time for socializing with friends.

Option 2 It is the time when the sermon is heard.

Option 3 It is the visible and tangible sign of God's presence.

Option 4 It is where you find people who help others.

1.13 Witness as a means of grace.

We have reached the last lesson in the area of Kerygma.

At the end of the entire process of the first proclamation of the good news of salvation, the new believer has been motivated to tell others what Christ has done in his or her life. That desire to talk about Christ and that burning urge to tell others what Jesus has done for their life and in their life is what is called testimony.

Jesus himself predicted the power of testimony: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere: in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). After meeting Jesus, Andrew brought his brother Peter to meet Jesus as well. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of those men who, upon hearing what John said, followed Jesus. Andrew went to find his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)."

Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Jesus looked intently at Simon and said, "Your name is Simon, son of John, but you will be called Cephas (which means Peter)" (John 1:40-42). What Andrew did was to bear witness to Peter. What would have happened if Andrew had not testified to Peter? Most likely nothing. But because Andrew did bear witness to Peter, many good things happened in his life. Things happen when we take action. There are two kinds of people: Those who take action and those who let opportunities pass them by.

Therefore, as you are now a new believer and a Christian leader, I invite you to take action and become a spreader of the good news of Jesus to so many people who need it.

The commissions are the task that Jesus delegated to his disciples, and they are the task for new Christians who were coming into being. These recommendations are found in the four Gospels: - Go and make disciples, teaching them (Matthew 28:19-20).

- Go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15).
- You are witnesses of all these things (Luke 24:48).
- As for you, follow me (John 21:22).

All four versions speak of taking action, which is why you are called to rise from your seats and go forth, from one place to many places.

Move on to the next area called Didascalia and you will go through 13 lessons as you did in the Kerigma area. Take the exam first.

Fourteenth Exam: Why is testimony a means of grace?

Option 1 It is a supernatural power to make things happen.

Option 2 It is what makes a preacher very effective.

Option 3 It is for people to share their experiences.

Option 4 It is God's work in people who have faith.

2. DIDASKALIA

The word Didascalia comes from the Greek διδασκαλία, which literally means "teaching" or "clear exposition." It is to point to something or toward something, toward where we should go. Therefore, the sign of teaching must be clear and correct.

In ancient Greece, didascalia was the teaching and instruction of the actors in a play. The term was also used in ancient times to refer to the catalogs of plays in competitive performances.

Today, didascalia refers to the director's notes in a play with instructions for the performers about the details and nuances of the staging.

Didascalia is derived from didactics, which is the art of teaching and whose main objective is to obtain results. Therefore, there must be a common purpose between the teacher and the student.

That is why Jesus is a teacher: You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you (John 13:13-15).

We are disciples: Jesus said to those who believed in him: You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8:31).

To instruct is to build from within, in the spirit, in the mind: Do not imitate the behaviors and customs of this world, but rather let God transform you into new people by changing your way of thinking (mind). Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good, pleasing, and perfect (Romans 12:2).

Now our goal is to be teachers and disciples permanently: You have heard me teach truths that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who are qualified to pass them on to others (2 Timothy 2:2).

To get closer to understanding the Latin word *didascalia*, there are two terms that go together: *docere* and *discere*, which mean to teach and to learn. In fact, words such as teaching and doctor come from *didascalia*.

In this way, *didascalia* has to do with education, teaching, instruction, training, preparation, and learning. It is gathering the information necessary to make a sound decision that intervenes and transforms reality.

Culture is *didascalia*. Every culture requires gathering and acquiring knowledge, which accumulates in a species and is passed down from generation to generation.

What's more, even animals have *didascalia*, as different species receive instructions to perform a task after deciding how to carry it out.

In ancient times, didascalia was priestly (ministerial) and military, then it became public and encompassed various disciplines.

Then came the seven liberal arts and the quadrivium. Humanism in the 12th century, the institutionalization of universities, and the Enlightenment transformed teaching and learning. Free and compulsory primary education was introduced by the French Revolution.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, teaching focused on science and technology. However, today there has been a reevaluation of the humanities and spiritual teaching. We are now entering an era of returning to the teachings of Jesus the Master as a model for life.

If you continue this series of 13 lessons, you will understand much more about the field of teaching and its role in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Therefore, take the following exam to move on to the next lesson.

First Exam: What is Didascalia?

Option 1 is a plan of principles that teach how to live.

Option 2 is a sign that indicates where we should go.

Option 3 is an outline for teaching and learning.

Option 4 is a method of teaching and learning.

2.1 Where does the ability to learn lie?

The ability to learn lies in the brain. When we learn something, it affects our personality because there is a change in the brain. When new information is stored, learning occurs, and this causes difficulties for the brain because it transforms it. When faced with new knowledge, the brain resists, becoming anxious, uncomfortable, and fearful because it refuses to be transformed. This is what Paul warns against when he says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

The mind is home to a variety of thoughts, among which foolish and mature ones stand out: Do not be childish in your understanding of these things. Be innocent as babies in regard to evil, but mature in understanding matters such as these (1 Corinthians 14:20). The brain contains neurons. The term is derived from the Greek *νεῦρον*, meaning string or nerve. Neurons are a type of cell that forms part of the nervous system and is responsible for the excitability, stimuli, and impulses of our body. Neurons have the ability to communicate accurately, quickly, and over long distances with other cells, whether nerve, muscle, or glandular. But as a whole, it is the brain that learns from external stimuli through the senses and reason, which is a competence unique to human beings.

The Bible provides some guidelines that we should keep in mind in the art of learning: test everything that is said. Retain what is good. (Thessalonians 5:21). This ability to learn requires discernment: only simpletons believe everything they are told! The prudent carefully examine their steps" (Proverbs 14:15).

Knowledge comes after learning. Learning is difficult, but once you learn something, knowledge brings enormous blessings and security. Few people probably like to learn, but many like to know. In any case, you cannot know without first learning. Learn as much as you can, and you will know more. When someone is already learned and knows, they experience what the Scriptures recommend: do not act without thinking, but rather seek to understand what the Lord wants you to do (Ephesians 5:17).

So, we must force our brains to learn, because they can learn everything they are taught, and the more knowledge our brains learn, the wiser we are in every way, such as mentally, physically, spiritually, financially, and socially. Never stop, for every day is an opportunity that life gives you to learn and savor wisdom as a good nutrient: The wise man is hungry for knowledge, while the fool feeds on garbage (Proverbs 15:14). Move on to the next lesson after the exam.

Second Exam: Where does the ability to learn lie or exist?

Option 1 In the capacity of the external senses.

Option 2 In academia and the teaching of teachers.

Option 3 In the brain, where neurons are found.

Option 4 In one's own life experience and that of others.

2.2 How can you learn to learn?

We have already seen that learning takes place in the brain and that the brain changes when it learns something new. Now we are going to discover how we learn something new that is not yet in the brain. In other words, how knowledge is stored.

We learn through the association of ideas, as well as through our surroundings, simultaneous stimuli, imitation of models, analogies, and metaphors. When we learn, we use memory, language, problem solving, images, deduction, and induction.

When we want to learn something, we position ourselves appropriately in relation to what we want to learn, then we interpret, assimilate, and retain what we have learned in our brains so that we can express it when we want to. When circumstances require it, the information we have acquired will be available.

Learning requires sufficient time, stimulation, motivation, interest, and a lot of effort for that new knowledge to be engraved in the brain.

The unknown is boring and causes fear and anxiety. The brain does not want to be touched by new knowledge, that is, by new knowledge that can only be achieved through learning. So the person struggles to learn and must discern what is best for them to learn. Because after so much struggle, what they have learned should be useful in their daily life.

We learn from things, events, and people. We must learn how to learn. Jesus, being the Master of masters, had to learn.

That is why Jesus is a model disciple: "I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me" (John 8:28).

Moreover, from a very early age, Jesus sought to learn: Three days later, they finally found him in the temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers (Luke 2:46-47). From Jesus, we understand that in order to learn, we must cultivate the habit of listening and develop the art of asking appropriate and substantial questions.

Jesus was born into the world of Roman colonization, characterized by legislation and law. It was also characterized by an appreciation for the architecture of marvelous buildings, the design of roads, and the construction of bridges, aqueducts, and means of communication. But Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, like other towns in Galilee, had been influenced in its culture, language, and thinking by the reasoning and genius of the knowledge achieved by the Greeks. Jesus, like other people, learned that one had to learn in the Hellenic style, which was to be educated by learning to ask questions, learning to listen to answers, and learning to admire the surrounding world.

Every day Jesus learned more: "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and all people" (Luke 2:52).

Jesus is also a model Teacher because he taught all the time: Why didn't you arrest me in the temple? I was teaching there every day (Matthew 26:55). Moreover, he did not only teach in the temple: Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee teaching in the synagogues (Matthew 4:23).

Jesus had disciples and strictly invited them to learn from him: Come and follow me (Matthew 19:21) and to practice

what they had learned: Go and evangelize... teaching them (Matthew 28:19). He encouraged them: I will be with you always (Matthew 28:20).

How can we imitate Jesus? In the next lesson, we will learn how to learn from Jesus the Teacher. For now, take the following test:

Third Exam: What must be done in order to learn?

Option 1 You have to make an effort and be consistent and disciplined.

Option 2 Human beings are born knowing how to learn; they just need to practice.

Option 3 You have to go to school and learn everything that can be taught.

Option 4 All of the above answers are correct.

2.3 The difference between a teacher and a professor.

Learning occurs through teaching. Teaching refers to the information and training that a person receives from another person, an event, or a thing. Teaching is about a subject, discipline, and behavior that must be acquired and formulated as a personal life project. Those who practice the profession of teaching are known as teachers, instructors, monitors, professors, or masters. The word teacher comes from the Latin *docens*, which in turn derives from *docere*, meaning to teach.

The term instructor comes from Latin and is formed by *in* (penetration, inside) and *structos* (construction, factory). It is the instruction that a person imparts on a particular subject or matter, whether or not they have had the experience or applied that knowledge in their life. The word monitor comes from the Latin *monitor*, *monitoris*, and refers to someone who advises or reminds someone else of their responsibilities, duties, or tasks. It also refers to someone who admonishes, warns, guides, and helps. The word *profesor* (professor) was formed from the Latin *profiteri*, derived from the same sound as *fateri*, which meant to confess or admit. When the prefix *pro* is added, it denotes talking about one's things and experiences in full view of everyone. Today, a professor is someone who is professionally dedicated to teaching an art, skill, or doctrine, whether or not it comes from their own experiences.

Maestro, on the other hand, comes from the Latin *magister*, which is responsible for providing formal education in a community. The professor is distinguished by their ability to impart, in the best possible way, the official instruction regulated

by an educational statute to the student. But the maestro is distinguished by the mark they leave on their followers, because they are involved in the learning of their disciples. The teacher is endorsed by the effectiveness of what he teaches, the content of what he imparts, and the learning process. That is why Jesus is recognized as a Master. He earned the respect, affection, and trust of his disciples: Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life (John 6:68). Jesus inspired confidence: people were amazed at his teaching, because he did it with true authority, something completely different from what the teachers of religious law did (Mark 1:22). When we speak of a teacher, we are referring to the highest level in the art and discipline of teaching and knowledge. Teacher is magister: magis means more and ter means three. It alludes to the fact that the teacher knows three times more than the best of his disciples can assimilate. Jesus is the greatest of teachers, because he not only knew, but also knew those around him: Jesus himself did not trust them, because he knew them all, and he had no need for anyone to testify about man, for he knew what was in man (John 2:24-25).

Fourth Examination:

What is the fundamental distinction of Jesus the Teacher?

Option 1 He always taught and monitored his disciples.

Option 2 He imparted his instruction with examples and parables.

Option 3 He walked from place to place shouting his doctrine.

Option 4 He taught with authority and knew what was in man.

2.4 Jesus, the teacher of teachers.

Jesus learned from childhood (Luke 2:52). Through his own life and ministry, Jesus helps us to know, grow, and walk our path so that we may become authentic teachers. The role of the teacher is to help the disciple learn, and the apprentice determines the teacher, as Scripture says: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).

Jesus developed his teachable attitude through obedience: although he was the Son of God, Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered (Hebrews 5:8). He learned until He Himself became the content of that teaching: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). To know Jesus is to attain full wisdom, as the Gospel affirms: If you really knew me, you would also know... (John 6:7).

Jesus is the Master of masters, because only by coming to him can one learn to be like him in disposition and character, which transforms the disciple and his environment: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28-30).

The term Teacher, with reference to Jesus, was highly appreciated by the sacred writers. For in the Gospels the term teacher (*didáskalos*) appears forty-eight times. Regarding the Hebrew term for Teacher, Rabbi appears fifteen times and *Rab-buni* twice.

Jesus himself attributes the title of Teacher to himself and affirms it with pleasure and full acceptance: You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am (John 13:13). Furthermore, he grants himself the privilege of choosing and naming each of his disciples: You did not choose me, but I chose you (John 15:16). Although it is voluntary to be a disciple, Jesus demands a certain attitude, is decisive, and defines his conditions: If any of you want to be my followers, you must give up your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me (Matthew 16:24).

Teachers spend a certain amount of time with their students; with Jesus the Teacher, it is for life and forever: No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). In this way, the disciple-teacher relationship becomes an intimate one: You are now my friends, because I have told you everything the Father told me (John 15:15). The degree of rapport reaches such a level that the disciple can say: It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Galatians 2:20). The personality of the Master is incorporated to such a degree into the personality of the disciple that his followers must resemble their master (Matthew 10:25).

With Jesus, the disciple is ready when others become teachers in the style of Jesus the Teacher. Without doubt or ambiguity, they would accompany him, and he would send them out to preach and give them authority to cast out demons (Mark 3:14-15).

The next lesson will address the attitude of the disciple in becoming a teacher. Before moving on to the next lesson, present the exam:

Fifth Test: What is the highest level a disciple can reach with Jesus the Teacher?

Option 1 The disciples of Jesus the Teacher must always follow him.

Option 2: The disciples must be chosen by Jesus the Teacher.

Option 3 The disciples incorporate the personality of Jesus the Teacher.

Option 4 The disciples are then sent out to teach and preach.

2.5 Those who learn are available and teachable.

The barrier to learning is in our brain. Learning is the great difficulty of our brain. However, knowing is one of the greatest satisfactions of our brain. Those who know something live motivated, and what they do, they do with love and believe it has value.

Then the obstacle lies in learning, not in knowing or understanding. To overcome the impediment to learning, life has equipped us with two tools: being available and being teachable. Acts 8:4 says that the believers, while scattered, preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. They were disciples trained, equipped, and empowered by teachers who, in turn, learned from the one and only incomparable Teacher, Jesus.

In other words, these disciples had to learn. They were available and teachable, free to learn how to evangelize, and after being trained, they carried out their work with constant and permanent motivation.

The term "available" means to be empty and detached, vacant, ready and willing for whatever purpose is requested of you; that a person can freely respond to the call at any time.

The available person is an active and militant servant who can be assigned immediately and without discrepancy. This is how Jesus' disciples were: as soon as they reached dry land, they left everything and followed Jesus (Luke 5:11).

There are four examples in the Bible of brilliant and bold availability: Samuel: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening (1 Samuel 3:9). Mary: Let your word be fulfilled in me (Luke

1:38). Jesus: "Your will be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42). Paul: "Lord, what do you want me to do?" (Acts 9:6).

In turn, teachable is that docile person who allows himself to be molded, like clay in the potter's hands (Isaiah 64:8), who through learning is transformed into a valuable work designed by the hands of God. That is why teachable is the one who is always learning. The best teacher is the one who is prepared to receive and learn what life constantly strives to teach him.

The learning process is ongoing, constant, and up-to-date. From the beginning, the disciples were chosen for their teachable characteristics: You have heard me teach truths that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who are qualified to pass them on to others (2 Timothy 2:2). In Christian leadership, there are no volunteers, only those who are chosen: At day-break, he called all his disciples and chose twelve of them to be apostles (Luke 6:13). They were selected for their teachable and available attitude.

So, to learn, it is necessary to be available and teachable. Then, to be a faithful and loyal disciple of the Master Jesus, we must abandon ourselves freely and without reservation to the wealth of his teachings with persevering discipline.

After taking the exam, you will move on to the next lesson and learn about a very ancient document that the first disciples used to teach.

Sixth Exam:

Why is it necessary to be available and teachable in order to learn?

Option 1 Because the obstacle lies in learning and not in knowing.

Option 2 Because they are two tools that facilitate learning.

Option 3 Because it prepares the disciple for a specific purpose.

Option 4 Because in Christian leadership there are no volunteers.

2.6 The Didache or teaching of the apostles.

Didache, pronounced didajé, comes from the Greek didascalia, which means teaching, and refers to didáskalos, who teaches. It is known as the "Teaching of the Apostles" and as the "Teaching of the Lord to the nations through the twelve apostles."

The Didache is a contemporary writing with the books of the New Testament of the Bible. It was used from the year 70 by the first Christian community. This work of Christian literature is a living testimony that teaching and guiding was a primary task of the disciple-teachers.

This vivid testimony of Christian literature, known as the Didache, is a practical example of how the early Christian community used didascalia.

The entire content of the Didache can be found on many websites and various internet search engines, as well as in various bookstores. Here we will only comment on a few relevant features:

1. The Didache has structure: moral content, cultural norms, disciplinary behaviors, and perseverance in discipline.

2. It has doctrinal content: moral instruction, baptism, fasting and prayer, formulas for the Eucharistic supper, instruction on the apostles and prophets, the Lord's Day, bishops and deacons, and eschatology.

3. When the New Testament was being written, which later became part of the Bible, theological doctrinal content was also being created at the same time, which did not enter the biblical canon but was highly appreciated by Christians.

4. The Didache has to do with Christian education. There is unity in the teaching of Christian life when doctrine is based on the Bible, Tradition (history), Experience, and Reason, to answer the current questions of human beings and help fulfill God's purpose of living in holiness.

5. Teaching is what leads a person to discipleship. If a new believer is not taught, he or she will not mature in the faith and therefore will not reach the level of leadership that the church needs.

6. Without unity in Christian education, there is no congregation and, as a result, there will be no sending: Go and make disciples...teaching them everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:18-20).

7. The pursuit of quality control and excellence is motivated by teaching: The church, then, had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; it was strengthened, and the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in number (Acts 9:31).

8. The trained disciple becomes a witness with the strength and power of the Holy Spirit: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere (Acts 1:8).

9. The disciple is trained and equipped for evangelistic work: take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls (Matthew 11:29).

10. The disciple is taught by others who have already been trained: together we are his house, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself (Ephesians 2:20).

Seventh Examination:

What is the Didache or The Teaching of the Apostles?

Option 1 A scripture that has nothing to do with the Bible.

Option 2 Writings that did not make it into the books of the Bible.

Option 3 A doctrinal teaching manual for Christians.

Option 4 The teachings of Jesus that were not included in the Bible.

2.7 The Didascalia Apostolorum.

The Didascalia is also known as the Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles and the Holy Disciples of Our Savior. It is a work of Christian literature, highly regarded in the doctrinal teaching of the early community, similar to the Didache. Although the author is believed to be of Jewish origin, it was written in the second century in Greek and Syriac, a language derived from Aramaic.

Syriac was a literary language widely used by early Christians to spread the teachings of Jesus. Throughout Asia, India, and eastern China, both in Arabic and Persian environments, people communicated in the Syriac language.

This is a clear sign of the inculturation of the Gospel. It indicates that the leaders of the early church were concerned, from the beginning, with using the most appropriate, current, and widespread means to transmit the message of salvation.

The main objective of the Didascalia is to provide moral instruction and rules of behavior in worship, for the maintenance of order and discipline in the Church. This work aims to refute the current of Gnosticism and the line of Judaism. This source of literature seeks to teach sound doctrine against the heresies of the Jewish Christians, exhorts caution with pagan literature, and avoids immoral practices such as promiscuity in baths.

It sets out rules on the election and consecration of leaders, on baptism and gentle treatment of repentant sinners, and on care for the poor. It provides guidelines on lawsuits and disputes. It stipulates places of worship and encourages good

manners, not missing worship because of work or going to shows.

No one can have excuses for avoiding martyrdom. The ordinary days of fasting are Wednesday and Friday, but it sets stricter rules for fasting during the week before Easter: from Monday, six full days, until the night after Saturday, one must abstain from food. It deals with the education of children, as fundamental education in the Bible: Repeat them to your children again and again (Deuteronomy 6:7).

In short, when we look at the history of Christianity from its beginnings, it is impressive how the church has struggled to remain loyal to the teachings of Jesus to this day.

The Didascalia says that God has abandoned the Synagogue for the Church of the Gentiles, but that Satan has done the same. Satan no longer tempts the Jews, but instead devotes himself to dividing the one flock into sects. This rivalry began in the time of the apostles, and that is why the Didascalia Apostolorum was written. Therefore, today's church leaders must teach with strength and power at all times, without discouragement and with enthusiasm, the doctrine that Jesus imparted:

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching us what is true and for showing us what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

In conclusion, teaching is the priority task of the church's ministerial leadership: We apostles should spend our time teaching God's word, not managing the distribution of food (Acts 6:2).

Eighth Examination:

What is the importance of the Didascalia Apostolorum?

Option 1 It was written by the apostles of Jesus Christ themselves.

Option 2 It gives moral instructions and rules of behavior.

Option 3 It has been preserved intact since the day it was written.

Option 4 It reflects the church's concern for teaching.

2.8 How does one come to know God?

The Greek word for knowledge is *gnosis*. To know is to have information about something in your brain, to know the difference and understand the nature, qualities, and circumstances.

But when we speak of the knowledge of God, we are referring to the divine nature of our lives: they show that they have God's law written on their hearts, because their own conscience and their own thoughts either accuse them or indicate that they are doing the right thing (Romans 2:15).

Knowledge is attained through study, using reason and experience to grasp or process information about our surroundings. Thus, through the testimony of creation, we know God:

Through everything God has made, they can see with their own eyes the invisible qualities of God: his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God (Romans 1:20).

In other words, we know God through his own revelation: they know the truth about God, because he has made it evident to them (Romans 1:19).

No human being despises knowledge, for it is appreciated for its validity and valued for its worth. Its validity is mutable, it is incomplete, it is never finished, we are always learning.

Knowledge is attained through study. Thus, study is present in matters of our faith. Studying is useful and necessary, as it represents a providential opportunity to progress on the path to knowing God.

When we cultivate our brain or mind, our emotions and feelings open our soul to listen to God's voice with discernment and humility.

The knowledge that is in the brain allows us to approach God as intellect, spirit, love, and mystery. For human beings, God is an object of study, and there is a method of study for reaching His divine nature.

God is revelation and the search for reality: The fear of the Lord is the foundation of wisdom. Knowing the Holy One results in good judgment (Proverbs 9:10).

That thirst and desire within us to know God is not our own, but God's own: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. More than burnt offerings, I want you to know me" (Hosea 6:6).

Consequently, we have come to a greater knowledge of God through His Son: Yes, everything else is worthless when compared to the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have discarded everything else and consider it rubbish in order to gain Christ (Philippians 3:8).

For our part, we do God's will when we are serving him in his work, and we can be sure that we know God if we obey his commands (1 John 2:3). Jesus himself affirms that the kingdom of God is among us: You will never be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'There it is!' because the kingdom of God is already among you (Luke 17:21).

Jesus himself emphasizes that eternal life is knowledge of God: And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent (John 17:3).

Personal experience of God is a source of knowledge: We proclaim to you what has been from the beginning, what we have seen and heard. We have seen it with our own eyes and

touched it with our own hands. He is the Word of life (1 John 1:1).

In short, even love itself is knowledge of God: whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love (1 John 4:8).

Ninth Examination:

How do we come to the knowledge of God?

Option 1 Through prayer and Sunday worship.

Option 2 Through constant reading of the Holy Scriptures.

Option 3 When we are obedient and practice His will.

Option 4 Through study, reason, and experience.

2.9 Character as a fundamental foundation.

Character derives from the Greek word Charakter. It means engraved, sculpted, stamped, marked, carved. It is a unique stigma, proper and distinctive to each person.

Character refers to the unique and particular way of each person; it is what is genuine and authentic in every human being. Character is treasured by every Christian. As the fundamental foundation of the Christian, it is the life of Christ engraved in the believer by the work of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of character is to reveal the person of Christ in all aspects, faculties, and areas of our lives, at all times and in all places, in the same way that the character of Christ is to reproduce God, as Jesus himself said: Those who have seen me have seen the Father (John 14:9).

The character of Christ is the attributes of God, carved in a cornerstone (Matthew 21:42; 1 Peter 2:7; Acts 4:11). A rock carved by the power that obedience to God gave him (Hebrews 5:8-9). The character of God was engraved in Christ:

My Father is working until now, and I am working (John 5:17). Christ bore the seal of the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). However, the Jews sought to kill him. They accused him of saying that he had the character of God: he said that God was his own Father, making himself equal to God (John 5:18).

It seems that the scribes and Pharisees, who searched the Scriptures (John 5:39), had forgotten what their ancestors had written, and so Jesus himself reminded them: Jesus answered, "In your own Scriptures (Psalm 82:6) it is written that God said

to certain leaders of the people: I say that you are gods (John 10:34).

How can we forget Scripture itself when it states: Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pay close attention to what I am about to say. I will make you appear to Pharaoh as God, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet" (Exodus 7:1). Jesus honored God's character in his life: for whatever the Father does, the Son also does likewise (John 5:19). Everything that Christ does, the Christian does, and even greater things (John 14:12). That is why Christ's model is repeated in the apostles: "And I tell you that you are Peter (which means rock), and on this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

Just as the foundation or base is the most important part of any building or infrastructure, so knowledge is a priority for Christians: together we constitute his house, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself (Ephesians 2:20). In the life of faith, we must review the foundation, its depth, and its strength: That process will continue until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Finally, character empowers the Christian (Acts 1:8). That power and authority of the believer in Jesus comes from God Himself.

Tenth Examination:

What is character as the fundamental foundation of the Christian?

Option 1 It is the life of Christ engraved on the believer.

Option 2 It is the mark of various tattoos on the skin.

Option 3 It is the genetic inheritance passed on by parents.

Option 4 It is the teaching received in school.

2.10 Learning to walk by walking.

According to Jesus' purpose and his plan for those who were to join his flock, they had to undergo a complete change in their lives.

Jesus justified his approach by saying that his teaching was new, and therefore his disciples and followers must also be transformed, because new wine needs new wineskins (Mark 2:22).

That is why Jesus said, "So do not be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:7). At its core, his innovative proposal is about the renewal of understanding of new believers (Romans 12:2). Jesus presented himself as a Teacher (John 13:13) using the pedagogical system of learning to walk by walking with his persuasive invitation: "Come, follow me" (Mark 1:17).

Walking and learning with Jesus became a daily and unconditional practice among his followers: As they walked along, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go" (Luke 9:57). The walker received and learned: Jesus taught in towns and villages as he made his way to Jerusalem (Luke 13:22).

Jesus stripped his disciples of the comfortable comforts and apparent security of this world: Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your selfish ways, take up your cross every day, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

The method of learning to walk by walking became so popular and relevant that the early Christians were identified

by the name of the Way: He asked for letters to the synagogues in Damascus to request their cooperation in arresting the followers of the Way who were there (Acts 9:2).

Controversies continued in opposition to the new teachings identified as those of the Way, but some became stubborn, rejected the message, and spoke publicly against the Way (Acts 19:9).

In his moving testimony, Paul says: I persecuted the followers of the Way, harassing some to the point of death, and I arrested both men and women and threw them into prison (Acts 22:4). Thus, the teachings of Jesus were given the name of the Way, and his followers were called "those of the Way." It was a new way of life, a new system of relating to creation, to human beings, and to God. Being born again required a new way of being and living. Jesus is the way (John 14:16). The path that leads to life is narrow, and few find it (Matthew 7:14).

Today, it is clear to us that we continue to learn to walk by walking with Jesus. Therefore, while we can, let us strive to enter and progress on the right path, because Jesus himself announced that many will seek to enter, but will not be able to (Luke 13:24).

Ultimately, our duty is to remain and progress on the path of Jesus, and our mission is to help others do the same:

My beloved brothers, if any of you stray from the truth and another brings you back, you can be sure that whoever brings back the sinner from his evil way will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins (James 5:19-20).

Eleventh Examination:

What is learning to walk by walking?

Option 1 A system for teaching babies to walk.

Option 2 The pedagogical system used by Jesus the Teacher.

Option 3 A very practical phrase of poetic inspiration.

Option 4 The transformation that the disciples had to undergo.

2.11 Exercises that enliven the action of faith.

One day Jesus noticed the conviction of his interlocutor and assured the crowd that followed him: I have not seen such faith in all Israel (Luke 7:9). Jesus made this acknowledgment with amazement when he heard the Roman officer's testimony of faith when he said: Just say the word from where you are and my servant will be healed (Luke 7:7).

Where was the faith of the father of all believers compared to the faith of this Gentile? (Romans 4:11). How great was the faith of the other patriarchs? For we know that through their faith they obtained a good testimony (Hebrews 11). However, the faith of this Roman Gentile was superior. Faith must be exercised, enlivened, and put into action. Let's look at some exercises that enliven the action of faith.

The first exercise of faith is experience. Faith is power. It is the power that comes from experience, habit, and skill. The soldier was familiar with the value of power (Acts 1:8) because of his profession, and he confirmed this: I know this because I am under the authority of my superiors and have authority over my soldiers. I only have to say, 'Go,' and they go; or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my servants, 'Do this,' and they do it. Faith is exercised in everyday life. Whether at home, at work, in conversations, or in the thousands of experiences of the little things in life. There is always an opportunity to practice faith.

The Roman centurion's faith satisfied Jesus. For, in fact, without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). But not just any faith, for what amazed Jesus was faith with excellence and quality. The certainty of the glory and majesty of the

one true God and the recognition of Jesus' authority and power was what dazzled the Master. The Roman soldier was anticipating the same power that Jesus promised us we would experience: but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere (Acts 1:8).

The second exercise of faith is systematic study. Faith is put into action through methods and habits that are consistent with study or teaching, as Paul said: So faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes from listening to the Good News about Christ (Romans 10:17). This indicates that it is vital for new believers to give reason for their faith.

The problem is that among believers there is a lack of assimilation of the contents of the faith. They have heard the message superficially, without vital connection and in a disorderly way, easily forgetting the essence of the faith. To give an accurate response of faith, the message needs to reach, interest, be internalized, and lived. The answer to what one believes and why one believes it comes from studying and understanding the faith in a firm, systematic, and rational way: Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship (Romans 12:1).

The early believers kept a condensed record of the life of Christ (Acts 2:14-37), and that understanding was repeated until the Gospels and other New Testament writings were formed. Therefore, reading, listening, visualizing, researching, comparing, interpreting, and dealing with the things of God on a daily basis lead the believer to know the divine will in his life and enable him to know how to put his faith into action.

The third exercise of faith is to cultivate its attributes. Firm assurance (Hebrews 11:1), unashamed hope (Romans 5:5), and complete conviction (John 4:42 and 2 Timothy 1:12) result from the system and progressive process of faith. For faith is not a magical peculiarity (Acts 8:13, 19) nor a nepotistic property (Acts 19:13-17). Faith is the fruit of the powerful word of the gospel (Romans 1:16). Faith comes from God and from hearing His Word. Faith is had by having it (Romans 14:22). True faith produces fruit: On the other hand, the kind of fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against these things! (Galatians 5:22-23).

The fourth exercise of faith is to contend. Once, while talking to an experienced pastor, I heard him say, "In our church, we are not proselytizers." Unsettled and dissatisfied with the expression I had just heard, I asked him what he meant by it. But his answer was contrary to the following biblical text:

Beloved, while I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). Faith is not a relative belief, nor is it a subjective feeling. Faith is objective and absolute. Faith was given by revelation (Galatians 3:25), which must be preached (Galatians 1:23) and brought to such a level of splendor and magnificence that it produces fruit in the constant increase of the number of believers (Acts 6:7).

We must contend for the faith because we must be militant (2 Timothy 1:13), because many fall away from the faith (Acts 20:29-31), and because Jesus debated with the Jews (Luke 13:17)

and the apostles did the same (Acts 4:5), even at the cost of their lives (Acts 6:7).

Twelfth Examination:

What exercises enliven the action of faith?

Option 1 Subjectivism, emotionalism, and relativism.

Option 2 As the patriarchs did with their testimony.

Option 3 Experience, study, attributes, and contending.

Option 4 Passive attitude and failure to proselytize.

2.12 The usefulness of asking questions.

One of the best pedagogical methods used in teaching has been the Socratic method, described by Plato in "The Socratic Dialogues." The Socratic method is not just a dialectical procedure or a form of debate.

The formula consists of asking, questioning, and challenging until the correct, real, and true answer is found. Human beings who have developed critical thinking and possess the ability to solve problems have done so because they have cultivated the acuity and insight to ask the right and transcendental questions. The ability to ask pertinent questions leads human beings to discover what they have been searching for through their questioning, until they arrive at what they want to know and understand.

When open-ended questions are asked, beginning with what, when, how, where, why, and what for, they spark interest in reflection, dialectics, and debate, allowing for a deeper exploration of the topic at hand. On the other hand, closed-ended questions lead to yes or no answers, and it is not possible to obtain clear, precise answers that are close to the desired purpose. Everything remains at a superficial level of interaction. However, not all open-ended questions produce satisfactory, auspicious, and sufficient answers. That is why we must continue to inquire. Keep asking questions. Expand ideas. Process information. Describe and observe. Understand and provoke more questions. Asking questions is very useful because it leads us to evolve with new discoveries and create innovative inventions. It helps to break paradigms and renew or

abandon beliefs. In the spiritual realm and with reference to the relationship between God and creation, human beings have also asked themselves big and difficult questions.

And it is in this mystical, inner, and sensitive realm that the Socratic method is most useful and effective. One question leads to another, which facilitates another question, and this leads to another question. It is a continuous follow-up. Without losing the thread of the conversation, it advances systematically on the same topic. There are questions about God and about nature. There are questions about the relationship between God and human beings. There are also questions and a need for clarification regarding the historicity and biblical literature, as well as its debatable and controversial content.

Among the many questions are the following: Does God exist? How does God feel about all the injustice in the world? Does God also have needs? Is the Bible the Word of God, or does the Bible speak of the Word of God? Is God male or female? In addition, there are such existential questions as: Are we certain where we come from and where we are going? Can we ask for evidence of everything we think? Can human beings know God, or can we only aspire to know about God? If faith is by God's grace, why does God require our faith? Why does the Bible contain apparent contradictions and different versions of the same events, facts, or characters? Who provoked David to take a census: God (2 Samuel 24:1) or was it Satan (1 Chronicles 21:1) who incited him? Finally, was Zatu's family nine hundred and forty-five (Ezra 2:8) or eight hundred and forty-five (Nehemiah 7:13)?

If Jesus is a descendant of David, from which son of David does Jesus descend: from Solomon (Matthew 1:6) or from

Nathan (Luke 3:31)? Was John the Baptist Elijah who was to come (Matthew 11:14, 17:10-13) or was he not Elijah who was to return (John 1:19-21)? It is said that Peter knew that Jesus was the Christ through revelation from heaven and did not learn it from any human being (Matthew 16:17). On the other hand, in John 1:41, it appears that it was his brother Andrew who told him. In Paul's experience, it is stated that the voice told him what his duty would be (Acts 26:16-18), but in Acts 9:7 and 22:10, the voice commanded him to enter the city of Damascus and there he would be told what to do. However, if a person asks one of the above questions and then proposes another question based on that question and then slips in another question, they come to the conclusion that what appeared to be apparent contradictions in the various and paradoxical biblical accounts are in fact supplementary evidence. As in the case of Jesus' commission to his apostles: Go and make disciples... teaching (Matthew 28:19-20), preaching (Mark 16:15), testifying (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8), and following Jesus (John 21:19, 22). In the end, they are coherent and orderly versions that reveal the authenticity of the sacred events and convey the truthfulness of their content.

They are different narratives that use various literary devices, which complement the seriousness of the event and enrich the events, providing greater security and certainty to discover, believe, transfer, and spread the truth of God.

The same thing happens with Jeremiah 32:4 and Ezekiel 12:13. It is said that Zedekiah, king of Judah, would be taken to Babylon, but in the other passage it is stated that he will not see Babylon. But in Jeremiah 39:6,7 it is reported that he was taken blind and therefore could not see Babylon. The various

versions or apparent discrepancies confirm that the biblical writings were not simple reproductions by automatic copyists or mechanically minded scribes, nor did the sacred authors imitate each other when writing, but rather their interest was to reveal the coherence of the truth.

The compilation of manuscripts and the variants of the writers present neutrality, freedom, and the confirmation of Jeremiah 1:12: You have seen well, says the Lord, for I am watching over my word to fulfill it. In conclusion, it is worthwhile to ask questions. Without fear of losing faith or being criticized for unbelief, everyone can question and challenge themselves, so that they may be transformed by the renewal of their minds (Romans 12:2).

Thirteenth Examination:

What is the purpose of asking questions?

Option 1 It leads to discovery, invention, and abandonment of \ beliefs.

Option 2 Faith is developed further and there is greater belief in evolution.

Option 3 It reveals that the Bible has contradictions.

Option 4 There is a need to quote journalists' professions.

2.13 How to move from imitation to interpretation?

The term imitation comes from the Latin *imitatio*. It means to make something identical to what already exists. To produce an exact copy of the original. To conceive a representation of the real model or figure. The word interpretation, on the other hand, is derived from the Latin *interpretari*: "intermediary." It mediates between two parties, above established laws, with the purpose of discovering new meanings.

Imitation is present in the arts, such as painting, music, acting, and photography. In these disciplines, as in others, certain rules are followed and models are incorporated so that the image is as close as possible to reality.

Through imitation, eras are marked, genres are defined, and styles are outlined; trends are detected and measured; fashions are chosen and set. Currently, professional academic training is riddled with unproductive and repetitive subjects. Due to disproportionate and fraudulent imitation, the curriculum neither provides guidelines for interpretation nor guides students toward the search for new horizons of knowledge.

The futile investment of time and energy, agents and resources, and the unnecessary occupation of space, deactivates students' appetite for accessing the field of surprising discoveries. Teachers and students entertain themselves. Some pretend to teach and others pretend to learn.

Imitation is so commonplace that it winds its way through society as something natural. In many cases, nature itself resorts to imitation to take advantage of its camouflage and enrich the mysterious flow of life.

The reason why imitation is practiced more than training in originality is because innovation is considered to require greater effort and concentration. But imitation also occurs out of fear and survival; out of insecurity about failure and frustration at rejection.

It is clear that emulation stems from tradition, education, culture, and spiritual and religious beliefs. Superstition and fetishism thrive on imitation.

However, although imitation may seem elementary, it is not easy, and of course, its results come from prodigious minds that use intelligence, observation skills, and sharpness in admiration to make the performance of their craft in reproducing plagiarism lucrative. Although to a certain extent it is profitable to reproduce and, with ingenious versatility, to display and offer what one wants to represent, Paul's interest is characterized by teaching and admonishing us to avoid imitation, in exchange for learning to develop the skill of discerning God's will:

Do not imitate the behaviors and customs of this world, but rather let God transform you into new people by changing your way of thinking. Then you will learn to know (discern) God's will for you, which is good, pleasing, and perfect (Romans 12:2).

To discern is to perceive and declare the difference between God's will and the traditional customs acquired by culture, society, and beliefs. Therefore, it is necessary to move from imitation to interpretation. The tool of discernment is interpretation.

Jesus himself recommends interpretation: Fools. You know how to interpret the signs of the weather on earth and in

the heavens, but you do not know how to interpret the present times (Luke 12:56). It is an invitation to remove the unnecessary and restore the essential, so that we can deepen the understandable and close dialogue within the church and with the rest of humanity.

Many things are changing in the church. Biblical versions, the words in prayers and sermons, and forms and customs of worship differ according to the era, geographical area, and cultural expression. That is why Jesus invites us to discern events with a critical sense of history.

So the church must interpret and adapt to the signs of the times, changing the means of transmitting the gospel and the forms of the biblical message, but not the content. So how do we move from imitation to interpretation? The shift occurs when we change our way of thinking (Romans 12:2).

God changes the way we think by his grace, and human beings can also renew it when they choose to make their own decisions. We must believe that everything depends on God, but we must do things with all our human effort.

To interpret is to understand, to know, to evolve, to create, to translate, and to adapt what already exists to new circumstances, inventions, and productions with new forms of expression. Jesus the Teacher came to interpret what had been said in previous times: "You have heard that it was said to the ancients... but I say to you" (Matthew 5:21). In a wise clarification, the Lord affirms that he did not come to take away or abolish anything: Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17).

The expression "to fulfill" means that Jesus is interpreting the will of God. His purpose is to establish the kingdom of heaven among us, when from then on, Jesus began to preach: Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the kingdom of heaven is near (Matthew 4:17).

The apostle Paul also exercised and cultivated interpretation:

And indeed, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things and consider them rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith (Philippians 3:8-9).

To interpret is to make the complicated simple and simplify the complicated. It is to understand and give rational meaning to written accounts, signs, and symbols, updating them for the present day. God himself had given the law through Moses, and since it was not enough for human beings to attain salvation, he later provided grace and revealed the truth: For the law was given through Moses, but God's inexhaustible love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

This change or advance in the plan of salvation occurs through discernment made possible by interpretation. For what was once is sometimes incomprehensible and difficult to fulfill: they crush people under the weight of unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to lighten the load (Matthew 23:4).

With the new interpretation, Jesus' proposal is essential, vital, and refreshing. His teaching is clear and appealing:

Come to me, all you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, for I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear and the burden I give you is light (Matthew 11:28).

Through interpretation, we know how to give to God what belongs to God and to human beings what belongs to them: Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God (Matthew 22:21). The Master encourages us to have authority in interpretation: Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? (Luke 12:57). Why turn to other authorities (Luke 12:58-59)?

As we have discovered so far, God Himself discerned and also interpreted. Christ did the same. Now, we must follow the same criteria of interpretation. Through interpretation, we acquire the ability to know and understand how things can be done better. We understand why we must act to change situations. And especially, we decide to innovate and evolve in our lives, in the quest to live more and better.

Finally, history is the record of human interpretations, their acceptance, their transformation into ideals, and their timely replacement by the imposition of new purposes, approaches, and beliefs.

Let us not imitate. Let us interpret the signs and indications of the times, so that we may discover new means of expression and renewed instruments to achieve a better vision and greater vigor in the ministry of the church.

Fourteenth Examination:

How can we move from imitation to interpretation?

Option 1 By transforming ideas into new concepts.

Option 2 Reproducing the original.

Option 3 When imitation is set aside.

Option 4 Changing the way of thinking.

3. PARENESIS:

From the Greek παραίνεσις: paraínesis, meaning exhortation, and παραινέω: parainéō, translated as exhort. Parénesis is the meaning contained in worship, both in prayer and in praise and preaching.

In the same way that today we talk about the attention that should be paid to emotional health and the interest that emotional intelligence has aroused, so too do we discuss parenesis. Parenesis is the expression of love in the simplest details of daily life. Parénesis is not just moralizing, but making our life in Christ real, which goes beyond rules or norms. Parénesis is living in Christ, it is adopting the lifestyle of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, parenesis addresses the emotional area of a congregation's ministry. For healthy and praiseworthy worship correctly activates the emotional, sensitive, and affective parts of the congregation: "Come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us joyfully acclaim the Rock of our salvation" (Psalm 95:1).

The joy and gladness of worship goes beyond the act of celebration; it continues over time for the congregation members as they go about their daily lives: "After worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were

continually in the temple praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:52-53).

Parenesis is the talent of a congregation. Of course, it is not the place, nor the denomination, nor the religion that makes worship worthy of recognition and appreciation of the divinity and holiness of God, but rather the attitude of those who congregate.

Everything depends on the attitude that the worshipper brings to the celebration, the disposition during the commemoration, and the fervor with which they leave the worship service, so that the revival is transmitted to those who did not attend the celebration of faith of those who were united in one time and one space.

The parenesis is inspiration and sincere action from the spirit of the worshipers: "But the time is coming, and has already come, when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. The Father seeks such people to worship him. For God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24).

Many confuse parenesis with the religious worship of Christians or with the prayer that all people offer. Parenesis is the prayer, praise, and worship of believers, not of unbelievers. Worship is not for unbelievers. Worship is the living testimony of believers. Therefore, in worship, the preacher should deal with people who have already been evangelized and taught the Word.

Parenesis is not simply the exhortation of a preacher. Parenesis is a proper relationship with God that occupies the entire life of the believer and remains active at all times, as it did for Paul, the other apostles, and the early Christians.

In Acts 27:10-11, Paul uses parenesis to comfort and warn: "He said, 'Men, I can see that there will be trouble ahead if we continue on this course—shipwreck, loss of cargo, and danger to our lives.' But the officer in charge of the prisoners paid more attention to the captain and the owner of the ship than to Paul."

Now, Paul uses parenesis to exhort, encourage, and assert his authority: "Finally, Paul called the crew together and said, 'Men, you should have listened to me at the beginning and not left Crete. Then you would have avoided all this damage and loss. But take heart! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will sink" (Acts 27:22).

From the beginning, Jesus' public ministry was announced in parenesis: "John used many similar warnings when he announced the Good News to the people" (Luke 3:18).

Jesus used the same parenetic approach throughout his ministry: "Jesus went through all the towns and villages of that region, teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the Good News about the kingdom; and he healed every kind of disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them" (Matthew 9:35-36). For his part, Paul became the prototype of parenetic language: "Paul called the believers together and encouraged them. While he was there, he strengthened the believers in every town he passed through. Then he went down to Greece" (Acts 20:1-2).

Paul insists to his disciples that they must use parenetic means so that Christ's work does not stop: "You must teach these things and encourage believers to do them. You have the authority to correct them when necessary, so do not allow anyone to ignore what you say" (Titus 2:15).

It was so common to use the resources of parenesis that the leaders of the synagogues urged Paul and Barnabas to use it: "After the customary readings from the books of Moses and the prophets, those in charge of the service sent them the following message: Brothers, if you have any words of encouragement for the people, please go ahead and say them" (Acts 13:14-15).

Today, the complete gospel must be presented in the same way as John the Baptist, Jesus, his apostles, and the early Christians did, who followed the same model of continuity using: Kerygma, Didascalia, and Parenesis. When the preacher speaks in parenesis, he addresses those who have already received the kerygma. Through parenesis, the moral behavior of the group or of the people who have changed their attitude is guided, without emphasizing intellectual matters or rational knowledge, which are proper to didascalia.

For the words of the preacher are expressions of the heart that has had a profound experience of the greatness and dignity of God, directed toward other loving hearts that savor, admire, and feel what the preacher is testifying to as worship. The one who preaches the Word seeks to move, stimulate, and strengthen the will, feelings, and hearts of the believers present. He touches the inner disposition of the converted, who feel exhorted, stimulated, and admonished to continue on the path of holiness.

Parénesis leads those who already have saving faith from regular behavior to excellent behavior, from good to better, which is why they are exhorted: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:25). Believers need to continue

listening insistently and earnestly to the good news of salvation, to prevent the tendency toward unbelief from discouraging them. Paul warned: "The problem is in me, because I am too human, a slave to sin... I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate" (Romans 7:14-15). In this regard, Jesus said things like, "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11), "Now go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37). He also challenged his adversaries: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? (Luke 5:23).

Parenesis must be exercised by people with authority. Jesus could do everything because he had authority over people (Mark 1:22) and over nature itself (Matthew 8:27).

Thus, in addition to exhorting the heart, the will, the attitude, and the inner disposition of believers, the preacher will resort to vivid imagery, testimony, and expressiveness.

The preacher, with all his authority, through the consistency of his life and his conviction, must recount the wonders, signs, and miracles with prestige, esteem, and admiration before the audience, so that the results will be positive:

"The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers often met together in the temple, in the area known as Solomon's Portico" (Acts 5:12).

In the same way, Jesus used popular sayings, parables, fables, and stories. John the Baptist's preaching was emotional: "He preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mark 1:5).

Jesus began his preaching with the same purpose as John: "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17). For his part, Paul's Christian

life began with his conversion, and he continued to apply the same formula for the rest of his life:

"You must completely change your way of thinking and be truly honest and holy, as befits people whom God has recreated to be like him" (Ephesians 4:23-24). "Obey the Spirit of God" (Galatians 5:16). "Based on the privilege and authority that God has given me, I warn each one of you" (Romans 12:3). After his doctrinal exposition in his letters, Paul ends with parenesis, as he did in the following texts: Romans 12-15; Galatians 5-6; Ephesians 4-6.

Here begins a series of 13 lessons on the subject of worship or parenesis, after the exam.

First Examination: What is Parenesis?

Option 1 is the religious worship of all Christians.

Option 2 is the prayer offered by all people who gather together.

Option 3 is the prayer, praise, and worship of believers.

Option 4 is the exhortation made by a preacher to the people.

3.1 Worship is the public worship of the Church.

Worship is the public prayer and praise of the congregation. It is different from the private act of faith of believers, which was also recommended and practiced by Jesus: "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6).

It is about intimacy alone with God and the will striven for through prayer. Most of the time, we close the door to sleep. Here, it is to pray, as the Master himself often practiced: "The next morning, before dawn, Jesus got up and went to a secluded place to pray" (Mark 1:35).

The reward of his prayer through signs, miracles, and wonders was the result of his friendship with God. For whenever he finished ministering, he returned to solitude in prayer: "After saying goodbye to the people, he went up into the hills to pray alone" (Mark 6:46).

Jesus had a habit of closing the door, disciplining his mind, and controlling his emotions through his life of prayer: "So Jesus often went away to the desert to pray" (Luke 5:16). He continued this practice until the end of his mission: "Then Jesus went with them to the garden called Gethsemane and said, 'Sit here while I go over there to pray'" (Matthew 26:36). But in addition to intimate, personal, and solitary prayer, the disciples also learned from Jesus how to pray in public, which we call worship.

Worship is the public worship of the church because it is the outward, tangible, and visible form of prayer and praise,

since the beginning of Christianity: "All the time praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And every day the Lord added to that Christian community those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). Public worship is as necessary and useful to the spiritual life as private prayer because it is for witness (Matthew 24:14). Public manifestation is due to the fact that the church is a visible body.

As the body of Christ, the life of the church should be clear, evident, and manifest to the whole world. Public worship is the extension of Christ's humanity in the present day for the world: "And the church is the body of Christ; he completes and fills it, and he is also the one who gives fullness to all things everywhere with his presence" (Ephesians 1:23). Public worship is an act that is done in every place and at all times. Since it is an expressive moment, unique and representative of the members of the church, it is expected that every believer will have a sense of belonging, transparency, and responsibility, always attending the worship services of their church: "All of you together are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of that body" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Because worship is essential, there is always a reason to celebrate. Congregants form a celebrant assembly with ceremonial actions and mandatory, systematic solemnities. Acts of worship are performed in a festive, spontaneous, but not improvised atmosphere. There is intentional, methodical, and purposeful leadership training among church members: "They have the responsibility to prepare God's people to do God's work and build up the church, that is, the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). This building up of the church is accomplished through the efforts and struggles of the very members

who have been elevated to the dignity of being conformed to Christ: "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, because I share in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, that is, the church" (Colossians 1:24).

The public worship of the church is the living, visible, and effective presence of the believing people, united and organized. The signs and symbols used in worship present Christ, who produces the growth of the church (Acts 2:47), while believers praise God, rejoicing with the people: "For Christ holds the whole body together with joints and ligaments, which grow as God nourishes it" (Colossians 2:19).

As a result of the collective participation of the congregation, the church grows, is strengthened, and is encouraged to express its witness: "The apostles gave powerful testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all" (Acts 4:33).

Therefore, the church worships unanimously (Acts 1:15), recites its confession of faith (Romans 10:9-10), learns the Scriptures (Romans 15:4), teaches its doctrine (2 Timothy 3:15), and perseveres in prayer and supplication (Ephesians 6:18). Although worship has often been emboldened by protocol and paraphernalia, it is constantly returning to simplifying worship, pluralizing vestments, and maintaining sobriety, aware that divine worship must be updated. Therefore, the order of public worship is dynamic, free, participatory, contemporary, and popular. It is a propitious time for constant renewal, which is why it is ideal for presenting those who have been evangelized and taught.

It is in public worship that new believers join in prayer and praise, publicly confess their faith, and as good workers

have nothing to be ashamed of (2 Timothy 1:8), but begin to perform signs and wonders, like the early Christians: "The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers often met together in the temple, in the area known as Solomon's Portico, but no one else dared to join them, even though all the people held them in high esteem. Nevertheless, more and more people—crowds of men and women—believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 5:12-14). Therefore, the quality and frequency of the church's public worship is the thermostat that signals and regulates the healthy numerical and spiritual growth of a congregation.

Second Examination:

Why is the church's public worship important?

Option 1 Because it is the thermostat that regulates growth.

Option 2 Because it is the extension of Christ's humanity.

Option 3 Because it is the static protocol of sacred rites.

Option 4 Because it is the time to introduce new believers.

3.2 Worship is the spiritual worship of the Church.

Because God is the center of our worship, in accordance with his divine essence, our public worship is spiritual: "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Worship is for God. It is not for human satisfaction. Worship is to please God, not to satisfy human whims. We were created in the image and likeness of God. Not the other way around. It was not God who was created in our image. However, even today, human beings continue to fall into the temptation of representing God, and because of their stubbornness, they shape Him according to their corporate imagination, of flesh and blood.

From the beginning, humanity has floated in the impressive weakness of idolatry, losing exclusive loyalty to the Spirit of God and His divine spiritual will. While God was decreeing his law: "You shall not make for yourself any kind of idol or image of anything in heaven, on earth, or in the sea" (Exodus 20:1), the people were enacting the opposite: "Come, make us gods who can guide us" (Exodus 32:1).

And so they continued to do for the rest of their days. Wrongly. Their worship was not spiritual, because they materialized gods and embodied praise. Nor was their worship true, because their worship was symbolic (Hebrews 10:1), unreal and false: "There are those who squander their silver and gold and hire a craftsman to make them a god. Then they bow down and worship it!" (Isaiah 46:6)

Because God is spirit, the interaction between God and humanity is spiritual, defined, discerning, and unambiguous:

"But if you refuse to serve the Lord, choose today whom you will serve. Will you choose the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will you prefer the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

However, the rebellious attitude of the people led the prophet to spare no effort in denouncing their fatal aberration: "Worshiping foreign gods consumes their strength" (Hosea 7:9). For their lustful and lascivious worship will be fruitless, its implications steeped in mere emotionalism, resulting in frustration, bitterness, and despair: "What sorrow awaits you who say to wooden idols, 'Awake and save us! To mute images of stone, you say, 'Arise and teach us! Can an idol tell you what to do? Even if they are covered with gold and silver, inside they have no life" (Habakkuk 2:19).

For the true Christian, worship is spiritual in nature, because of the spiritual nature of God: "You are like living stones, being built into a spiritual house. In this way, you become a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices that God accepts through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

And this spiritual worship is manifested in a rational service of a mind transformed by the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:1-2). Now we are the temple, and the Spirit of God, who is in us (Ephesians 2:22), is the worshipper.

Worship is the spiritual service of the church, because it is the Holy Spirit who worships in us: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). Our worship does not come from our needs or our gratitude, but because the Holy Spirit intercedes and groans within us (Romans 8:26-27), produces our prayer (1

Corinthians 12:3), and shows us to whom we should direct our worship (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:16) in the manner of Jesus (Mark 14:16). Spiritual worship is the melody that the Holy Spirit composes in our hearts and that must be expressed in unison with like-minded hearts: "Encourage one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

Since worship is spiritual, it is free from time and space. At all times and in all places, we must be in constant worship: "Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name" (Hebrews 13:15). It is time for us to return to secure, unaltered, spiritual worship, as the early Christians did: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

Third Examination:

Why is worship the spiritual service of the church?

Option 1 Because it is the Holy Spirit who worships in us.

Option 2 Because rituals and sacrifices are performed that please God.

Option 3 Because God is Spirit and desires spiritual worship.

Option 4 Because we gather in public places for worship.

3.3 Worship is the ongoing ministry of the Church.

Worship is not isolated services or formal ceremonies of a group of believers. It is not even just Sunday congregational services or devotionals in a church. It is much more than that.

The exercise of worship is not limited to a community service of prayer and praise. To worship is to enter into the perpetual time of the spiritual experience of returning to live in the territory destined by God for humanity: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15).

Worship is remaining in God's right environment. It is returning to the original divine plan. It is always being led by God and in fraternal union with one another (Colossians 3:12-15). It was God who conceived the place, planted a garden, and there released, placed, and settled humanity.

Therefore, it is God Himself who creates the place of worship in the mind and heart of human beings. Worship is in the heart of humanity. The heart never stops or pauses. It is always in action. Spiritually, worship is the recovery of paradise lost:

"May the message of Christ, with all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel one another with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with a grateful heart. And whatever you do or say, do it as representatives of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 2:16-17).

To worship is to return completely to paradise and breathe in the atmosphere created by God. It is to live and remain forever in the place that Jesus promised to the condemned man

while they were hanging on the cross: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

Worship brings back the original paradise, where the deep relationship and sharing of life with God is carried out in a peaceful and happy manner, in perfect mastery and harmony. That is why worship must be a permanent service of the church, and the place of worship must be the humanity of believers in Christ.

Worship takes place in paradise, and paradise is the kingdom of God that is among believers (Luke 17:21). We do not have to wait until we are dead to enjoy paradise. From here, in this life, through worship, we enjoy the first fruits of the final paradise, as the apostle Paul experienced: "Fourteen years ago I was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in my body or out of my body, I do not know; only God knows. It is true, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body; but I do know that I was taken to paradise and heard things so incredible that they cannot be expressed in words, things that no human being is allowed to tell" (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

True and genuine worship is a permanent service, where the invisible divine dimensions are brought into contact and communion with the visible ones (Colossians 1:19-20). Worship unites heaven and earth. Worship cannot be an intermittent or discontinuous act. Worship is a constant flow of grace, love, praise, and blessings, through perpetual contact between the generator, who is God, and the generated, who is humanity.

Worship is an attitude of our life perpetually moved by the influence of the Holy Spirit, who gives us life and makes

our present presence in heaven real while we live on earth: "For he raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6).

Worship is a foreshadowing of eternal heavenly worship. Worship is permanent because it is similar to the fervor of worshipers in heaven: "That is why they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will shelter them" (Revelation 7:15).

Worship is a state of the soul or spirit, without place or time, without past or future. It is heaven, it is paradise. It is being with God: "Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, I beg you to surrender your bodies to God for all that he has done for you. Let it be a living and holy sacrifice, the kind of sacrifice that pleases him. That is the true way to worship him" (Romans 12:1). Worship is life itself in paradise. It is our home, it is the norm, where we should live in God's presence. That is why our body is a divine temple: "What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people'" (1 Corinthians 6:16).

Worship goes where our body goes. This is understandable because God told Joshua that He would be with him wherever he went (Joshua 1:9). Time ceases to exist in worship and becomes a dynamic movement, always prosperous and progressive: "We are carefully joined together in him and are forming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him, you Gentiles are also made part of that dwelling place where God lives by his Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22). How can there be time in worship if we are the temple and the one who produces worship is

always present? The Holy Spirit is the worshipper in us. That is why worship is a permanent service: "Do you not realize that all of you together are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Permanent worship is a daily service for believers, because God's presence is stable and always present. There is no past or future. It is an eternal present, but spiraling upward, seeking quality and excellence: "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them" (Revelation 21:3-5).

Fourth Examination:

Why is worship the permanent service of the church?

Option 1 Because we are temples, and worship is always within us.

Option 2 Because we must be in the temple night and day worshipping.

Option 3 Because Jesus Christ asked us to always be watchful.

Option 4 Because music and prayers are necessary for worship.

3.4 Prayer is the fluid that connects us to God.

To pray is to dialogue with God. It is a permanent and ever-new conversation that nourishes the relationship between God and the believer. Through prayer, communication between human beings and God takes place.

"And we are sure that he hears us whenever we ask him for something that pleases him; and since we know that he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for" (1 John 5:14-15).

The fluid that conducts the interrelationship between humanity and divinity is prayer. Just as air and water are essential fluids for life, so prayer is the fluid necessary for the spiritual life of human beings.

Without water and air, there is no life. Without prayer, there is no nourishment for the spirit, as Jesus explained: "But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14). And he reiterated to the crowd: "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me" (John 7:37).

Prayer is a repeated and permanent encounter between the believer and the source of living water, which is Jesus Christ. When Jesus declares, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you" (John 4:26), it is because there has already been an intense dialogue. Amid concerns, agitation, questions, and answers, Jesus reveals himself and the speaker discovers the mysterious message of the "water of life" (John 4:11) in worship (John 4:21-24).

The fruits of prayer do not remain only in the interpersonal dialogue between God and the believer, but transcend their

environment. As happened with the impactful effect of the Samaritan woman: "And they said to the woman, 'We no longer believe just because of your word, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world, the Christ'" (John 4:42).

Prayer first disposes the heart to true worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) and then influences the minds and hearts of those within reach of divine radiation, turning them also into worshipers: "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in him because of the word of the woman who testified, saying, 'He told me everything I have done. Then the Samaritans came to him and begged him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of the word of Jesus'" (John 4:39-41).

Prayer is as fluid as air. While at the foot of the mountain, it is easier to breathe, although it is less pure than the air in the high mountain ranges, which is cleaner but more difficult to breathe. Therefore, prayer is arid for those who have no experience, and for those who have not practiced the habit of breathing at the summit, it is discouraging. However, it is at the summit of the mountain where the true worshipper must be located (John 4:23-24).

The word "spirit" translates the Greek "*πνευμα*" (pneuma) and the Hebrew "ruach." Prayer is entering into the dimension of the Spirit, who has been present since the beginning of creation: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Elijah was able to discern God's will, not when he was in the turbulence and agitation of his concerns, but when he managed to enter into

prayer as peaceful as the air: "After the fire there was a gentle breeze. When Elijah felt it, he covered his face with his cloak, went out, and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" (1 Kings 19:12-13). While the Jews were celebrating the feast of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples persevered in the flow of prayer, and the Spirit manifested itself in the form of air: "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2, 4).

Prayer is like the air that passes through the lungs, reaches the blood, and purifies it, giving life to the bodily nature of our existence. In addition to water and air, there is light. Another very important fluid in human life. Light is the luminous fluid that originates from a source and is transferred to a perceiver who absorbs and reveals its flashes.

Prayer is the light that comes from God, because God is light (1 John 1:5). We move in His spiritual clarity to receive His blessings as His children: "God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, which prompts us to cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Galatians 4:6). It was through that same flow of light that Jesus cried out, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. I ask you to take this cup of suffering away from me. However, I want your will to be done, not mine" (Mark 14:36). And we continue to call God, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).

From God flows light; from God flows prayer. With Christ came light (John 1:5), with Christ we are light (Matthew 5:14), because Jesus himself was light. Whoever remains in prayer remains illuminated: "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you will not have to walk in darkness because you will

have the light that leads to life" (John 8:12). Divine light flows in words. Prayer is talking to God, because God is Word. The flow of prayer is manifested in verbal expressions, because its nature is Word: "The Word gave life to all creation, and its life brought light to all" (John 1:4).

Prayer is the spiritual electrical current from which light flows to an entire city. The person who prays, the group that prays, the church that prays, becomes a beacon of light for their surroundings: "The city does not need the sun or the moon, because the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light" (Revelation 21:23). Prayer is the light of cities, fields, businesses, families, individuals, and the whole world:

"There will be no night there—no need for the light of lamps or the sun—because the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). Just as sound travels through the fluid of air, so the voice of God travels through the fluid of prayer. Just as waves travel through the fluid of water, so God's revelations travel through the fluid of prayer. The function of prayer is to serve as a medium for renewal and change in people's lives, and as a means of transporting God's blessings. There are many more examples of fluids that can be compared to prayer, which connects us to God. The oil of anointing (James 5:14), the blood of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44), tears for restoration (Jeremiah 9:1; John 11:35; Luke 19:41), the saliva of healing (Mark 8:23; John 9:6).

In conclusion, prayer is the fluid that keeps us in God's grace. Prayer is the fluid that exercises quality control in our relationship with God. It is a catalyst that intervenes in the reception of divine blessings. It is the thermostat that regulates the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth Examination:

Why is prayer the fluid that connects us to God?

Option 1 Because we ask for everything in Jesus' name.

Option 2 Because it is the only means that offers us God's grace.

*Option 3 Because it is a thermometer that measures God's
presence.*

*Option 4 Because it is a conduit that connects humanity with
God.*

3.5 Singing is the melody that aligns us with God.

To sing is to vibrate in God's presence. If praying is dialoguing with God, singing is the melody that keeps us in tune with God and in divine verbal harmony. Jesus' earthly life from beginning to end was marked by musicality. His environment was rooted in the melodious habits of his culture and the spiritual meaning of singing.

Among the many aspects related to music in Jesus' life, the following moments stand out: Mary, the mother of Jesus, expresses her thoughts by singing (Luke 1:45-55). The birth of Jesus was announced with angelic voices (Luke 2:14). The presentation in the temple was accompanied by hymns of praise (Luke 2:22-38). And at the end of his life, it was recorded that Jesus sang (Mark 14:26).

That same musical nuance sustained the faithful apostles, even in the most crucial moments of their lives. Paul and Silas remained on the divine frequency in times of trouble: "Around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening" (Acts 16:25). Could it be some of the songs they had been singing for many years? For example: "Praise the Lord! Let everything I am praise the Lord. I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God with my last breath" (Psalm 146:1-2).

If we think about it, every day we are all subject to the frequencies that surround us. We emit oscillations, vibrations, or waves in the various circumstances of our lives. That is why James advises: "Is anyone among you going through hardship? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing praises" (James

5:13). Singing is the melody that aligns us with God because it moves and directs the soul and focuses it on God. It is the inspiring range of the colorful fan of heavenly and paradisiacal arpeggios: "Let the righteous rejoice in the Lord; let the upright praise him. Praise the Lord with the lyre; make music to him on the ten-stringed harp. Sing to him a new song of praise" (Psalm 33:1-3). Singing is the flavor that brings joy to our relationship with God. When we pray through singing, boundaries disappear because of the universal language of musical expression: "Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and advise one another with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God with a grateful heart" (Colossians 3:16). Singing is the voice that, as it leaves the human body through the vocal apparatus, integrates words into the musical line of communication with God. Music is the spiritual food that gives eternal peace and inner harmony. In singing, prayer passes through various levels of spectra, frequencies, resonances, vibrations, and harmonic analysis.

How, then, can we not accept the psalmist's invitation? "Sing joyfully to God, inhabitants of the whole earth" (Psalm 100:1). Just as air is the energy of the body, singing is the oxygen of the spirit. Once again, air, which represents the divine breath, intervenes in singing. The air that circulates through the respiratory system causes the vocal cords to vibrate in the spectrum of divine resonances.

Now we can understand the prophet when he says: "For the Lord your God dwells in your midst. He is a mighty savior. He will delight in you with joy. With his love he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with songs of joy" (Zephaniah 3:17). Creation was made to praise God. Therefore, oral

intelligibility, the presence of harmonics, the energy of the voice, harmonic timbre, breath duration, natural acoustic spectrum, and frequency components are instruments created by God for His worship.

Hence, speaking is singing. Every language has sonority. The same is true in prayer; its pronunciation has melody: "And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are your ways, King of the saints" (Revelation 15:3). The most characteristic feature of a human being is their accent when they speak. It is unique. It belongs to them. It is inherited. It is a habit that they always carry with them, no matter where they go, their accent goes with them. Prayer is the constant musical habit that turns life into worship: "singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to one another, and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19).

Prayer sung in worship is the similar pronunciation of a group of individuals who speak with the same intonation and sonority. Songs reflect many peculiarities and experiences inherent in the personality of a group. Hence, each church, spiritual movement, congregation, or era has its own musical expression. Singing provides security and sometimes causes uncertainty. This depends on the circle in which the individual finds themselves. If they are with like-minded people, they feel comfortable. Music is a resource for making oneself understood. But there can be frustration, poor performance in worship, and poor results in ministry when there is no similarity in their praise. It is precisely that it is not the words that convey the message, but the tone of their expressions. Singing gives

meaning, declares, and understands what one wants to communicate. A message is better interpreted with musicality. In singing, feelings blossom, verses spring forth, reflections emerge, memories are pardoned, words take on meaning, the soul is immersed in the depths of its mysterious being, and life rises to the highest of spiritual aspirations.

When we sing, the voice embraces time and transforms darkness into light, cold into warmth, and indifference into love. Singing is definitely the melody that aligns us with God. That is why the psalmist recommends: "Praise the Lord! For he heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield; I trust in him with all my heart. He gives me his help, and my heart is filled with joy; I burst into songs of thanksgiving" (Psalm 28:6-7).

Sixth Examination:

Why is singing the melody that aligns us with God?

Option 1 Because when we sing, verses and feelings blossom.

Option 2 Because it is a resource for communicating with others.

*Option 3 Because it moves and directs the soul and focuses it on
God.*

Option 4 Because music is to the spirit as air is to the body.

3.6 Preaching is making public what God says in secret.

In general, preaching is delivering a sermon on a topic. For some, it is speaking in defense of ideas or spreading doctrines. For others, it is persuasively addressing an audience, giving advice, or rebuking the congregation. Often, preaching focuses on responding to the concerns that the church is facing. Biblical passages are adapted and technical resources are used to solve the problems of the congregation.

There are churches where preaching is prefabricated in a cycle calendar for up to three years, which are repeated consecutively for life. The preacher already knows what he will be talking about in three, five, ten years, and beyond. It is evident that many preachers are very concerned with preaching techniques and the fundamental components of a good exposition of a topic or biblical text.

There are numerous and varied courses in homiletics. There are those who claim to have discovered and created the most advanced, infallible, and effective technology for preaching the Word of God. There are methodical classes that teach how to preach. These methodologies are presented by experts in the field, who find students interested and willing to practice these skills.

However, when we turn to the teaching and academy of Jesus, the Master of masters, we find a divergence from the proposals of those who believe themselves to be experts in the science of preaching. Jesus is the Master of preaching par excellence. Not only did he give instructions on how and what to preach (Luke 10:1-20), but he himself exercised the office, going

everywhere proclaiming his message: "Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (Matthew 9:35). Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom because of the uncertain conditions in which the people lived. The crowds had no one to announce and proclaim a message of hope to them, to bring them out of their confusion:

"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were helpless and scattered like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). Faced with such calamity and misfortune, Jesus moved his disciples to take action. He makes a diagnosis of the reality. He focuses on the needs of the people and points out the way to solve the problem: "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field'" (Matthew 9:37-38). Here we understand that preachers are called by divine vocation to share what they have seen their Master do, feel, and say. It is about imitating the Master. The purpose is to possess the same deep feeling and intimate relationship that God had with Jesus: "Long ago, God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now, in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-3).

What other message can a preacher give, if not the content of the person of Jesus? How should one preach and what should one preach, if not by following the instructions of the Master of preaching himself? "Do not worry about how or what you will speak, for at that time you will be given what you are

to say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you" (Matthew 10:19-20).

In the same context of the instructions that Jesus gives to his disciples, he affirms that preaching is making public what he has told them in secret. Furthermore, Jesus says that it must be done without fear, because everything that has happened and been said is destined to be known: "So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in your ear, proclaim from the rooftops" (Matthew 10:26-27).

Jesus' message was articulated to the ears of his disciples. It was a message that the Father had entrusted to Jesus. The Master of Galilee was only revealing himself to his unconditional and inseparable friends: "You are now my friends, because I have told you everything the Father told me" (John 15:15).

The preacher is close to Jesus. It should be noted that God speaks to individuals in particular. But it should also be clarified that when a preacher speaks, it is because he has heard God in his heart. Jesus himself affirmed that he did not speak on his own behalf. He said what his Father had commissioned him to say. He did not overstep his bounds: "They asked him, 'Who are you? I am what I have always said I am. I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I will not do so. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful'" (John 8:25-26).

Preaching is speaking what God says in secret, because that is the usual way God makes himself known. Preaching is making known what God says in intimacy. God communicates

to the right people what humanity needs to know: "Behold, you love truth in the inward being, and in secret you have made me understand wisdom" (Psalm 51:6). This intimacy with God does not refer to moments of prayer, devotional, or worship. It is a permanent state of being in the company of God, who is known for his faithfulness and loyalty: "For who has stood in the council of God, that he should see and hear his words? Who has attended to his word and heard it?" (Jeremiah 23:18)

In the secret place of God means in the presence of the Lord to hear what He really says: "But if they had stood in my secret place, they would have heard my words and turned my people from their evil ways and from the evil of their deeds" (Jeremiah 23:22).

The preacher must remain in God's secret place. That is, on his frequency, in tune, listening to the divine message. The preacher, even though he always has a message, faces the problem that it is not always from God.

Therefore, the preacher must follow the model of the great listeners of God's Word, as we find in the Bible: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10). Mary invites us to do whatever Jesus says (John 2:5). Likewise, she submitted herself to the Word: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). There is effective trust: "But say the word, and my servant will be healed" (Luke 7:7).

Communication is mutual and involves constant interaction between God and the preacher. God listens to the preacher: "For God says, 'At the right time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you. Indeed, the right time is now; today is the day of salvation'" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The preacher listens to God: "Then I heard a loud voice in heaven" (Revelation 12:10). The relationship between the source of the message and the sender of the message is intimately spiritual. The prophets were messengers inspired by the strength and power of the Spirit: "The prophets spoke on behalf of God, driven by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

The preacher, like the prophet, is a messenger who listens to and interprets the Holy Spirit: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7).

Therefore, the preacher speaks when the Spirit has flowed and made his message known to him. The preacher knows how to wait and knows when he is active in the spiritual presence: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

The preacher understands very well the responsibility of preparing the church. The preacher knows that the building up of the body of Christ is a continuous process of assiduous and constant preaching until the goal set by Jesus Christ is reached: "That process will continue until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

And we know that Christ's standard is perfection (Matthew 5:48). Through the words spoken by the preacher, the church is formed, in the image of Christ, into a single flock at the voice of his preaching: "Once he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of the sheep, and they follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:4). Just as Jesus Christ was entrusted with the salvation of humanity, in the same sense the word was entrusted to preachers: "Son of man, I have made you a

watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear the word from my mouth and give them warning from me" (Ezekiel 3:17).

Preaching is not limited to one person or one era. Throughout history, there has been a constant succession of preachers who follow the same procedure as the first disciples: "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

Therefore, in order to preach what God says in secret, the preacher must be a good listener. Listening is a virtue that is acquired by hearing divine messages. Anything else would simply be discordant voices. Divine language is what a preacher hears: "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). When a preacher is running out of things to say, he groans and asks God to teach him what to say (James 1:5). Surely he will be given and revealed abundant messages: "Call to me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and hidden things that you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3).

Just as Jesus listened to his Father, so preachers listen to Jesus. Moreover, those who proclaim the word are configured with Christ: "For who among men knows the thoughts of the Lord? Who knows enough to teach him? But we understand these things because we have the mind of Christ" (1 Corinthians 2:16). So far, we have shown that human techniques that aspire to train preachers in the art of communicating the word are diminished when God gives the message and appoints the messengers in his own way:

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak things of the world to shame the

strong" (1 Corinthians 2:7). Such a divine decision causes unease among those who wield power in the world. Of course, if the preacher publishes what God has whispered in his ear, he will not be very popular with those who operate on human wisdom:

"Instead, we speak with wisdom among those who have reached maturity, but not with the wisdom of this world or that of its rulers, who will come to nothing" (1 Corinthians 2:6).

In conclusion, preaching is a work of loyalty and consistency between God and the preacher. The exposition of the word is a faithful reflection of the divine source. Preaching is publishing what God says in secret.

Seventh Examination:

What does it mean to "publish what God says in secret"?

Option 1 It is to make known what God says in private.

Option 2 It is about fulfilling a duty of loyalty to God.

Option 3 God chooses the foolish to shame the wise.

Option 4 The preacher is a good listener to the divine message.

3.7 What happens when one preaches with authority?

The term authority comes from the Greek *exousia*. It means power. In the sense of the ability to do something or the right a person has to do something. Authority also comes from the Latin *auctoritas*. It is the ability to create and to make progress. It is about the honor and prestige that a person achieves through the exercise of their talented knowledge or through the moral respect for their conduct, worthy of following or imitating.

In other words, authority is the legitimate power of influence and leadership that a human being has over other people, who recognize and accept their healthy influence. The right to authority is obtained through a person's ability and knowledge, which is far superior to that of others. Their approval is certified by the direct obedience and support of those who recognize that authority.

Authority is earned by example. The best scientist is an authority in science. The best teacher is an authority in pedagogy. The best writer is an authority in literature. And so it is in everything. Authority is governed by those who know the most and can do the most. In the case of Jesus of Nazareth, his authority was legitimate because it emanated from God himself. Jesus explained this when the Jews accused him of violating the rules of the Sabbath: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does" (John 5:19). Jesus himself said that his authority was given to him. He never spoke on his own (John 12:49), nor did he act on his own

(John 5:26-29). His power was supreme and universal: "Jesus came and said to his disciples, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Matthew 28:18).

Jesus' authority was not like the supposed authority that the Jews believed they had, who thought they understood and practiced the Scriptures (John 5:39). Nor was it the mistaken source of authority that Roman officials thought they had: "Pilate asked Jesus, 'Why don't you speak to me? Don't you realize that I have the authority to release you or to crucify you? Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above'" (John 19:10-11). Jesus' power was his Word (Matthew 4:1-11), and at the same time, he himself was the Word (John 1:1, 14). Jesus was the content of the message and at the same time the container. In other words, Jesus was the message and also the sender of the message when he claimed to speak on behalf of the divine source: "Those who speak on their own seek their own glory, but he who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks the truth, not lies" (John 7:18). The exercise of authority has a purpose. In Jesus' case, his purpose was to establish the kingdom of God here on earth: "After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached the Good News of God. The time promised by God has finally come! The kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News of the kingdom of God!" (Mark 1:14-15). Jesus was the messenger who spoke the good news of the kingdom of God. This was also the theme Paul used to persuade those he wanted to evangelize (Acts 19:8). Jesus spread a kingdom of divine authority: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power" (1 Corinthians 4:20). Jesus based his authority on truth (John 14:16) and came into the world to

bear witness to the truth (John 18:37). When Jesus came into the world, he brought with him all the credentials that gave him the authority to fulfill his mission (Philippians 2:5-11). This authority can never be compromised (Proverbs 23:23), as his disciples understood (1 John 5:20) when they had to defend the truth of their Master with discipline, wisdom, and good judgment:

"When Simon saw that the Spirit was received when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy that power. He exclaimed, 'Let me also have this power, so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!'" (Acts 8:19). The criteria are clear when preaching with authority. To impart the word with legitimate authority, one must live under authority: "Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed. I know this because I am under the authority of my superiors and have authority over my soldiers. I only have to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this,' they do it" (Luke 7:7-8). Therefore, Jesus' determination to give us the power of his authority was not the result of a simple spontaneous decision. It is the correct formula for legitimate succession, so that authority has its true effect: "One day Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to heal diseases. Then he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2).

The kingdom of God is a kingdom of authority, of absolute dominion and total control. The true believer is given this authority, as when he receives the keys to a house he has just bought: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). Therefore, when preaching with authority, the things that are declared happen as they are said (Romans 4:17), in the style of Jesus: "The disciples were amazed and asked, 'Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him!'" (Matthew 8:27).

When preaching with authority, one gains recognition and prestige in the same way that Jesus did before the crowds after expounding his teachings: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28-29). Authority is a sign of leadership. Jesus made such good use of his authority as Redeemer and Savior that his prestige was soon recognized, even by his most feared opponents: "And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, 'What is this? What new teaching is this, that with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him?'" (Mark 1:27). Wherever Jesus went, he showed that he had power and authority through the supremacy of his word: "And they went into Capernaum; and on the Sabbath he went into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:21).

These were the signs that Jesus promised his disciples they would see when they exercised authority with power (Mark 16:17-18), and Jesus presented them with obvious authority: "Which is easier to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? So I will show you that

the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Then Jesus looked at the paralytic and said, 'Get up, take your stretcher, and go home!'" (Mark 2:9-11).

Jesus' authority can only be exercised by those who have the keys (Matthew 16:18-19). But the keys can only be received by those who are part of his kingdom (Ephesians 1:17-18). For the rest, many afflictions await them (Luke 11:52), and they are filled with many concerns and doubts: "When Jesus returned to the temple and began to teach, the chief priests and the elders came to him. And they asked him, 'By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right?'" (Matthew 21:23-25). How could they understand that a teacher like Jesus came from an unknown village in pagan Galilee: "Will the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah must be from the family of David and from his own town, Bethlehem?" (John 7:41-42). "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). How can we understand that the Messiah could have been born into a family of craftsmen: "Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here among us?" (Mark 6:3).

Today, the same questions continue to arise: How can we bring people from where they are to where God wants them to be? How do we know if that preacher has legitimate authority? How can I preach with the authority of Jesus? Jesus was clear and emphatic when he established his criteria for authority: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things" (Matthew 25:21, 23). We must not despise the opportunities that God delegates to us, no matter how small they may be.

Those who preach with authority bear an undeniable mark of having been in the presence of the Lord. The supernatural in their lives is revealed on their faces, as it was with Stephen (Acts 6:15). When preaching with authority, spiritual results are sought. Therefore, the power and authority of preaching are strictly spiritual leadership. To preach with authority is to depend totally and absolutely on the power of God that enables us to do what we cannot do in our own strength:

"Jesus looked at them intently and said, 'With man this is impossible, but not with God. With God all things are possible'" (Mark 10:27).

Eighth Examination:

What happens when you preach with authority?

Option 1 Unclean spirits, wind, and waves obey.

Option 2 The supernatural in their lives is revealed in their faces.

Option 3 Many results of spiritual leadership are achieved.

Option 4 The person possesses the keys to display authority.

3.8 Who is responsible for preaching today?

Jesus Christ came "preaching the time of God's grace" (Luke 4:19). At the same time, He Himself was the fulfillment of that time (Luke 4:21). It is the καιρός. It is pronounced kairós, which means the right and opportune moment when God acts on behalf of human beings. Unlike krónos (κρόνος), which is the quantitative time conventionally created by humanity, kairós is qualitative time. It is when one moves from the bad to the good and from the good to the best. In kairós, decisions are made correctly and the results are fruitful. That is why God spoke in many ways and in the end spoke through his Word, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). The best proof of God's existence is when God speaks and his Word produces action (Mark 1:1), light (John 8:12), and life (John 11:25).

The compelling evidence of kairos with the presence of Jesus among humanity was when Jesus entered Galilee, preaching the Good News of God and saying, "The time promised by God has finally come! The kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!" (Mark 1:15). Jesus was sent to fulfill a mission (Luke 4:43). This was something he had to do at the precise moment of kairos. That is why, at one point, he said that the time had not yet come (John 2:4), but later, when the time was right, he did what he had to do (John 13:1). Jesus' entire public life revolved around the word. At the age of twelve, he amazed his listeners (Luke 2:47). His baptism was surrounded by words (Matthew 3:17), in the desert his words were categorical (Luke 4:1-13), in his public life his words

attracted crowds (Matthew 4:25), he taught them (Mark 10:1) and made his adversaries uncomfortable (Luke 7:34).

The time of Jesus continues to be repeated in the personal life of every human being. It is the presence of God, which for some is fleeting and for others is constant and permanent. It is the joy that awakens when the paradigms and norms of everyday life are broken. It is when one tunes in to God and establishes communication with the divine. It is living in the perpetual love of God's presence manifested in the spiritual attraction of affection and appreciation for others (1 John 4:8), especially the unconverted (Luke 5:29-32). It is making the daily decision to live by crossing the threshold of hope with the reasonable assurance that something will happen. It is believing when joy surrounds us and trusting when there is adversity: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Therefore, when faced with the question: Who is responsible today for preaching the word of Jesus Christ? The one responsible for preaching today is the one who knows how to discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3-4). The preacher stands in the perspective of faith, following the living image of Jesus (Hebrews 12:2) and is moved by the Holy Spirit: "No one can know the thoughts of a person except that person's own spirit, and no one can know the thoughts of God except God's own Spirit. And we have received God's Spirit (not the spirit of the world), so that we can know the wonderful things that God has given us" (1 Corinthians 2:11-12).

Just as God did yesterday, He does today (Hebrews 13:8). He called those He wanted yesterday (Mark 3:13), and He does

the same today. Long ago, He spoke separately to His preachers (Matthew 20:17), and now He uses the same criteria. Jesus commissioned His disciples (Mark 16:15), then promised Paul that He would show him what he must do (Acts 9:6), and today Jesus continues to act (John 5:17).

Those who preach the word today are believers who have listened to Jesus in his Word (John 5:24). They are people who abide in his word (John 8:31), remain interested in his Word (Luke 11:27), and preach only his Word (Matthew 10:7). Today's preachers have the authority to preach because the Word of God remains in them, they have persevered, and in their messages they value Jesus with all their hearts (1 John 2:14, 24). They are preachers of true testimony (Matthew 24:9-14). Therefore, not every believer is responsible for preaching the Word of God, but only those who meet the standards set by Jesus.

Ninth Examination:

Who is responsible for preaching today?

Option 1 Those who preach God's blessing in time.

Option 3: Those who have been called by Jesus to be believers.

Option 4 Those who know how to discern the signs of the times.

Option 2 Those who have listened to Jesus in his preaching.

3.9 What does it mean to preach the gospel?

Preach comes from the Latin word *pre*, meaning before or in front of. *Dedicare* means to dedicate or consecrate. Therefore, to preach is to make known what was previously hidden and now comes to light through the voice of a person. Such was the case with John the Baptist when he introduced himself: "I am a voice crying out in the desert. Make way for the coming of the Lord!" (John 1:23).

The Gospel is the account of an event in favor of humanity. It is the news that God saves us from the consequences of sin through Jesus Christ. To evangelize is to tell how God saves us through Jesus Christ. This is the task of the church. The word *gospel* originates from the Greek *euanghélion* (εὐαγγέλιον). It is composed of *eu*, "good," and *ánghelos*, "messenger-announcement." It means "good news" or "joyful message." In Greek culture, *gospel* was the message that a communicator announced about a military victory or sporting triumph, personal success, or healing from an illness. Good results were what was called *gospel*.

To be *gospel*, the news had to be positive and authentic. Nothing false could be proclaimed. The absolute truth that was beyond question was called *gospel*. *Gospel* is the set of teachings of Jesus Christ. There is no truth that does not belong to the *Gospel*. The *gospel* is life, eternal life. The *gospel* is happiness. The *gospel* is the fullness of all that belongs to God and that human beings can know and enjoy. The writer Luke researched so that he could truthfully recount the *gospel* (Luke 1:1-4). The life and work of Christ were attractive to many

chroniclers and preachers of his time. Jesus himself warned of the significance that his deeds and wonders would have: "I tell you the truth, wherever the Good News is preached throughout the world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of her" (Matthew 26:13).

Omens and prophecies about Jesus Christ were abundant. Many writers before the coming of Jesus had predicted the portentous events of his passage on earth: "This is the Good News about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way'" (Mark 1:1-2). From the beginning of the Christian era, it was understood that preaching the gospel meant spreading a message of life and salvation for humanity from Jesus Christ: "Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They would accompany him, and he would send them out to preach" (Mark 3:14). That same purpose motivated the apostle Paul to write his letters and to devote the rest of his life to preaching the gospel, ever since he was called by Jesus himself to perform such an honorable task: "I, Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus and chosen by God to be an apostle and sent to preach his Good News, write this letter. God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. The Good News is about his Son, a descendant of David" (Romans 1:1-3).

Preaching the gospel means having been called. No one can perform the office of preacher unless it is by vocation. That is, every preacher is chosen by God himself for the noble task of spreading the good news of salvation: "Through Christ, God has given us, as apostles, the privilege and authority to proclaim everywhere to the Gentiles what God has done for them,

so that they may believe in him and obey him, which will give glory to his name" (Romans 1:5).

Preaching the gospel is a burning desire that originates in the heart of the evangelist and naturally extends to the listeners, who are also called to experience the desire to share God's message. Since Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel (Mark 16:15-16) until today, millions of preachers have been called throughout history. The apostolic succession continues today in the many figures who have been considered great preachers of the gospel, as Paul himself testifies:

"And I ask you, my faithful partner, to help these two women, because they worked hard alongside me to spread the Good News to others. They worked together with Clement and my other partners, whose names are written in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3). The investment in preaching the gospel has been tremendous from the beginning of the Christian era to the present day. Countless people have devoted their minds, contributed their physical resources, and allocated their money to the cause of evangelism throughout the centuries.

Although there are sometimes complaints that some, even though they are part of the church, forget their responsibility to contribute to the spread of the gospel, many faithful Christians do so: "As you know, Philippians, you were the only ones who helped me financially when I first brought you the Good News and then continued my journey from Macedonia. No other church did the same" (Philippians 4:15). The vast majority of Christians are aware of the commitment they made when they received Christ into their lives and decided to become servants for the preaching of the gospel: "In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who preach the Good News

should be supported by those who receive the benefit of the message. However, I have never taken advantage of any of these rights. And I am not writing this to suggest that it is my desire to start doing so now. In fact, I would rather die than lose my right to boast of preaching without charge. However, preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am obligated by God to do so. How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Good News!" (1 Corinthians 9:14-16).

For Paul, as for us today, those who devote themselves full-time to preaching the gospel are granted the right to receive support. But it is also noted that it is a divine obligation for those who bear the name of Christian to make the good news of the gospel known to others.

Because preaching the gospel is not a personal initiative. It is a vocation. It is a calling from God. The evangelist is a person chosen and set apart for the purpose of being a preacher: "If I did this on my own initiative, I would deserve to be paid, but I have no choice, because God has entrusted me with this sacred duty. What, then, is my reward? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone. For that reason, I never claim my rights when I preach the Good News" (1 Corinthians 9:17-18).

God continues to call new and current preachers of the gospel today. Throughout history, Jesus continues to call new apostles. They are those who humbly dedicate themselves to following Christ and preaching the gospel: "Was I wrong when I humbled myself and honored you by preaching the Good News of God without expecting anything in return?" (2 Corinthians 11:7). Just as yesterday, today many react immediately and follow Jesus when they hear the call to become

evangelizers (Mark 1:17). The new preachers of the gospel begin an apostolic life. It is about living a life of following Jesus and preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Like the apostles themselves, it is about enthusiastically proclaiming the good news of salvation, which will be received with joy, gladness, and rejoicing. It is speaking, proclaiming, and announcing the message of salvation with the power of God: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile" (Romans 1:16). The good news or joyful message is that God saves us in Jesus Christ. When preachers communicate the news that Jesus has saved us, that is when they evangelize.

Tenth Examination:

What does it mean to preach the gospel?

Option 1 To spread a message of life and salvation.

Option 3 To proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God made man.

Option 4 To spread the various doctrines of different churches.

Option 2 To preach that Christ is coming and to predict the date of his coming.

3.10 Why is it our duty to preach?

A duty is not simply an obligation. Generally, an obligation is a commitment that is acquired from outside, such as laws, contracts, rules of coexistence, and religious precepts, which are judged by people who monitor their compliance.

In contrast, a duty goes beyond the limits of a commitment or a responsibility acquired by imposition. Duty emerges from the spiritual nature of a human being. It arises from a person's conscience and from their most intimate and noble affections and feelings. Duty is accepted through family heritage, social groups, work associations, and extends to cultural communities. People obey the laws of a country out of obligation. In contrast, out of duty, a human being accepts Christ as their Lord and Savior. Out of duty, they pass on their vital experience of faith in Jesus. No one punishes them from the outside if they do not believe in Christ. Their own conscience and the reward for the results of their actions motivate them to continue with the duty of being a good Christian.

So why is it our duty to preach the gospel? Because God ordained it (Titus 1:3) and Jesus Christ taught it to us throughout his public ministry (Matthew 4:23). Also because the apostles faithfully fulfilled their duty to preach the gospel even in the most adverse moments (Acts 8:4). Furthermore, preaching has been the constant work of the church throughout the history of Christianity to this day. It is our duty to preach the word of God because people need to hear the word of God. The good news of salvation produces a response of faith because there are those who preach (Romans 10:17). The preacher becomes

the voice of God speaking to believers and the rest of humanity. The duty to preach begins when one feels Jesus' call to devote oneself to the ministry of the word, just as the Master of Galilee invited the first apostles: "Some time later Jesus went up a mountain and called those he wanted to accompany him. They all came to him. Then he appointed twelve of them and called them his apostles. They would accompany him, and he would send them out to preach" (Mark 3:13-14).

Jesus promised that he himself calls (Revelation 3:20), teaches (John 14:26), equips (Ephesians 4:11-13), and sends (John 20:21). Those who are to be his preachers are not alone (Matthew 28:20). Even though the means used by ministers of the word may often be misunderstood, Christ will be preached, as Paul said: "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice" (Philippians 1:14-18). The time is now. The hour has come, the Kingdom is at hand (Mark 1:15). In no way has there been a lack of time for maturation, nor a period for the call to preaching to develop. For the preparation has been made in advance through the grace of God (Ephesians 1:4). Jesus himself acted when the time came to respond to the call of his vocation (John 13:1). Before the time had come, he simply said that it was not yet time (John 2:4). Thankfully, the sacred writings give us evidence that before human beings act, God himself has already been preparing the person, and even knows all their deeds: "Nathanael said to Jesus, 'How do you know me? Jesus answered, 'I saw you under the fig tree before Philip found you'" (John 1:48).

Life itself is a vocation that must be lived to the fullest, embraced with energy, approached with passion, and tackled

with the determination to enjoy it intensely, because that is how it is meant to be: "This is how it should be done now, because we must fulfill all that God requires" (Matthew 3:15).

The simple fact of living is a great event that should not be left to chance or buried (Matthew 25:25). Living is important. Living is acting responsibly. To live is to respond to the demands of life. As with the first apostles, when Jesus calls, the response must be immediate, because the mission must be fulfilled in God's time. It is urgent! There is no respite! The harvest is ready! (John 4:35) The response to the call cannot wait! In his infinite will, God himself establishes the time to act.

Jesus' disciples left everything behind because God expects an immediate response. The first apostles did not measure the consequences of following Jesus. Some time later, they realize this and ask about their reward. What would be the reward for their apostleship? "Then Peter said to him, 'We have left everything to follow you. What will we receive in return?'" (Matthew 19:27).

Jesus had simply told them to follow him, and they, in their natural duty of vocation, did so: "Jesus replied to Simon, 'Don't be afraid! From now on, you will catch people! And as soon as they reached land, they left everything and followed Jesus'" (Luke 5:10-11). Peter and his other companions had left everything familiar and everyday behind. Their beliefs, their possessions, their knowledge, their work, their family, their land, their desires, their plans, their dreams. Everything was left behind. They had to learn new customs (John 13:15), new teachings (Mark 1:27-28), new ways of relating to one another (John 15:12-14), a new way of seeing things and life (Matthew 5:21-48), and even a new interpretation of the law (Matthew 7:12).

Jesus himself warned them that he would make all things new (Revelation 21:5). This newness had an impact on the lives of the first apostles, as a clear sign of their calling to the ministry of the word: "Then he called the crowd to join the disciples and said, 'If any of you want to be my followers, you must give up your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me'" (Mark 8:34). The disciples wanted and accepted their Master's call. That is why the duty to preach was a radical, unique, and total response in the apostles. The impetus of the first preachers was so powerful and decisive that it continued to spread in the apostolic succession through time.

"This means that everyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Everything was left behind. Paul testifies that he had left behind things from his past, such as his zeal for religious doctrine and his intellectual eloquence, considering them lost and forgotten: "I have discarded everything else and consider it rubbish in order to gain Christ and become one with him" (Philippians 3:8).

Like Paul, many had the same attitude of leaving everything behind and starting a new life. Cornelius' good reputation was left behind when he received the call: "Cornelius, a Roman officer, sent us. He is a devout and God-fearing man, highly respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to send for you to come to his house so that he may hear your message" (Acts 10:22). Zacchaeus, who was called by name and had to endure the gossip of the people, welcomed Jesus into his home and became one of his faithful disciples (Luke 19:1-10). Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38-39) did not fear criticism, nor were they deterred by the security of their

prestigious social, political, and economic positions in their community.

Many women were important in the life and ministry of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus, Elizabeth, and Anna (Luke 2:36-37); Martha and Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42); the Samaritan woman (John 4:28, 29, 39); Mary Magdalene and other women (Luke 8:1-2) were directly involved in the ministry of preaching the word. Joanna, the wife of Cuza, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many other women contributed their own resources to support Jesus, his disciples, and his ministry (Luke 8:3). Preaching the word is not a profession. Preaching is a calling, a vocation so decisive and determining that the preacher of the word has no way out, no alternative. All that remains is to exclaim: "Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth" (Psalm 73:25).

By natural, spontaneous, and spiritual conviction, the preacher of the word knows the richness and value of his calling. Therefore, he leaves everything behind and acquires the character of an apostle, cherishing it like a treasure or a pearl of great value (Matthew 13:44-46). The preacher is joyfully captivated at all times and in all places to carry out his vocation: "So then, thanks be to God, who has made us his captives and always leads us in triumph in Christ's victory parade. Now he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere like a fragrant perfume" (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Eleventh Examination:

Why is it our duty to preach?

Option 1 Because people need to hear the word of God.

Option 3 Because the preacher is assured of his reward.

Option 4 Because it is necessary to preach the word at all times.

Option 2 Because humanity willingly desires to hear God.

3.11 Preaching according to purpose

Preaching has a purpose. It is about responding to why the preacher expounds the word. It refers to the intention and the goal to be achieved. When Peter preached for the first time, three thousand believers were added to the church (Acts 2:41). It was a powerful impact. The preaching was effective. Very soon the number of believers had grown to five thousand (Acts 4:4). The effectiveness of purposeful preaching is measured by its effects and results, that is, by its fruits (John 15:8). The expected outcome, the desired fruits, the behaviors that are hoped to be changed, and the souls that are sought to be rescued define the purpose of preaching. The preacher demonstrates his spiritual experience in public. He convinces his listeners to accept the proposal he is declaring through his testimony and arguments: "Therefore, we speak to others about Christ, we warn everyone, and we teach everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God perfect in their relationship with Christ" (Colossians 1:28).

Through preaching, God's purpose is made known. No one is born knowing that God has a purpose for their lives. Someone begins to tell them, and their mind accepts that the measure of their image and likeness is like that of Christ: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For God knew his own in advance and chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the eldest of many brothers" (Romans 8:28-29).

Every human being is governed by the values of their environment, whether it be their family, social group, or community. Therefore, preaching must shed light on these learned principles and cultural customs, as they are the reasons behind the behavior of a human community. Since human beings have thoughts and beliefs that are deeply rooted in many generations of ancestors, very few people agree to believe after hearing the gospel just once. Evangelism through preaching must be constant.

Only as people become convinced of the good news of salvation do many more accept it and begin to tell others about it. This is how the word of God has an impact on more people. When preaching is done with the intention of leading the new believer to make a change in their life, the message has application in the believer's life. New believers put into practice what they have begun to believe. The purpose of preaching is to show and lead people to see God's purpose for their lives (Matthew 7:26), because in reality, people have deep concerns about contradicting the divine truth for their lives: "You may make all the plans you want, but the Lord's purpose will prevail" (Proverbs 19:21).

Over time, the preached word encourages listeners to become believers (Titus 3:3). Then believers are inspired to dedicate their gifts, abilities, time, and influence to the service of the Lord, as disciples and later as apostles. In this way, as more people observe that others in their social circle have already accepted the word of God, many more join them, because they feel that if they do not adopt the same behavior, they may be disqualified from their environment.

If those who hear God's word are moved to change their way of life (James 1:22), then the purpose of preaching is to be the right tool to nourish the church with new believers. The purpose of preaching is to lead people to cross the threshold of their expectations, hopes, and desires by satisfying their genuine needs (Titus 2:1).

Preaching is the light that illuminates a person's mind, so that they can make the decision to change the course of their life and, together with others, decide to live a Christian life: "Is there any encouragement in belonging to Christ? Is there any comfort in his love? Do we share a common bond in the Spirit? Do you have tender and compassionate hearts? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly among yourselves, loving one another, and working together with one mind and one purpose" (Philippians 2:1-2).

The unbeliever needs to be presented with valid, legitimate, and appropriate reasons to accept the way of thinking that Jesus Christ offers (Ephesians 5:8). Through purposeful preaching, the unbeliever finds meaning and great significance in the word of God: "Do not be selfish; do not try to impress anyone. Be humble, considering others better than yourselves. Don't just look out for your own interests, but also be interested in others. Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" (Philippians 2:3-5).

For Jesus, though he was God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped: "Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being" (Philippians 2:6). Purposeful preaching teaches obedience (Matthew 28:20), produces obedient and docile disciples (Luke 11:28), and leads to repentance

(Matthew 3:8), as did the early followers of Jesus: "First I preached to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout Judea, and also to the Gentiles: that everyone must repent of their sins and turn to God, and prove that they have changed by doing good deeds" (Acts 26:20).

Purposeful preaching explains spiritual truths: "We speak these things, not using words taught by human wisdom. Instead, we speak with words given us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Purposeful preaching demonstrates that believers need to mature and grow in their Christian faith, persuades them that they must constantly experience Christ in their lives, and needs to bear witness to their Jesus-centered lives so that unbelievers will be motivated to believe: "The purpose of my instruction is that all believers may be filled with the love that springs from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and sincere faith; but some did not understand this. They turned away from these things and spend their time in meaningless debates" (1 Timothy 1:5-6).

The body of Christ must be transformed, updated, and repaired by the authority of God's word. Purposeful preaching changes human character and behavior. Preaching leads people to respond or take action as required by the word (John 13:17). Preaching exposes the truth of God's word (1 John 3:19) so that human beings may break free from their bonds: "and they will know the truth, and the truth will set them free" (John 8:32).

The purpose of preaching throughout the centuries has not changed. It is the same word in different environments, different places, and different times. Purposeful preaching connects human beings with God, calling them to conviction, for

preaching is the instrument God uses to make himself known through the power of his Holy Spirit: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard the message" (Acts 10:44).

Purposeful preaching analyzes and explains the word of God, interprets the content of the Bible, and clarifies God's designs so that listeners begin to act as God wants them to: "God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17). Purposeful preaching illuminates the process of renewal of life, of the church, of the world with the eternal truths that God never changes, but which apply to the reality of the historical moment that humanity is going through. The preaching of God's word, whether expounded by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers, has the same purpose of training and equipping new believers to reach the standard set by Jesus, while also leading other new believers to do the same:

"They have the responsibility to prepare God's people to carry out God's work and build up the church, that is, the body of Christ. That process will continue until we all reach such unity in our faith and knowledge of the Son of God that we are mature in the Lord, that is, until we reach the full and complete measure of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

In short, preaching the word of God is the purpose of the entire church.

Twelfth Examination:

What is preaching according to purpose?

Option 1 The advertising resource for spreading God's message.

Option 2: The tool for nurturing the church with new believers.

Option 3 A stage where preachers speak eloquently.

Option 4 Helping unbelievers find meaning in their existence.

3.12 Preaching according to the message.

The message is not simply the content of the information. The message is what one seeks to achieve when transmitting information. The message is composed of the sender's wealth and heritage of ideas, feelings, thoughts, experiences, desires, and events.

At the same time, it is determined by the interest of the receiver, who also has a collection and heritage of elements similar or different from the sender that influence the reception and interpretation of the message. Hence, the message is also the mediating process of communication between the sender of the information and the reaction of the recipients. The message of the gospel is classified as news, proclaimed by Jesus (Matthew 4:23), continued by his apostles (Mark 16:20), and transmitted by successive generations until it reaches the whole world (Matthew 24:14). Preaching according to the message is the novel announcement of the good news of salvation provided by Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

Within the journalistic genres, news is defined as the interpretation and production of a reality that is made known in order to generate knowledge and produce reactions. News is the novelty that affects those who communicate and receive information. It is the facts and events of public interest that are made known in a society in order to understand current events. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The news is that God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:4-5) and Jesus Christ has revealed God (John 10:30). Jesus acted with the power of God (Luke 4:18-21) and his followers also acted and continue to act with divine power (John 14:16). The Christian message is the kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). It is a kingdom of liberation (Matthew 12:28), it is the good news that God spoke through Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2) and acted in Jesus Christ for the redemption of humanity (Luke 1:68).

The Bible's message about the kingdom of God is not an invitation to do something. The biblical message is an invitation to receive the salvation that God gives us absolutely free (2 Corinthians 5:21). The message of preaching is that God has saved us by grace through faith (Romans 6:23). Salvation consists of receiving Christ (John 1:12). This is how the early preachers expressed it. Paul is the prototype of one who preaches the true evangelistic message (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Peter is the paradigm of the effectiveness of the message (Acts 2:14-41). Stephen is the model of preaching according to the message (Acts 7:2-59). The evangelistic message is that Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24) and purchased us with his precious blood (Acts 20:28). In Christ we are justified, not by works according to the law (Romans 3:20), but by faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:28). For just as Abraham believed God and was justified (Romans 4:3), so our righteousness is by faith in Christ (Romans 5:1) and not by the actions we do (Romans 4:5). Actions are the fruits we produce after being redeemed (Matthew 7:20). We were established in the world in grace (Genesis 1:27), fell into disgrace, and were separated from God's will because of sin (Genesis 3:22-24). But the

solution came through Christ (1 Timothy 2:5-6). God expects a personal response of faith, evidenced by the experience of receiving Christ as our Lord and Savior, in order to begin to live times of refreshment (Acts 3:19). The message conveyed by the preacher is not his own; it is a message inspired by God but influenced by circumstances and the preacher's interpretation and understanding of his audience (Romans 12:2).

Therefore, the message is embellished by nature, which speaks to us of God, as does the human body, which refers us to God. History has a message from God. The preacher finds a theme in the life and work of someone distinguished from others. Cultural values and criteria and the customs of peoples are inexhaustible sources of relevance that serve as indisputable means and resources for delivering the evangelizing message. But the true message comes from God. The indisputable and perennial source of preaching is the writings preserved in the Bible. Therefore, the preacher speaks of what God has wanted to tell us about himself in the Holy Scriptures. Paul, in his wise instruction to his disciple Timothy, instructs us in the message of preaching:

1. *Soundness of the message*: "Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with patience and good teaching."
2. *Obstacles to the message*: "The time will come when people will no longer listen to sound and healthy teaching. They will follow their own desires and seek teachers who will tell them what their ears long to hear. They will reject the truth and pursue myths."
3. *Perseverance in the message*: "But you must keep a clear mind in every situation. Do not be afraid to suffer for the Lord. Be busy telling others the Good News and carry out the

ministry God gave you" (2 Timothy 4:2-5). The message of preaching does not originate spontaneously, much less is it transmitted in an improvised manner. There is an intention in the preacher that compels him to prepare, research, and deduce the truthful content of the message: "Many people have tried to write an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used the reports circulating among us given by eyewitnesses, the first disciples. After carefully investigating everything from the beginning, I too decided to write a careful account for you, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may be certain of the truth of everything you have been taught" (Luke 1:1-4).

The message of preaching is the unchanging content of God, but adapted to the fluctuating and current circumstances of humanity.

Thirteenth Examination:

What is preaching according to the message?

Option 1 It is the indisputable and perennial source of all preaching.

Option 2 It is the way the preacher influences the audience.

Option 3 It is what the preacher says after listening to God.

Option 4 It is the novel announcement of the good news of salvation.

3.13 Preaching according to design.

The word "design" is an Italian term, which in turn descends from the Latin "designio." It refers to naming, pointing out, or marking. In the first instance, the word design refers to a sketch, outline, or diagram that is developed in the mind and captured on a material medium before the final production is completed.

In general, when we talk about design, a variety of figures, pictures, diagrams, and abstract or real structures from any context or professional discipline, such as architecture, engineering, or industry, come to mind. However, design refers to the search for solutions to problems, facts, or events, with the aim of improving human well-being.

For its part, the goal of preaching is for us to come to know God, to learn to relate to Him, and to be obedient in responding to His will. It is not simply a matter of structuring the sermon so that it has an impact on the listeners. The structure refers to the theme, title, introduction, development, and conclusions. In other words, the structure points to the outline of the sermon. Design, on the other hand, refers to the aesthetic way of communicating the content.

That is why preaching has a design. The preacher consciously determines and specifies the intention of his preaching. He seeks a goal. He defines the purpose that motivates his action. He does not leave the results and consequences to chance. A sermon identifies a theme, presents reality in the light of God's Word, and projects commitments and tasks in order to meet the obvious needs of the audience.

A well-designed sermon enables and encourages the message to be understood by the audience. The message of the sermon comes from God and must be adapted to human understanding. The only language we have to speak about God, salvation, His grace, and His character is human language. Preaching is designed by the structure of human language, which is a means of expressing the divine message. Jesus' own apostles were satisfied when the Master spoke to them in precise language: "At last you are speaking plainly and not in figures of speech" (John 16:29). Through reasoning and personal experience, the preacher listens to God in His Word and adapts God's message so that humanity can understand it: "Long ago, God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now, in these last days, He has spoken to us through His Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Whether apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers (Ephesians 4:11), all have the mission of preaching God's message for the edification of the whole church according to his Word, who is Christ our Lord (Ephesians 4:12-13).

Preaching according to design consists of conveying God's view of humanity, taking into account history, circumstances, and the contemporary moment, so that it can be understood: "Now we understand that you know all things and that no one needs to ask you anything. That is why we believe that you came from God" (John 16:30).

The preacher is the eyes of God. He is the one who leads the audience to see the facts, events, and reality through God's eyes. This is very similar to the event of Moses when he asked God to show him His glorious presence, and God said to him, "Stand near me on this rock. When my glorious presence passes

by, I will hide you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and let you see my back, but my face will not be seen" (Exodus 33:21-23).

It is suggested that no one sees the face of God except through a mediator. First it was Moses, then the prophets, and finally the mediator was Christ and now his successive preachers. The design in preaching brings creativity so as not to always do the same thing, repetitive and mechanical. For no one can understand a message with the language of yesteryear. That is why updated translations of the Bible continue to be made.

As humanity evolves, the message must be in line with current thinking. The preacher seeks to obtain good results from his work and provoke reactions, in the style of Paul in Athens (Acts 17:32-34). Preaching, through design, seeks to obtain different results by doing things differently. It breaks paradigms and adapts the message to the needs of the listeners, as Paul did with the Athenians.

The content of the message of preaching is always the same. Jesus Christ, who is the revealed Word, remains unchanged: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So do not be carried away by strange and new ideas" (Hebrews 13:8-9). What changes is the design of the preaching. For this, it is necessary to establish the intention of the sermon and create an appropriate environment for presenting the message. The preacher must be clear about the central place of preaching in the life of the Church. In addition to knowing how to interpret biblical texts and design expository, narrative, and thematic sermons, the preacher must project and guide humanity

toward God. Unlike the artist, who is more spontaneous and whose actions may not be justified, the preacher must give reasons and account for his results. That is why he is a designer.

The preacher observes and analyzes the environment in which human beings live, discovers their needs and priorities, and proposes alternative solutions through mental plans, verbal models, and visual expressions. The preacher is a designer who builds realities and executes projects based on the initial idea that God entrusts to him. Preaching must always be new in form and useful in its effects. It solves problems. The preacher plans, organizes, relates, and controls the message. Verbal communication is made visual. The preacher uses intuition to understand things as they arise. With little reasoning, few explanations, and minimal time to analyze, he can give an obvious, immediate, and direct answer that satisfies the audience.

The preacher has sudden reactions and feelings, the result of belief, meditation on the word of God, and constant prayer. The preacher is an expert in innovating messages. He synthesizes topics. He organizes ideas. He transforms situations. He uses the resources around him. He proposes new forms, creates interpretations, and generates novel meanings.

The preacher knows how to maintain visual, verbal, and emotional control when delivering the message. He gets the most out of the message, controlling it and ensuring its effectiveness. He knows how to value time. He designs how much time is useful for the message to reach, interest, be remembered, and be lived by the listener. The preacher surprises with his spontaneity, but never improvises. Genius does not invent

fables. A lot of time is invested in planning, developing, and composing an effective sermon.

The preacher knows in advance what he is going to convey. He knows the audience he is going to address. He familiarizes himself with the setting and feels comfortable with the decor and atmosphere of the place where he is going to preach.

The design of the sermon seeks not only aesthetics or artistry, but also practical application, benefit, and usefulness. Therefore, although functional resources are used in preaching and technological communication strategies, engineering, science, and art are employed, the most important thing is that the form of the message has a foundation. When designing the message, the preacher first observes, investigates, analyzes, adjusts, models, bequeaths, grants, endows, concedes, transmits, arranges, and then defines the topic to be preached.

The design of preaching integrates technical, social, and economic instruments. It includes biological needs, with psychological and material effects. It incorporates shapes, colors, volume, and space. All of this is thought out and interrelated with the environment that surrounds humanity.

Preaching is bilateral. The sender and the receiver interact. And there is also interaction among the recipients of the message. Through preaching, human beings relate to each other because of their customs, habits, desires, and dreams.

Fourteenth Examination:

What is preaching according to design?

Option 1 It is the structure and permanent outline of the message.

Option 2 It refers to the aesthetic form of communicating the content.

Option 3 It consists of seeking to impact listeners with novelty.

Option 4 It incorporates shapes, colors, volume, and space for beauty.

4. CHARISMA:

The term charisma comes from the Greek: charisma (χάρισμα), which in turn descends from χαρίζεσθαι: to please, to do favors. The root "char" means something that causes happiness. "Charis" is to grant grace, God's free favor. "Ma" refers to the object and result of an action.

Nowadays, the term charisma is frequently used in popular language and everyday conversation. Above all, it refers to a special ability that some people have to attract or fascinate others.

In various disciplines, charisma is the subject of study and research. Sociologists, psychologists, politicians, communicators, publicists, marketers, travel agents, public relations professionals, image consultants, and business managers all take advantage of the coveted gift of charisma. Many consider charisma to be innate. A person who has charisma simply by their presence, without making any effort, attracts people's attention and fills a visible and attractive space wherever they are.

It's that simple. Those who have charisma inspire sympathy just by looking at them. Charismatic people are someone with whom others identify. They are people who can be, do, and say things that no one else can be, do, or say. Generally,

charisma produces leaders. People follow, love, laugh, and cry with the charismatic person. Their admirers enjoy their joys and are saddened by the difficult and stormy times their charismatic leader, guide, and driver goes through. However, in the spiritual and faith realm, charisma is a supernatural gift granted by God to certain individuals. Although charisma is mentioned throughout the Bible, it is most developed in the New Testament, where the word charisma appears 17 times. In Paul's writings, it is recorded 16 times: Romans 1:11; 5:15-16; 6:23; 11:29; 12:6; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 7:7; 12:4.9.28.30.31; 2 Corinthians 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6.

The term charisma appears once in Peter's writings: 1 Peter 4:10. Paul makes four lists of charisms: 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Romans 12:6-8; and Ephesians 4:11. Although the list of charisms is open-ended, Paul lists a total of 20 different charisms:

Wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, apostleship, prophecy, miracles, helping, administration, tongues, discernment of spirits, interpretation of tongues, service, teaching, exhortation, giving generously, leading with diligence, mercy with joy, evangelists, and pastors.

Those who receive charisms put them at the service of the common good, for the edification of the body of Christ, which is the Church. As in the case of the gift of tongues: "No more than two or three should speak in tongues. They should speak one at a time, and someone should interpret what they say. But if there is no one present who can interpret, they should remain silent in the church meeting and speak in tongues to God in private" (1 Corinthians 14:27-28).

Charisms are given by grace, but they do not replace the effort and responsibility of daily life. They are in no way for show or disorder, but rather entail a willingness to sacrifice. Nor are charisms possessed for selfish interests, such as pride, competition, fame, or other anomalies. Charisms that do not contribute to the building up of the body of Christ harm the Church. Therefore, members of the church must have the ability to discern the charisms in those who possess them: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything; hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22).

Paul's instructions are very specific and precise. The charismatic person does not flaunt or boast about the gift he possesses, much less become conceited and boastful. Nor is he an idol of the masses. The person only uses charisms with humility in the service of others, for the common good of humanity: "Each of us is given a spiritual gift so that we may help one another" (1 Corinthians 12:7). Precisely, holiness consists in the good use of charisms, without such gifts being a sign of holiness: "If I could speak all the languages of the world and of angels, but did not love others, I would only be a noisy metal or a resounding cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Charisms are not a sign of merit and virtue of holiness, because they are freely given by the Holy Spirit: "It is the same and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have" (1 Corinthians 12:11). No one can attract or retain them without the granting of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:28-32). Charisma is God's grace in gifts and talents to serve.

Charisms are gifts possessed by servants, who identify and distinguish them from others through their constant usefulness in the life of the Christian community: "Now to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it, the one through the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the other through the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the third with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the fourth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the fifth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the sixth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the seventh with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the eighth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the ninth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the tenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the eleventh with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the twelfth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the thirteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the fourteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the fifteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the sixteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the seventeenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the eighteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable, the nineteenth with the gift of prophecy as is suitable. The Church is renewed by the work of people with charisma. A new image of the church develops in the sector where its charismatic servants minister.

In conclusion, charisms are gifts from God that become tangible and visible in the people who possess them, through talents (Matthew 25:15), gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11), virtues (Mark 9:24) qualities (1 Timothy 6:11-16), faculties (John 14:16-26), and fruits (John 15:5), for the strength of the Church in the transformation of the world.

First Examination:

What is Charisma?

Option 1 It is God's grace in gifts and talents for service.

Option 2 It is a person's way of being, attitude, and character.

Option 3 It is when someone is a guide and leader of many followers.

Option 4 It is the sequence of gifts common to humanity.

4.1 The ability to motivate and inspire admiration.

The word capacity comes from the Latin *capax*, which means to be capable. To be capable is to have the attitude of possessing the necessary resources to perform tasks or functions relevant to the trades, arts, or professions that exist in society. The capable person has a predisposition, vigor, skills, and intellectual and emotional conditions for the fulfillment of a function or the performance of a position.

With regard to charisma, a person has the ability to embody a great deal of emotional attraction in their personality, which arouses dependence in their admirers. Those who follow the charismatic person see them as highly capable and suitable. For their part, those who possess charisma present themselves with speculative aptitude, exuberant intelligence, and profuse talent.

The strength of the charismatic person emerges from their own motivation, as they know how to play their role, love what they do, and believe in it. But the power of those who possess charisma is also driven by their admirers, who have a favorable attitude toward the charismatic person. Those who follow the charismatic person are motivated to do something and are also capable of persevering in the effort that something requires for as long as necessary to achieve the goal they have set for themselves.

The strength that charismatic people inspire is directly related to attitudes, because the values, appearances, and opinions that charismatic people generate dictate what their followers need. Charismatic people determine what is important and

what is not for their followers. In other words, those who have charisma lead their followers to be willing to make the effort to achieve what the leader asks of them. Charismatic leaders often exert both external and internal motivation. External motivation is caused by a stimulus that the charismatic leader produces in their environment, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual perks and resources that benefit their followers.

Internal motivation, on the other hand, is the force that arises and is generated by the charismatic leader's followers themselves, often produced by the same external stimuli as those experienced by the leader. But in most cases, it is because the people themselves, due to their own needs and circumstances, rate and value what the leader offers as attractive. That rating will depend on the attitudes of the leader's admirers. In turn, these attitudes do not come out of nowhere; they are the result of their own experiences, needs, and priorities, which have been shaped by their contact with the outside world. Therefore, the motivation generated by a charismatic leader is also supported by the conditions and circumstances of their followers. They are an appropriate niche for the charismatic leader to gain followers or clients. But at the same time, for that niche or conglomerate of people, the charismatic leader also comes to satisfy those needs that they were waiting to have fulfilled.

Therefore, motivation hides a process that is the result of the interaction between the charismatic leader and their environment, between their attitudes and internal projections and the way they see the outside world. Therefore, the ability to motivate and inspire admiration is a process that always starts with internal motivations, but also depends on external

motivations. It is the process that results from the relationship created between the charismatic person and their followers.

That is why motivation is a dynamic, constantly changing process that arises as a result of the encounter between the attitudes and environment of both parties. Both the charismatic leader and their admirers. The same environment will be judged and valued differently by individuals with different attitudes. That is why some follow one leader and others follow another charismatic leader.

Motivating and inspiring admiration is an art form. It is what a leader offers and what their followers value. It consists of creating a situation in which those who possess charisma offer something that their admirers consider to be of great value based on their mental imagery and attitude. But it is also about the strong bonds of knowledge between the charismatic figure and their admirers, whether through the media or directly. They pay attention to each other, developing a perception and capacity for empathy. In short, there is mutual receptivity.

Both sides remain in constant observation of each other and walk in permanent respect. The environment offers the things that both the leader and their followers value, and therefore no one else needs to motivate them, nor does anything discourage them. However, although empathy is total, cooperative, and associated, it is not static. On the contrary, it is very dynamic and changing.

Constant changes and movements arise between the leader and their followers. Environments and needs evolve. Leaders innovate and often diversify. In the face of imminent change, charismatic leaders have to modify external stimuli to achieve results quickly. If they do not do so or fail to respond to change,

they run the risk of losing relevance, becoming obsolete, and perishing. Therefore, the problems that leaders will often encounter are that they do not have the power to respond to the needs of the environment or cannot change the environment adequately. Therefore, the ability to motivate and generate admiration in charismatic leadership lies in attitudes. Simply put, attitude is the way a person, group, community, or society behaves, acts, or reacts to a certain event or situation. It is the intention or state of mind of individuals.

Attitudes are based on people's own beliefs and creations. Attitudes are the result of one's own experiences and are the foundation of motivation. Therefore, attitudes are constantly changing and are influenced by the surrounding reality. Although attitudes are not the same as reality, they are modified by reality.

Like behavior, attitudes cannot be seen, but they can be deduced and are often the subject of intuition. Intuition is a term that comes from the Latin *intueri*, and can be translated as looking inward or contemplating. It is what is obvious or common sense. And intuition is much stronger than beliefs and reason itself. It moves in the realm of emotions and feelings.

That is why followers of a leader do not explain their determination and decision to follow and admire someone who attracts them with their charismatic power. They just follow them, period, as long as it satisfies their current needs.

Second Examination:

What is the ability to motivate and generate admiration all about?

Option 1 It is about a leader manipulating a group of people.

Option 2 It consists of the art of influencing the minds of individuals.

Option 3 It is what a leader offers and what their followers value.

Option 4 It is intuition that moves in the realm of emotion.

4.2 Traits and signs of charismatic people

Charismatic people have obvious traits that identify them and do not go unnoticed. In addition, there are signs that allow us to infer and recognize the existence of a charismatic person in a group, community, or society. But what are these traits and signs of a charismatic person? Charismatic people have an inner strength that shines through and reflects what they carry inside in three obvious areas: physically, mentally, and spiritually.

In terms of physical appearance and body language. Charismatic people have an open, hygienic, and healthy posture. When they speak, they keep their hands away from their face, away from their body, and with their palms facing forward or upward. Their body language is genuine and authentic. They find it easy to socialize with different groups of people. Their facial expressions convey joy and kindness, generating sympathy wherever they go.

Charismatic people develop a genuine smile, nod their heads when others speak, briefly touch the arm of the person they are talking to, and maintain eye contact. When they speak, they address the audience. They move around enthusiastically, lean forward slightly, and look around the auditorium. They maintain a calm gaze and do not show nervousness. They adapt their body language to the way they speak. They attach great importance to gestures, but do not fall into arbitrariness. They express topics with passionate fluency and their gestures communicate feelings. They break paradigms. They think outside the box. They lead projects. They follow different methods

and formulas to obtain different results. They are experts in what they do.

Emotionally and affectively. Charismatic people are intensely emotional, sensitive, and cordial. They are very humanitarian and sensitive. They make a difference and are controversial. Their charisma helps them to be effectively innovative, intuitive, and eloquent. They are creative and original. In their speeches, they are clear, fluid, energetic, and articulate. They regularly evoke images, narrate anecdotes, or provide accurate illustrations.

With harmony and excellent rhythm, they sketch out the verbal beat with well-accentuated pauses, creating tension or emphasis among their listeners. They live free of harmful emotions. Their communication is genuine and authentic, natural and effortless. They socialize with joy and kindness and generate sympathy. They have a good sense of humor, allowing them to be sarcastic without being grotesque. Their spontaneity brings smiles to the faces of their admirers. When adversity, frustration, and pain come their way, they give life lessons and handle the situation with humility. Through willpower, dignity, and perseverance, they overcome misfortune. They set life goals that make them happy. They are worthy of admiration and respect.

In the spiritual and transcendental aspect. Doors open everywhere for charismatic people. In popular language, it is said that they have an angel or an aura that helps them attract attention and always be liked. Good vibes accompany them. Charismatic people are distinguished by their gift of service and are very people-oriented. They are kind and cheerful. In their spiritual value, they develop the ability to bring joy to

those around them. They impress others by being people who are very trustworthy.

They are always available and teachable. They carry the value of humility in their spirit. They learn and ask questions when they don't know something. They recognize those who teach them. They are supportive and kind. They inspire those around them. They are visionaries and dreamers. They shine with positive vibrations that generate peace and joy. Their followers feel protected, placid, and free from boredom, as if the lives of their supporters were better off in their presence.

They are always open, and harmony and spiritual connection flow from them, producing changes in their followers' health and behavior, bringing maturity and restoring peace within themselves. They ask for forgiveness and know how to forgive. They acknowledge their mistakes with decorum and dignity. They rid themselves of selfishness, arrogance, and pride. They always acknowledge their faults. They rely on the good advice of their conscience to have spiritual rest and inner freedom.

They take risks and make sacrifices. They bear witness, set an example, and act in accordance with the ideas they promote. They care about the common goal and the role of each person. They are admired because they enjoy things and situations that others would like to have and enjoy, such as good health, success, and power. They are recognized for the moral values, discipline, energy, and drive that characterize and represent them.

Third Examination:

What are the traits and signs of charismatic people?

Option 1 They are unusual behaviors that certain people have.

Option 2 Their traits and signs are physical, mental, and spiritual.

Option 3 They are liked by everyone and live very well.

Option 4 They are successful, very disciplined, and bear witness to life.

4.3 Supernatural habits given by God.

A habit is considered to be any repeated behavior or conduct, and the regular exercise of a faculty, talent, or aptitude by a person. Habits are attitudes that appear over time, develop, and are maintained, giving identity and authority to the person who possesses these values through their gifts and conditions.

Therefore, charisms, which are gifts freely given by God to certain people, are habits. For people who have charisms exercise and perform these gifts on a daily basis. That is, charismatic gifts remain in the person and remain habitual in those who possess them. Habits are gifts from God developed by human beings. All gifts are given by God. Whether they are gifts for performing a simply human trade or art, or some spiritual gift that serves as a means for God's grace to benefit humanity. "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). God's gifts become habits through the action, practice, and exercise of those gifts. As the charismatic person remains spiritually healthy and grows, the gifts become more valuable. As the apostle Paul himself warns: "Dear friends, I am warning you in advance. Be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the errors of those wicked people and lose the firm foundation you have. Instead, grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:17-18).

The proper exercise of spiritual gifts allows for the spiritual growth and maturity of those who possess charisms: "That

process will continue until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... He makes the whole body fit together. And each part, by fulfilling its specific function, helps the others to develop, and then the whole body grows and is healthy and full of love" (Ephesians 4:13, 16). These gifts given by God make the believer's life fruitful, expressed in the body of Christ, which is the church. And as the body of Christ becomes healthier through the habits of believers, God manifests greater power and glory: "But if you all prophesy, and unbelievers or people who do not understand these things come into the meeting, they will be convinced of sin and judged by what you say. As they listen, their secret thoughts will be exposed, and they will fall on their knees and worship God, declaring, 'Truly, God is here among you'" (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). Another valuable and precious guarantee is that the gifts will always remain. The gifts will always be there; God is faithful and keeps His Word. You cannot renounce God's gifts and calling: "For God's gifts and calling are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29).

Paul exhorts and encourages us to develop these gifts from God, for we have all been blessed and equipped to be leaders through the natural talents God has given us: "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10).

Gifts must be turned into habits. As long as a person has faith, they can believe and be faithful to God's gifts. If a person neglects their faith, their power and strength to believe weakens and they fall into unfaithfulness: "So, consider Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ, entrusted with the task of

explaining the mysteries of God. Now it is required that a steward be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

These talents that have been manifested and appreciated by believers must be submitted to God's will and always consecrated to the Lord, and they must be used for His honor and glory, for they are given by the Holy Spirit for the common good of the church: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different ways of serving, but we all serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us" (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Therefore, although gifts are given by God, human beings must turn them into habits through hard work and years of practice. Gifts and talents must be developed and used responsibly. We must all give account for our talents and gifts given by God, as Paul says: "It is true, each of us will have to answer for himself before God" (Romans 14:12).

Fourth Examination:

What are the supernatural habits given by God?

Option 1 They are gifts from God developed by human beings.

Option 2 They are gifts and habits that God gives to each person.

Option 3 They are when someone is born with great intelligence and talent.

Option 4 Each person must give an account of their talents and gifts.

4.4 The ability to manage gifts

From the beginning, God enabled human beings to be stewards and not owners of His creative work. To manage is to act in favor of fulfilling the objectives and purposes set by the owner of the enterprise. In our case, God is the owner of everything (Exodus 19:5), but above all of ourselves, for we are his property: "Do you not realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The identity of a Christian is not to love, nor to be righteous, nor to go to church or do works of mercy. People do those things simply because they are human. The Christian's personality is to belong to Christ. To be a Christian is not to live for ourselves, but to live for Christ: "He died for all so that those who receive Christ's new life will no longer live for themselves. Rather, they will live for Christ, who died and rose again for them" (2 Corinthians 15). To administer is to ensure that an organization's physical resources, human agents, financial means, and technical instruments fulfill the plans of its owner: "Then God blessed them with the following words: Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the animals that run on the ground" (Genesis 1:28).

God is the one who distributes gifts (Ephesians 4:8) and distributes them as his Spirit wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is not human beings who allocate or assign gifts. Humanity is the steward of gifts. Charismatic people have the ability to administer gifts because God Himself works with those who have

gifts, as the apostle Paul clearly interprets: "God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us" (1 Corinthians 12:6). God himself works through the gifts that he himself bestows. It is not so difficult for human beings when they do God's will and live according to his guidelines: "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). When Jesus chose the disciples, it was so that they would be with him and become evangelists (Mark 1:17). In the end, he commanded them: "Go and make disciples... teaching them" (Matthew 28:19-20). Therefore, the Church is to evangelize and make disciples, through the calling that God has given it. When human beings manage well the gifts that God has entrusted to them, they live in peace, and that peace comes from the joy that derives when human beings walk in accordance with the path that Christ has shown them (John 14:6). God does not want us to ignore his gifts, but rather to know his gifts. From the beginning, the early Christians had to face the responsibility of managing God's gifts. Through these gifts, Christians had to demonstrate their faithfulness to Christ, be purified, and learn to depend absolutely on God, since God works and flows where gifts are managed well, as good heirs:

"So then, if we are children, we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17). Gifts are God's power (1 Corinthians 2:1-5) that build up the church through the good stewardship of Christians, gifts they have received since the beginning of their ministry (1 Corinthians 12:11), which were confirmed in promise by Jesus Christ himself (John 14:12). Thus, the ability to administer gifts consists of

producing the fruits that God expects as a result of our actions (Matthew 7:16). It is the result of human behavior. Administering God's gifts with honesty and great responsibility produces healthy growth in the church. Healthy growth in the local church: -Spiritual growth is projected. Obedience to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32), who fills us with power to be witnesses of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). -Numerical growth is projected. Multiplication like the first Christian community (Acts 2:47), from 12 to 70 to 120 to 500 to 3,000 to 5,000 and then millions. -Organizational growth is projected. New leadership emerges, ministries are renewed, and believers will cultivate the fruits of ongoing evangelism. God's plan to give us gifts is based on the formation of leaders, responding to the task of training them all (Ephesians 4:11-12). That task of managing gifts well is done through personal contagion (Mark 3:4), gradually and incrementally. The early Christians (2 Timothy 2:2; Acts 6:7; 9:31) had the same impact that the church has today when God's gifts are well managed.

Fifth Examination:

What does the ability to administer gifts consist of?

Option 1 It is to administer all gifts with honesty and good judgment.

Option 2 It is to produce abundant and high-quality fruit of all kinds.

Option 3 It is to make good use of God's resources and means.

Option 4 It is the result of human behavior.

4.5 Fruits as a result of gifts

The term fruit is derived from the Latin *fructus*. It refers to enjoying, making use of, or consuming. In other words, fruit is what a person enjoys and consumes as a result of their efforts. Therefore, to bear fruit is to produce, obtain, or bring about yield or gain. It is to produce good results.

Although in the beginning it referred only to the productivity obtained from the earth, especially from plants and their fruit, it later took on a figurative meaning. For example, Christ desires that his followers in his church bear much fruit (John 15:2). This refers to the attitudes and actions of those who live for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:15), guided and controlled by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:6).

In other words, nothing and no one produces on their own. Fruit is the result of an action or an attitude. In the Christian sense, fruit is the result of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:11), which perfect the life of the Christian. The fruits are the result of a long and painful process. Jesus himself warned of this when he said that it was necessary for the seed to die in order to produce new grains and an abundant harvest of new lives: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). Therefore, gifts work through a disciplinary work that the Holy Spirit does in the life of the Christian, who allows himself to be molded in order to produce good results: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time it is receiving it. On the contrary, it is painful! But later, it produces

the peaceful harvest of a righteous life for those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:11).

On the contrary, if Christians do not allow themselves to be guided and led by the Holy Spirit, their lives are fruitless: "They are like trees in autumn, twice dead, because they bear no fruit and have been uprooted" (Jude 1:12). As Paul warns, these would be only works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), which have nothing to do with the spiritual: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

The fruits are the result of God's gifts, because the gifts are the seed that contains the DNA of Christ. As the gifts mature in the charismatic person, they produce fruit. The measure of the gifts is equivalent to the yield obtained: "So, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, you can identify people by their actions" (Matthew 7:20). In addition to the painful process of metamorphosis that the person who possesses the gifts undergoes, in order to bear more fruit, it is necessary for the Christian to continue to go through various trials, compared to the pruning of a tree: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that does not bear fruit and prunes every branch that does bear fruit, so that it will bear even more" (John 15:1-2).

When we belong to Christ (Ephesians 2:10) and live daily for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:15), we will bear fruit. There is no alternative; we bear fruit if we are and remain united to Jesus Christ: "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot bear fruit if it is cut off from the vine, and neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me" (John 15:4).

Furthermore, the only way to confirm that we are Christians and faithful disciples of Jesus is by our results. The standard of gifts is fruit. The quality, excellence, and measure of our faith are evidenced, testified to, and valued in the fruit: "When you produce much fruit, you show that you are my true disciples. That brings much glory to my Father" (John 15:8).

However, the genuine Christian has nothing to worry about. He cannot live an anguished or desperate life wondering whether or not he will bear fruit. The harvest is assured. The only attitude we should have is to let Jesus work in us. Because if we are Christians, it is by pure divine disposition and not by our own will: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you" (John 15:16).

Jesus himself says that if we love him, we will keep his commandments (John 14:21), and the sign that we know Christ is that we keep his commandments (1 John 2:3). Everything is based on listening to and obeying the Word, which is Jesus himself. In the parable of the sower, Jesus speaks of the different people who hear the Word of God: "The seeds that fell on good soil represent those who truly hear and understand the word of God, and they produce a harvest thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times greater than what was sown" (Matthew 13:23).

In conclusion, fruits are the result of God's gifts in our lives. But in order to bear fruit, we must die to ourselves, to human laws, to our whims, and to mere customs, so that Christ and His grace may work in us, as the apostle Paul confirms: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, the question is this: you died to the power of the law when you died with Christ, and now you are

united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God" (Romans 7:4).

The dilemma of whether or not to produce fruit consists in discerning what we do, in monitoring our Christian life daily, and in evaluating the actions of the church. The Word itself warns us about the appearance of false prophets in the church (Matthew 7:5). It denounces false Christs (Matthew 24:24), false apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13), false brothers (Galatians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 11:20), false teachers (2 Peter 2:1), and even fraudulent workers (2 Corinthians 11:13).

The sacred writings are very clear and instruct us on how to identify these types of people. It is a matter of looking at and examining the fruits. Good fruits can only come from a righteous Christian life. Anyone, even if they speak of God, even of Christ, can produce false fruit. We must be cautious. The Word of God alone can produce changes in human life. It works in your favor:

"The same Good News that came to you is now spreading throughout the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere through the change of life it produces, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth of God's wonderful grace" (Colossians 1:6).

The Christian life does not stop or cease to produce. It is like a tree by the river, always lush and leafy, bearing fruit all year round (Jeremiah 17:8). The quality of a life is measured by its results: "Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce all kinds of good fruit. Meanwhile, you will grow as you learn to know God more and more" (Colossians 1:10).

Sixth Examination:

Why are fruits the result of God's gifts?

Option 1 Because every Christian should produce abundant fruit.

Option 2 Because we must discern and be vigilant in the faith.

Option 3 Because they are the seed that contains the DNA of Christ.

Option 4 Because gifts are indispensable in Christians.

4.6 Talents in relation to their activities

We have talked about charisms, gifts, and fruits. Now let's move on to talents. Charismatic people are gifted people. These gifts are special abilities that God gives to believers through talents, so that these talents may bear fruit.

Talents refer to the results of the genetic inheritance of a person created by God. The abilities of talented people correspond to the training they have undergone. There is a clear difference between talent and gifts. Gifts are spiritual assets and result from the power of the Holy Spirit. Talents are the tools of gifts, which when used profitably produce abundant fruit, in proportion to the gifts that the person has received.

Gifts are not seen; what is observed are talents. The gift of teaching is seen in a person's pedagogical talent. The gift of exhortation is visible in the persuasion that a person exercises over another person or a group. The change in behavior that occurs among people who have been persuaded is the fruit. The same is true of the gifts of solidarity, healing, miracles, tongues, prophecy, and leadership, among others. When these gifts are exercised, talented people appear in the same areas as God's gifts. Now, a talented person must be prepared to produce fruit. The fact is that sometimes, even though there is a lot of talent, the fruit is absent because of the negligence of the one who has developed the talents. They do not put them to work.

Apathy or discouragement lead to burying those talents. It may also be that they simply use them for personal gain, instead of using them for collective service, in fulfillment of the duty of talents. The fact is that, by their very nature, talents

always favor the gifts we have received. Paul himself teaches and encourages us to live productive lives. He explains what our attitude as believers in Christ should be:

"So let us not become weary in doing good. At the proper time we will reap a harvest of blessings if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9). So we are called to do good, sometimes big, sometimes small. What happens is that there are people who, even if the good they have to do is small, do not do it. That is called failure to put one's talent to work. The fact that they do not put their talents to work is a clear manifestation of laziness, neglect, lack of interest, and contempt for the one who has given them the talent and its proper purpose. Therefore, although gifts are spiritual, talents are physical, human, and social. The fruits of talents are valued and evaluated by their tangible and measurable results, according to each person's possibilities.

Talents are dependent on your activities because actions must be of quality and excellence. Therefore, you must live for someone else, not for yourselves. Christians live for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:15). We must know for whom we work, so that our efforts are not in vain: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

In Matthew 25:14-30, we find the parable of the talents. In this passage, we see that a man gives, gifts, or empowers three people with his wealth in talents. The gifts are visible in talents, which materialize in goods. The main teaching is that the Lord expects his servants to be faithful while he returns at his second coming. He expects us to be faithful with the gifts He has given

us. He expects us to bear fruit and to act according to the capacities and scope of those gifts.

God calls each person to life and gives them talents. God entrusts a mission to each person. It is a mission that must be fulfilled. Gifts are talents, and those talents must be reproduced through exercise, practice, or action in productivity, which we call fruits. To refuse to use one's talents is to harm and discredit the very purpose of human existence. For no human being lacks the gift of God's love, but that love must be cared for and guarded with altruism in the development of activities.

Therefore, although talents represent physical and material possessions, they derive from the gifts and qualities that God provides to each person. But each person must reproduce to the maximum what they have received. Talents are found in the activities of people with charisma. Some people have a great influence on others, others are very helpful, and many heroically devote themselves to caring for the helpless, defenseless, and hopeless.

Talents manifest themselves in various functions, trades, professions, arts, or jobs. They are also expressed in the studies that certain people undertake in research, analysis, and dissemination of results for the development and well-being of humanity. Others are experts in a branch of knowledge, in various fields of science, or have excellent technical skills in multiple areas of human knowledge. There are those who hold a specific responsibility in society. In any case, we must all use our gifts to develop more talents than we receive. The problem is that many people do not know why they were born and why they are in this life.

Many live with complexes and remain perplexed in the face of life's challenges. This attitude of confusion is a clear sign that they do not know their gifts and are unaware of their talents. But our duty, because of our origin and nature, is to know how to discern our gifts and turn them into talents, so that we can bear much fruit (John 15:8).

Seventh Examination:

Why are talents dependent on your activities?

Option 1 Because the actions of a Christian must be productive.

Option 2 Because actions must be of quality and excellence.

Option 3 Because there are those who bear responsibilities in their work.

Option 4 Because we must produce according to our possibilities.

4.7 Virtues are the fruit of the art of learning

Habits are attitudes and behaviors that are repeated regularly in a person. There are good habits called virtues and bad habits known as vices. Depending on a person's behavior, we can tell what kind of habits they have cultivated in their life. Acting with restraint and working with wisdom and sobriety are signs of the perfection of gifts in talented actions that make a person good, high-quality, or excellent.

Virtues are the habits that human beings have developed through their talents, thanks to the gifts they have received from their divine nature. In other words, virtues are the fruits of habits, and habits are achieved when a person sets out to learn, when they are open and teachable. Habits are acquired through the art of learning.

Art is understood as any human activity that, when done with care and dedication, produces good results, full of aesthetics and beauty, in a repetitive and permanent manner. Learning is understood as the acquisition or modification of abilities, such as skills, knowledge, behaviors, or values as a result of study, experience, instruction, reasoning, and observation.

Therefore, virtues are achieved when information is assimilated and a new strategy of knowledge and action is adopted. Virtues are the fruit of learning. Therefore, if we want to have hope, we must cultivate love, waiting, desiring, and longing for God with firm confidence: "And that hope will not end in disappointment. For we know how tenderly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his

love" (Romans 5:5). And if we are patient and persevere in seeking to acquire what we desire, we are cultivating hope:

"Rejoice in the hope we have. Be patient in difficulties and keep praying" (Romans 12:12). Furthermore, the virtue of hope is a legacy that can be observed in the experience of others who have cultivated and put it into practice before us: "This hope is a firm and reliable anchor for the soul; it leads us through the curtain into God's inner sanctuary. Jesus has already entered there for us. He has become our eternal High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:19-20). Hence, virtues are achieved through processes. Virtues do not appear spontaneously from one moment to the next. People need to practice, gain experience, and evolve their actions.

Through virtues, people acquire knowledge in its various dimensions: concepts, procedures, attitudes, and values. Virtues are mental abilities filled with knowledge and acquired habits, developed skills, and forged attitudes. Virtues are the fruit of the art of learning because they are the result of practicing good habits.

Without virtues, we get nowhere. They are the vitality that allows us humans to adapt, both consciously and unconsciously, to the environment in which we live by modifying our customs and behaviors. So, by nature, human beings are endowed with gifts. Then, when they acquire the use of reason regarding their gifts, they realize the talents they have received through spiritual gifts.

Then, through repetition, multiplication, or development of those talents, the person becomes talented. That talented habit is what is called virtue. Human beings are born without virtues. Virtues are learned and cultivated habits. Therefore,

virtues arise from the thoughtful choices a person makes in their daily life. Virtues are what determine us to be a certain way, unrepeatable and unique.

Virtues are what allow us to be well-disposed and do good. They are what drive us to be capable of performing the functions that are proper to our being as persons, with the functions and performance of the missions that life has entrusted us to carry out. In the course of existence, there are many occasions when there is abuse by excess and censorship by default. Virtue is the middle ground, which is the highest point in terms of goodness and perfection.

The middle ground is the summit. The middle ground admits neither excess nor deficiency. Good is good, and evil is evil. Vices are vices, and virtues are virtues. You either have them or you don't. Through virtues, we avoid making bad choices and more easily achieve the things God wants us to do. We effectively carry out the mission and respond to the vocation God has entrusted to us in this life.

Thus, virtues such as prudence, justice, peace, fortitude, temperance, faith, hope, and charity must be learned through education and teaching, for they are obtained through the practice of customs and habits, as the Apostle Paul expresses: "And now, beloved brothers, one more thing to finish. Focus on everything that is true, everything that is honorable, everything that is just, everything that is pure, everything that is beautiful, and everything that is admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise" (Philippians 4:8).

There is no virtue without goodness. Virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good and give the best in concrete actions. It is the free practice of doing good. But we need a light

to illuminate our path in order to acquire virtues. That light is found in the writings left to us by the sacred authors.

Prudence is acquired if we accept that "the end of the world is approaching. Therefore, be serious and disciplined in your prayers" (1 Peter 4:7). When a thought comes to our mind, we must have the ability to make a judgment, to discern what is good and what is appropriate, so that we can later give an opinion or make a wise decision for the true good.

Justice: "Masters, be fair and impartial to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 4:1). Then, if we wish to cultivate justice, there must be a constant desire and a firm will to give God and our neighbor what belongs to them and is due to them. Fortitude: "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here in the world you will have many trials and sorrows; but take heart, for I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Temperance: "Teach older men to exercise self-control, to be worthy of respect, and to live wisely. They must have a solid faith and be full of love and patience" (Titus 2:12).

So, if we want to cultivate the virtue of temperance, we must learn to moderate our attraction to sensual pleasures and seek moderation in the use of created goods. The apostle Paul encourages us by saying that we can act as God wants us to act, and he enlightens us when he insists: "Three things will last forever: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

And in his writings, Paul defines each of the divine virtues: Regarding faith, the apostle affirms: "This Good News reveals how God makes us righteous in his sight, which is achieved

from beginning to end through faith. As the Scriptures say: "It is through faith that the righteous have life" (Romans 1:17).

Faith is shown through love: "For once we have placed our faith in Christ Jesus, it does not matter whether we are circumcised or not. What matters is faith expressed through love" (Galatians 5:6). Faith cannot be said to exist unless it produces good results, as the apostle James says: "Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without good deeds is dead" (James 2:26). As for the virtue of hope: "Let us hold fast without wavering to the hope we profess, for God is faithful to fulfill his promise" (Hebrews 10:23).

Charity, for its part, is the summit of the virtues: "So now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34). Therefore, virtues are stable dispositions of the human understanding and will, which regulate our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith.

Virtues grow through education, deliberate acts, and persevering effort. For its part, divine grace purifies and elevates our virtuous habits toward the perfection of our highest ideals. In any case, virtues have as their origin, motive, and object God himself, who has come to humanity through Jesus Christ, our perfect model of how virtues are acquired and cultivated.

Eighth Examination:

Why are virtues the fruit of the art of learning?

Option 1 Because they are the result of practicing good habits.

Option 2 Because they are the work of good luck and chance.

Option 3 Because gifts automatically produce good fruits.

Option 4 Because everything depends on God and human beings only accept.

4.8 Qualities visualize virtues

Qualities define people. Someone's way of being and their positive qualities are visible. When someone wants to justify their behavior, they say, "God knows my heart." It is true that God knows everything (Luke 16:15), but we also know people's deeds, character, behavior, and actions. There is something that makes visible what we have and carry within us. The fruits are on the outside, they can be seen, they are on the branches of the tree, not in its roots.

Qualities visualize virtues because qualities are the result of people's character. The way a person speaks, behaves, and acts reflects who they are. We often talk about qualities spontaneously when we refer to a person's good behavior. But we have never asked ourselves what qualities are, where they come from, and how they are acquired. Among the most common qualities are humility, persistence, sobriety, responsibility, generosity, purity, and diligence. But other qualities that are also valued in human beings include joy, humor, optimism, kindness, companionship, industriousness, goodness, authenticity, hygiene, loyalty, simplicity, moderation, fidelity, and friendship. There are more specific qualities such as writing and reading well, speaking elegantly, being well-educated, and having a good memory.

Of course, thinking before acting, listening to others, and keeping secrets are great qualities that add to the humanity of those who possess them. Many people are characterized by being very careful with their appearance and physical objects, being understanding of others, liking to help others, and trying

to solve problems. Some people have a great capacity for motivation, share what they know, and are always learning.

Throughout the Bible, there are many episodes, events, and recommendations that encourage us to cultivate these qualities (James 3:17-18). We are often asked to develop these qualities and pay close attention to practicing them: "And do not forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God" (Hebrews 13:16).

Qualities make a difference and distinguish people from others. It is said that qualities can be natural, but in everyday experience, what is most often observed is that they are acquired over time or learned through warning and admonition: "Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good deeds, generous to those in need, and always willing to share with others" (1 Timothy 6:18). Paul exhorts them to practice generosity. For it is the virtuous quality that human beings have of giving and understanding other people. It is also known as charity and solidarity.

When generosity is absent, the fruits of a person's life diminish. That is why Jesus himself declares: "Give to those who ask you, and do not turn away from those who want to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:42). John the Baptist himself, as the precursor of the Messiah, persuaded people in his preaching to live righteously by practicing justice toward others: "John answered, 'If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry'" (Luke 3:11). For his part, the apostle Paul invites us to progress and perfect the gifts we have received, putting our qualities into action:

"If your gift is to encourage others, encourage them. If your gift is to give, give generously. If God has given you the ability

to lead, take that responsibility seriously. And if you have the gift of showing kindness to others, do so willingly" (Romans 12:8). Like John the Baptist (Mark 1:4), Paul invites us in his writings to change our lives. He says that by putting aside our bad habits, we should focus on cultivating honorable qualities:

"If you are a thief, stop stealing. Instead, use your hands for good and worthy work, and then share generously with those in need" (Ephesians 4:28). Through the recommendations that Paul gives to his disciple Timothy, we learn that widows are deserving and qualified to receive blessings and help from others if they have previously shown that they have cared for other people: "Let her have a good reputation for her good works, if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the feet of the saints, if she has helped those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work" (1 Timothy 5:10).

Therefore, qualities are those habits that characterize, distinguish, and define people from others. It is someone's own way of being, their quality and excellence. We can all develop qualities. But it is necessary to believe in ourselves, value ourselves as people, and focus on improving and reaching a high potential of humanity.

If we want to have qualities, we must be willing and accustomed to seeing the best in others, appreciating people, and treating others as we want to be treated (Luke 6:31).

Ninth Examination:

Why do qualities visualize virtues?

Option 1 Because we must change the way we think.

Option 2 Because we all need to develop the qualities.

Option 3 Because we need to make good use of our gifts.

Option 4 Because they are the result of people's character.

4.9 Charisms strengthen evangelization

Charisms are granted by the Holy Spirit for the purpose of spreading, transmitting, and communicating the gospel (Acts 1:8). They are gifts of renewal, to fulfill the task of evangelization. Charisms renew the strength to carry out evangelization (Acts 2:4). The sole task of charisms is to make the gospel known as the wonders of God (Acts 2:11). Evangelizing is not an option, it is a command (Matthew 28:19-20). The apostle Paul understood this very well, because he was guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-15), when he stated with determination:

"However, preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do so. How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Good News! If I did it on my own initiative, I would deserve to be paid, but I have no choice, because God has entrusted me with this sacred duty. What, then, is my reward? It is the opportunity to preach the Good News without charging anyone. For that reason, I never claim my rights when I preach the Good News" (1 Corinthians 9:16-18).

The attitude and willingness to communicate the gospel are born when one has the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The Samaritan woman rediscovers the gift of the Lord and runs quickly to announce it to her people (John 4:28-29). The woman discovers who Jesus is and then transmits what Jesus is.

Once again, the popular saying applies that no one gives what they do not have, because what is in our hearts is what we say to others (Matthew 12:34). The sole purpose of the church's existence is to evangelize. For to evangelize is to make Christ known, but no one can make him known unless they have contemplated his divinity and been in constant union with him in the Holy Spirit: "Since we live by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's guidance in every aspect of our lives" (Galatians 5:25). Jesus himself begins his ministry by proclaiming the good news through the power and strength of the Holy Spirit:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be set free, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the Lord's favor has come" (Luke 4:18-19). Charisms have renewed the vision of the church throughout history. If evangelization is the permanent action of the church, charisms are the nourishment that makes such evangelization possible. Charisms strengthen evangelization because they are the fuel of the evangelizer. Where there are people with charisms, an evangelized church is born, develops, and remains. Charismatics live evangelizing, with an attitude that is always new in their methods (Acts 2:44-47), new in their zeal (Acts 4:31), and new in their expression (Acts 4:42).

No church can multiply and grow in membership if it does not have people with talents who exercise the office of evangelization (Matthew 25:15). Evangelization acquires all its power and splendor when its strength is based on the gifts that God grants to its agents (1 Corinthians 12:11). For just as no one can call God Father except by the power of the Holy Spirit

(Galatians 4:6), so it is with evangelism: "No one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Although there are various charisms (1 Corinthians 12:4), there is only one Spirit, who gives rise to the charisms, building up the body of Christ and leading the church to the perfection of its holiness (1 Corinthians 12:7). Virtues are the result of practicing gifts. First, one receives the gift of belief, and then one practices that gift until one attains the virtue of faith. As in the following case: "Immediately the boy's father cried out, 'Yes, I believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!'" (Mark 9:24).

Seeing that the disciples were unable to cast the demon out of that person, the boy's father understands that faith must come from Christ, not from mere human will and effort. Therefore, it is the Holy Spirit who empowers the agents of evangelization. There are clear qualities in a person with charisma. He is a person of God, who flees from evil and pursues righteousness and is obedient to Christ's commands without hesitation (1 Timothy 6:11-16).

Evangelism leaders are empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out their ministry. In addition to knowing the Holy Spirit, they are infallibly guided to the truth. It is the Spirit who teaches them everything and reminds them of everything Christ said (John 14:16-26).

The quality of evangelism is measured by its results. Therefore, the purpose is to produce fruit, which is the result of remaining faithful and united to Christ (John 15:5), for the strength of the church in the transformation of the world.

Tenth Examination:

Why do charisms strengthen evangelization?

Option 1 Because they guide the church to the full and complete truth.

Option 2 Because they are the fuel of the evangelizer.

Option 3 Because they make the hidden mysteries of Christ visible.

Option 4 Because evangelization is mandated by Christ.

4.10 Charisms produce ministries

The permanent fruits of charisms are ministries. Evangelization is currently taking place throughout the world. Evangelizers exercise their office with courage, strength, and the ever-new action of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit distributes charisms as he sees fit (1 Corinthians 12:11), inspiring those he chooses to respond to the call of mission with deep seriousness and conviction.

There is a personal calling to evangelize, and there is also a collective calling. The call is not only individual, but the Holy Spirit raises up the same charism in several people so that, in common unity, they may fulfill the duty of evangelization as the church in the world. Today, the same thing is happening as in the early Christian community. The Holy Spirit endows suitable agents with charisms and sets them apart for ministry:

"One day, while these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2). The purpose is that evangelism should not be a merely human endeavor. Rather, it should be the work of the Holy Spirit, through agents empowered by God himself, as the apostle Paul so aptly put it:

"I am a special messenger of Christ Jesus sent to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News to present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16). What we generally call Christian denominations are institutes, agencies, or societies that have come together for a

common charism to carry out evangelization in a particular, specific, and determined environment.

Some are dedicated to evangelization through the care of children, and others through professionals. Some devote their efforts to the family, and there are those who specialize in caring for the sick, the elderly, or prisoners. These are concrete and well-defined fields. These niches that exist in the world and are identified by their physical, spiritual, social, cultural, and geographical needs cry out for the good news of life to be proclaimed to them, transforming their environments of death. Ministries are light in the darkness (Matthew 5:14-16). They proclaim the gospel as a testimony to the world (Matthew 24:14) and make the love of Christ visible (Ephesians 3:14-17). The various ministries extend the kingdom of God among humanity until the coming of Christ: "So that no one can criticize you. Live a clean and innocent life as befits children of God and shine like bright lights in a world full of wicked and corrupt people. Hold fast to the word of life; then, on the day Christ returns, I will be proud that I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless" (Philippians 2:15-16). The result of charisms are ministries. Charisms produce ministries because they are the tools to serve Christ effectively. Every ministry begins with a mustard seed, grows into a vegetable, and becomes a tree (Matthew 13:31-32). It begins as simply and plainly as the manger in Bethlehem. Ministries are initially just simple charismatic expressions, expressed by a few activists who feel the call.

Then, as the group grows, it transforms into institutes of consecrated life, into societies established, approved, and recognized by states, governments, and other religious

denominations as organizations of the Church. Ministries are the result of some people's response to the special invitation that God extends to them through the Holy Spirit.

Those who are called accept full obedience to Christ and devote themselves to the mission above their own interests and will. They seek to dedicate their entire lives to the service of God's kingdom. With these consecrated persons, ministries are born. There is a great effort to discern the new gifts of consecrated life entrusted by the Holy Spirit to the Church. Like Christ when he was consecrated by his parents in the temple, ministries also seek to enlighten those who live in darkness:

"He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (Luke 2:32). However, there are many needs in specific fields that must be evangelized. It is the Holy Spirit who calls and determines who can be useful for this work and how evangelization will be carried out. Throughout the history of the Church, from the communities that began in Asia Minor to the present day, ministries have taken on a variety of forms.

Some ministries have been dedicated to prayer, worship, and contemplation. Others have developed immersed in the active environment of civilization. The important thing is that they have been faithful in responding to God. When someone is called to a ministry, their life is transformed, their soul begins to be troubled and restless, and the Word of God takes on meaning to the ultimate consequence: "And I assure you that anyone who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive much more in this life and will have eternal life in the world to come" (Luke 18:29-30). When a person is invited by the Holy Spirit to

start a new ministry, more people join them, and together they do the work. God gives the vision and also provides the provision. A new ministry is based on unconditional love for God (Matthew 22:37), on a burning desire to become one with the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:17), and on perseverance and constancy in that devotion to God (1 John 4:16). That is what Jesus' first disciples did: "One day, as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the water, for they were fishermen. Jesus called out to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will teach you how to fish for people!' Immediately they left their nets and followed him" (Mark 1:16). This was repeated in the spirit and willing attitude of the apostle Paul later, when he was called by Jesus:

"I asked, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything you must do'" (Acts 22:10). It is the same firm response that the Lord expects today from those whom he calls to ministerial service. Those who are decisive and do not look back will be fit for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

It is important to understand that rather than judging the various religious denominations or ministries by their diversity of doctrine, theology, confessions, and methodologies, what is important is to value their ministerial service through the church in the world. Instead of criticizing differences, we must understand diversity, unify affinities and points of agreement, but above all, live love and unity, so that the world may believe in Jesus Christ (John 17:21).

Eleventh Examination:

Why do charisms produce ministries?

Option 1 Because those who are called to evangelize follow Christ.

Option 2 Because God's grace invites everyone to evangelize.

Option 3 Because there are different ministries and there is only one Lord.

Option 4 Because they are the tools to serve Christ effectively.

4.11 Charisms renew the church

The Church, although institutional, is not monolithic or static. It is founded on rock, but it is made up of many living stones. The church is made up of people, as the apostle Peter warns: "Come to him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious by God. You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:1-5).

Because of charisms, the church is a living body that transforms, changes, moves, walks, and renews itself without losing its essence. Charisms keep the church in constant motion. Charisms are extraordinary gifts from God. But they are also permanent gifts of grace that impel and move the church to constant renewal so that it may respond to the signs of the times.

The Holy Spirit distributes charisms among people to arrange and prepare for the variety of works and functions in the renewal and edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:7). The apostle Paul makes an explicit call for us to value and recognize the valuable and beneficial charisms of the Holy Spirit in the people of the church: "We ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who work among you, who preside over you in the Lord, and who admonish you; and to hold them in high esteem and love because of their work. Live in peace with one another" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13). The Holy Spirit is free to bestow charismatic gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11). But He also expects human beings to exercise their freedom, which is part of

their nature. That is why Paul encourages faithful Christians not to reject the presence of the Holy Spirit:

"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test everything; hold fast to what is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21). The Holy Spirit acts in two ways. On the one hand, he pours out sanctifying love and consecrates those who are to receive charisms. On the other hand, he opens paths for those who are bearers of charisms, to help them fulfill their mission in the church.

It is because of the dual function of the Holy Spirit that the church remains restored. Charisms renew the church because they revitalize believers for evangelization. It is through charisms that grace is actualized through virtues and fruits. The results are the ever-young and joyful face of the Church at all times: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness" (Galatians 5:22). Charisms enrich and encourage the evangelization of the Church. An ever-new evangelization is a perennial rain of grace that strengthens, beautifies, and enriches the missionary work of the Church.

Charisms are useful for the renewal of the Church. Whether they are ostentatious or sober gifts, grandiose or discreet, they are graces that strengthen, vitalize, and bless the Church. They give glory, honor, zeal, virtue, and courage to the work of evangelization.

It was precisely the charisms that the early Christians enjoyed. That is why they were able to perform so many wonders and signs. The apostles were visible signs of God's presence: "The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers often met together in

the temple, in the area known as Solomon's Portico, but no one else dared to join them, even though all the people held them in high esteem" (Acts 5:12-13).

Through the action of the Holy Spirit, the church keeps alive the flame of faith, love, and hope. The Holy Spirit is the engine that moves the church and leads it to seek new horizons, break paradigms, and achieve unexpected goals. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, the church remains without spot or wrinkle, but holy and blameless (Ephesians 5:27). In times when charisms are seen as obsolete and irrelevant, the Holy Spirit begins to blow and once again lifts up the church, moves it, and transfers it to good soil so that it may bear fruit (Matthew 13:8).

On the other hand, when the church is charismatic, faithful believers gain confidence and maintain their daily vitality. They understand that it is through humble, patient, and persevering effort that the Holy Spirit works. A charismatic person remains in the mystery of Christ and in the duty to bear witness. The Holy Spirit, through charisms, becomes the animator and sanctifier of the Church, the divine breath, the unifying principle, the source of light, vigor, support, and comfort.

Through charisms, the Holy Spirit gives peace and joy to the faith of believers; it is a sure pledge and premonitory prelude to eternal life. Charisms ignite an unquenchable fire in believers. They are gifts that put words of life into the message and awaken prophetic vision. Charismatic gifts cleanse the Church of all impurity and prolong the work of the Holy Spirit in human history.

Twelfth Examination:

Why do charisms renew the church?

Option 1 Because they keep the strength and power of faith alive.

Option 2 Because the church does not wither and remains very young.

Option 3 Because they revitalize believers for evangelization.

Option 4 Because they constantly renew the Church's vision and mission.

4.12 Charisms enliven and sanctify the church

Charisms are strength and vigor for the church. They keep the flame of fire (1 Thessalonians 1:8) alive in believers, so that they may properly exercise the salvific ministry of Christ. Ministerial work in the church requires responsibility and good witness, for the encouragement of the faithful and as a vital sign to the world. Through actions and words, prayer and suffering, the church is strengthened, does not stop, and continues to walk, through charisms.

It is through charisms that the church is always open to love, to the acceptance of all, and to the sharing of all. Through charisms, it reaches out, calls, reconciles, nourishes, forms, and sends forth in the name of Jesus Christ to fulfill the mission of reconciling us to Christ: "And all this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us the task of reconciling people to himself. For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ; God makes his appeal through us. We speak on behalf of Christ when we plead with you: Come back to God!" (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

In order to fulfill the task entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, to reconcile people to him, the presence of God's gifts is necessary. No one could be an excellent emissary and good messenger of Christ if it were not for the work of the Holy Spirit. Charisms are the sign of life in the church. When gifts, talents, and fruits are present, we can say that we are responding to the

questions of people who are broken in spirit, mind, emotions, will, and body. Gifts are a blessing. Through charisms, the church is a sacrament of God, imparting the good news of God's grace, which saves and heals every person. Charisms enliven and sanctify the Church, turning believers into ministers of the Church. This enlivening and sanctification is not achieved by the simple human work of leaders, but by the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are poured out on all believers.

Charisms, whether extraordinary or simple, surprising or everyday, are always ordered to the perfection of the Church. They animate the church with physical and spiritual vigor to be a witness to the world. Charisms produce vitality in the active service of the church. They promote holiness among all members, initiated in baptism, who make up the Body of Christ. Charisms are the living and active presence of the Holy Spirit in every faithful believer. Although the Church is a visible institution, active in works and words, it is essentially a spiritual force. God is spirit (John 4:24), He is love (1 John 4:8), He is invisible (Colossians 1:15). We are part of God's nature, therefore we are spiritual. That is, we have been freed by the Holy Spirit from physical corruption: "Because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These promises make it possible for you to participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world caused by human desires" (2 Peter 1:4).

Through charisms, the Holy Spirit makes us spiritual: "For his Spirit joins with our spirit to confirm that we are God's children" (Romans 8:16). Being already spiritual, we see and can live the restoration of paradise. From here we experience the

Kingdom of Heaven and live our adoption as children. In the Spirit, we have confidence to call God Father (Galatians 4:6) and to participate in the grace of Christ (Romans 5:2), to be called children of light (1 Thessalonians 5:5) and to share in eternal glory (1 Peter 5:3). Through charisms, the Holy Spirit makes us holy in love: "And that hope will not end in disappointment. For we know how much God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love" (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit, through his gifts, restores us to the divine image and likeness that had been lost because of sin. Divine love is the beginning of new life in Christ.

The Holy Spirit is our new life, which enables us to become witnesses of Christ's redemption through the strength and power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Through charisms, the Holy Spirit makes us servants fit for ministry: "Not that we think we are capable of doing anything on our own. Our competence comes from God. He qualified us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is not a covenant of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death, but according to the new covenant, the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6).

Our ministry is fruitful (John 15:8) because the Holy Spirit is responsible for bringing souls to the church, together with the Lord, so that they may be saved (Acts 2:42). The church is responsible for extending God's ministry. Encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it is the sign of Christ's presence in the world. Through charisms, it fulfills its mission. The Holy Spirit dwells within us. He inspires us, gives us gifts, and guides us with his grace and charisms, so that we may serve those who are waiting to receive Christ. Our work is to give, offer, and share freely what we have received freely (Matthew 10:8).

Thirteenth Examination:

Why do charisms enliven and sanctify the Church?

Option 1 To convert believers into ministers of the Church.

Option 2 To enable the Church to maintain lively and effective leadership.

Option 3 To unite believers and non-believers into one people.

Option 4 To freely give, offer, and share the gifts of faith.

4.13 Apparent dilemma between charisma and power

Throughout church history, many have pitted charisma against power. They have presented power as antagonistic to charisma. However, there is only an apparent dilemma between charisma and power. Charisma is a gift from God, offered to people through talents, so that they may bear fruit. No one bears fruit if they do not have the power to bring it about. Therefore, charisma holds power. Those who have charisma hold power.

The apparent dilemma between charisma and power stems from thinking that power is negative and charisma is positive. The truth is that there is no dilemma or controversy. For power is the mighty force of God, for whom all things are possible, "because nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). There is the power of love, just as there is the power of hope and faith. Nothing is impossible for those who have faith.

In this case, we are talking about genuine and true faith. Many will say, "I have faith." However, when it comes to seeing the results of that faith, no one can find the fruits anywhere. It is a faith that lacks effects. The quality and excellence of faith are measured by its results: "Jesus asked, 'What do you mean, 'Can I'? Everything is possible if you believe. Immediately the father cried out, 'Yes, I believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!'" (Mark 9:23-24).

It's clear! Power comes from God. For us to have that same power, all God asks of us is to have faith. Faith is enough for us to see the glory of God (John 11:40). However, humanity suffers from a lack of faith. That is why the boy's father said, "I

do believe, but help me to believe." For faith itself comes from God as a means of grace, so that we can communicate with and have access to divine power:

"In fact, without faith it is impossible to please God. Anyone who wishes to approach God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). The power of faith makes it possible for something to happen. It is being able to carry out a certain action. It is having the ability to overcome opposition with greater force in order to achieve a purpose.

Power is overcoming evil with good (Romans 12:21), destroying lies with the solidity of truth, hatred with the power of love, death with resurrection and life, as Christ did (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The power of faith would be fruitless and faith would be destroyed if it were proven that Christ did not rise from the dead. There would be no power of salvation or redemption. Our faith would not remain intact if Christ had only died: "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

With the resurrection, death, lies, the flesh, the power of Satan, and all their consequences were destroyed. With the resurrection of Christ, everything changed in our favor. Therefore, sincerity is stronger than deception, life is stronger than death, the invisible is stronger than the visible, and the spirit is stronger than the body. The Bible warns us that no human power can resist the power of the Holy Spirit forever: "You stubborn people! You are pagans at heart and deaf to the truth. Will you resist the Holy Spirit forever? That is what your ancestors did, and so will you!" (Acts 7:51). Precisely, we must not resist the Holy Spirit in order to have the power of charisms

and see their results. Faith is the only virtue that leads us to unite ourselves to the Holy Spirit in all his power.

Not resisting the Holy Spirit is allowing Him to do the work He wants to do in our lives. We begin to walk in communion with the Holy Spirit when we stop opposing Him with our thoughts, actions, and omissions. Now, the one we must confront and reject with strong resistance is the devil. There is a hidden force that incites humanity to rebel against God. Sin is not the result of chance: "When you are tempted, remember not to say, 'God is tempting me.' God can never be tempted to do evil, and he himself is never tempted. Temptation comes from our own desires, which seduce us and entice us.

These desires give birth to sin, and sin, when it is allowed to grow, gives birth to death. So do not be deceived, my beloved brothers" (James 1:13-16). Scripture itself warns us how we must fight against the forces of evil. We must do so with persistence and always following the example of Christ: "When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity" (Luke 4:13). We must resist the devil and wage war against him with the same attitude as Christ and in the same way as the early Christians did: "So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The apostle Paul knows how to defeat the enemy's forces. That is why he declares masterfully, with clarity, determination, and confidence, how we can always overcome the adversary, who is the devil: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand firm against all the devil's schemes. For we are not fighting against enemies of flesh and blood, but against evil rulers and authorities of the invisible world, against powerful

forces of this dark world and against evil spirits in heavenly places. Therefore, put on all the pieces of God's armor so that you can resist the enemy in times of evil. Then, after the battle, you will still be standing firm" (Ephesians 6:10-13). Those who have managed to resist the attacks of the evil one understand that when they have not given up, the devil has fled from them. Our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted by the devil, and after resisting all temptation, the Lord was left alone. So must we do. In order for the devil to retreat and stay away from our lives and circumstances, it is necessary to practice the instructions and prescriptions of Jesus: "You have heard the law that says punishment should be commensurate with the severity of the damage: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say: do not resist the evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer him the other cheek as well. If they sue you and take your shirt, give them your coat as well. If a soldier forces you to carry his equipment for a mile, carry it for two" (Matthew 5:38-41).

The offenses of those around you, whether family, friends, or neighbors, are chains that hinder God's purposes in your life. The flow of God in our lives is suspended when provocation, anger, resentment, and bitterness nest in our hearts. These feelings are subtle enemies against the movement of the Holy Spirit.

We often believe we are right when we are offended and allow ourselves the right to be angry (Ephesians 4:26). Without realizing it, we are denying ourselves God's grace and promises. Therefore, it is better to be at peace than to be right. We say it in prayer: "Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those

who sin against us. Do not let us give in to temptation, but rescue us from evil" (Matthew 6:12-13).

The power to forgive every offense against us restores God's loving, sanctifying, and forgiving grace. Friendship with God is reflected in good relationships with other people. When we are willing to offer forgiveness to others, we are receiving God's forgiveness and mercy. To be submissive and obedient to God is to treasure the power of his grace and gifts. God expects us to be strengthened by his power: "Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit will not tolerate humans for long, because they are only mortal flesh. In the future, the length of life will not exceed one hundred and twenty years'" (Genesis 6:3).

We must not act according to the customs learned from society, nor place too much trust in laws created by human beings. Our trust is placed in God: "So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). At the end of our existence, at the twilight of our lives. When we have reached maturity, we will realize that charisms are the power of God in our lives, to be his witnesses forever: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere: in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Fourteenth Examination:

What is the apparent dilemma between charisma and power?

Option 1 Do everything possible to gain an advantage over others.

Option 2 Let God always act on our behalf with love.

Option 3 Think that power is negative and charisma is positive.

Option 4 Fight against Satan's snares at all times.

5. DIACONIA:

Diakonia is closely related to the concept of servitude. The term comes from the Greek *διακονία*, which literally translates as "serving at table." Service that refers to the earthly, social, human, and cultural aspects. Diakonia developed in the Greek and Roman environments, under a servant profile, from a physical, material, and bodily point of view.

For its part, Jewish culture, which had adopted the same notion, considered Diakonia as domestic service when Jesus came, similar to those who served at the wedding at Cana (John 2:5). In no way did Diakonia refer to intellectual service, nor to proclaiming the gospel, nor to the spiritual realm. Furthermore, it was related only to the realm of slaves, servants, women, and children. Paul expressly used the term *diakonoi* (*diákono*) to address a specific group of people, whom he included in his special greeting. He placed them on a specific and prominent level.

With a clear ministerial identity, he recognized their specific role in God's holy people: "Greetings from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I, Paul, write this letter to all God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the ruling elders and deacons" (Philippians 1:1). In this same

order, Paul spoke of two different offices in the church: bishops and deacons. He exhorted both groups equally to follow the guidelines so that they could fulfill their required functions.

After addressing the bishops, he specified the duty of deacons: "In the same way, deacons must be worthy of much respect and have integrity. They must not be drunkards or dishonest with money. They must be committed to the mystery of faith that has now been revealed and live with a clear conscience. Let them be carefully evaluated before being appointed deacons. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, their wives must be worthy of respect and not slander anyone. They must have self-control and be faithful in everything they do. A deacon must be faithful to his wife, manage his children and others in his household well. Those who do their job well as deacons will be rewarded with the respect of others and will increase their confidence in the faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Paul addressed directly a ministerial position held by a group of men. However, in Acts 6:1-6, a text traditionally known as the appointment of the seven deacons, the word diaconate or deacon does not appear anywhere. When the problem was presented to them, the apostles simply discerned that they should not serve at the tables, distributing daily food, but that it was necessary to appoint others to perform this function:

"Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task" (Acts 6:3). At no point were the seven men given the title of deacons. Rather, the office that already existed in Greek and Roman culture for their servants was

related to the call to serve at tables, which the newly appointed men were to fulfill. Therefore, in the context of the early Christian community, diakonia goes beyond simply serving the tables with the daily ration to meet the needs of widows.

Diakonia is the social and physical service of a Christian to others. However, today diakonia is no longer limited to the aspect of human bodily needs. The deacon is a servant of the word of God. We know that the apostles decided to continue with the ministry of the word of God and prayer, without serving at tables. For their part, the chosen men not only performed the service of tables, but we also see them as ministers of the kerygma and baptism.

In the case of Stephen, he appears preaching with such dedication and great courage, even to the fatal consequences of martyrdom, as a testimony of his ministerial zeal (Acts 7:1-60). For his part, when the disciples were scattered, another of the seven was Philip, who evangelized in the region of Samaria (Acts 8:4-25), in the desert on the road to Gaza (Acts 8:26), in Azotus and Caesarea (Acts 8:40). These servants did not become servants at the specific moment when they were assigned the office of the tables. The gift of service, their diaconal spirit, already existed in them naturally. Therefore, diakonia, as service at the tables, also entails the ministry of the word of God, of prayer, and of the moving of the Holy Spirit, with his gifts and charisms:

"When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north, in the city of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way, until he reached

Caesarea" (Acts 8:39-40). It is clear that the ministry of the word of God and social ministry are priorities in the church. The social worker and servant cannot set aside the ministry of the word. Although the minister of the word can set aside social service, if others provide such diaconal service.

There is no diakonia, that is, service at the tables, without the proclamation of the word of God and prayer. But there can be preaching of the word and prayer without service at the table: "So the Twelve called all the believers together for a meeting. They said, 'We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, and not managing the distribution of food'" (Acts 6:2). Here there is clarity in distinguishing between means and ends. Table service is a means to the end, which is the proclamation of the word of God (Matthew 28:19-20) and perseverance in prayer (Acts 1:14), the learning and constant training of church members (Acts 2:42-47).

Jesus' apostles and disciples quickly learned the diaconal meaning of their Master. Jesus used diakonia to focus his proposal of service to others. Jesus himself presented himself as a servant, that is, as a deacon before others: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served (διακονηθῆναι), but to serve (διακονῆσαι) others and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

In addition to including the concept of diakonia in all his ministerial work, Jesus himself accepted diakonia in his earthly life in order to fulfill his mission: "Which is greater: the one who is at the table or the one who serves (at the table)? Is it not the one who is at the table (allowing himself to be served)? For I am among you as one who serves (at the table)" (Luke 22:27). According to Jesus' position, diakonia is a reflection of human

maturity in its physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. In childhood, there is a need and tendency to be served. Parents and guardians are the ideal helpers of childhood. But when adulthood is reached, human beings cease to be served and begin to serve. It is precisely God's desire that we be imitators of Jesus Christ: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45).

When Jesus begins his public ministry, he announces that his anointing by the Holy Spirit has an evident diaconal profile: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind that they will soon see, to set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18ff).

In the washing of feet, service is the result of love, which places the servant and the master on equal footing: "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them" (John 13:15-17).

In short, diakonia is the constant being and doing of the Church. Because the Church is diaconal in its identity, it promotes, coordinates, and guides charitable and social spirituality in its sense of Christian communication of the goods of this world. Christ made a preferential option for the poor, the little ones, the least, and so the Church must do the same.

Christ heard the cries of those who were excluded, cast aside, nullified, exploited, silenced, and so does the Church, which seeks to promote social change, both in the structures of society and in the transformation of the heart of every human

being. In the same way, the Church is not for itself. It is for humanity. It is not on earth to seek itself or to aggrandize itself, but to humbly serve all human beings.

Diakonia is the vital principle of the Church. One can receive the kerygma, one can go through the Didache and the parenesis, but if the process stops, the experience remains only as a group or spiritual movement without essence in the incarnation. On the other hand, if one advances to diakonia, the initiation of the Church is achieved, for the Church begins to be born when it becomes a servant.

With Diakonia, one begins to be Church, and then this same Church organizes and matures, reaching Koinonia.

First Examination: What is Diakonia?

Option 1 It is the appropriate assistance that the church provides to its congregation.

Option 2 It is the social and physical service of a Christian to others.

Option 3 It is the ministry of authority of the church to serve.

Option 4 It is the result of Christ's love for his church.

5.1 The new meaning of service and its value

With Jesus, the diaconal term of service takes on a new dimension. Service, while still physical, changes the attitude of the server. Now he is no longer a slave. The server is transformed into giving himself for his friends (John 15:13). Disciples who are obedient to Christ quickly learn the essence of their Christian life. Just as Christ was obedient to the one who sent him and did nothing on his own (John 5:30), so his faithful followers will do the same as their Master did:

"In the same way, when you obey me, you should say, 'We are unworthy servants who have simply done our duty'" (Luke 17:10). When we join forces, we bear witness to charity. Mercy unites us because it reflects a life of solidarity and generosity toward the less fortunate of humanity: "For I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothes. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me" (Matthew 25:35-36).

The new sense of service and its value embraces human needs with solidarity. The hardships of humanity become priority projects for the church. Now, with this new vision, church and social ministries seek to develop within the perimeter surrounding the community of faith. Serving the community surrounding the local church becomes a transcendental duty of spirituality and faith. A burning desire is born that all ministry begins with the social aspect, in obedience to Christ, who commanded his disciples to feed the hungry and exhausted crowd (Mark 6:37).

The new meaning of service is no longer simply an activity that a Christian does, nor a ministry that the church develops. Serving is the Christian's way of being and the vital sign of the church, at every moment and in every place, as a way of life, in the permanent presence of Christ (Matthew 28:20). The new meaning of service and its value have their source in love and faithfulness to Jesus (1 Corinthians 4:2). For before the Christian becomes a servant, his personality has been trained and equipped with the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit, of faith, hope, and charity (1 Corinthians 13:13).

No one can genuinely serve others without divine love in their life. The new sense of service and its value has its deep roots in the new commandment of love: "So now I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must love one another. The love you have for one another will be the proof to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35). The living image of Christ and his face is reflected in his servants, whom Jesus himself elevated to the status of confidants and friends who know everything that the Father entrusted to his Son (John 15:15). In this new reality, the disciples have the character and function of being other Christs:

"Sometimes I think that God has put us apostles on display like prisoners of war at the end of the victor's parade, condemned to death. We have become a spectacle to the whole world, both to people and to angels" (1 Corinthians 4:9). Our minds and hearts are ready to serve when they resemble Christ. The new dimension of service to others is the fruit of the Spirit of God who now dwells in us (1 Corinthians 3:16). With Jesus Christ, the Spirit came to dwell and work, not only in individuals, but in all members of the community of

believers. Just as unclean spirits dwell and rest in the bodies of unbelievers (Matthew 12:43-45), the Holy Spirit dwells in each one of us (1 Corinthians 6:16). All we have to do is accept the grace of the gift of the Holy Spirit's presence. How the Spirit comes to dwell in us is up to God: "God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us" (1 Corinthians). The practice of our talents causes the virtues that develop in us to grow. And as virtues develop and grow, they allow us to be born again: "For we are God's masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we might do the good things he prepared for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:10).

Being good does not make us different from non-believers. For often, non-believers do good things and even better things than believers. Service as simple philanthropy does not make us more spiritual. However, spiritual gifts in believers make them spiritual and holy, as well as helping them to be good and excellent servants: "God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another" (1 Peter 4:10).

Second Examination:

What is the new meaning of service and its value?

Option 1 The projects that the church develops for the benefit of all.

Option 2 The love and solidarity that human beings have for one another.

Option 3 God's action present in human activities.

Option 4 It takes on human needs with solidarity.

5.2 The new value of physical service

Physical service goes beyond simple material and bodily assistance. The new value of physical service spiritualizes the tangible, somatic dimensions and visible nature of human life. The new value of physical service dignifies those who receive help, both in body and mind, as well as in spirit. Although the assistance is tangible and material, the benefit is comprehensive. This was the service that characterized Jesus' public ministry. One of the most illustrative cases was the physical disease of leprosy. Although it was a physical condition, in many cultures the patient was shunned and despised. It was judged to be an incurable, mutilating, and shameful disorder. In Jewish culture, lepers were considered unclean and had to live apart from others, outside the camp (Leviticus 13:44). Even after being cured, they continued to be discriminated against. Simon, having suffered from leprosy, was now healthy and reincorporated into society. But he was still pointed out as a leper (Mark 14:3). It is natural that a physical illness requires physical attention. However, leprosy was related to morality and sin. Therefore, those who suffered from it did not receive any physical treatment. They resorted to miraculous acts or ritual cures of prayers and supplications. So, even though it was an epidemiological situation, discrimination and marginalization prevailed. There was a life sentence. There was no medicine, and even though the disease was considered a sin, there was no capacity for forgiveness of sins. In such dire circumstances, very few were healed:

"And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha; but none of them were cleansed, except Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:27). In contrast, in Jesus' physical ministry, everyone was healed. When a leper came to Jesus, he healed the leper (Matthew 8:1-3); when ten came, the same thing happened, all ten were freed from their disease (Luke 17:14). The new value of physical service is total and complete. Jesus made a difference. However, throughout human history, discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion have been constant and merciless practices of society, often with the indifference and complicity of authority and leadership.

Today, segregation continues based on race, gender, social class, illness, age, culture, education, among many others. It has been a scourge that is difficult to eradicate because there are socio-economic and political influences that keep it alive. There are many causes of human intolerance. Fear, ideologies, docility, unconsciousness, ignorance, and the conflagration of interests negatively fuel discrimination. For its part, Diakonia, in its new Christian dimension, is different. It is concerned with the physical well-being and basic needs of the individual in every age and culture. It transcends time, customs, and the idiosyncrasies of civilizations around the world. Since human beings have been, are, and will be the same in all times and places, it is clear that basic needs are not limited to physiological aspects alone. Rather, they are resources of great value for the quality and evolutionary excellence of humanity.

The harmonious balance of societies and cultures is based on the healthy, participatory, independent, and free development of each person in terms of economics, solidarity, and ecology. Physical needs are not measured or evaluated by simple

deprivation, scarcity, or misery, as if they could be absent from a person at any given moment. These needs are inherent to human beings.

In this sense, the new value of physical service responds to the needs of each person. It understands that physical needs are non-transferable values that are priceless, cannot be sold, acquired, or exchanged. Physical needs are inalienable values. Housing, clothing, health, food, hygiene, safety, prevention, education, family, work, recreation, personal identity, and human rights, among others. All are values inherent to the individual, which are non-negotiable.

The new value of physical service is identified with the inalienable rights and duties of human beings. It responds to the social priority of human dignity. The new value of physical service denounces any type of pollution. It highlights environmental degradation and calls for a healthy visual aesthetic. It condemns the exploitation of resources, the uncontrolled economic development of private property, and irrational technological industrialization.

The Christian vision proposes a change of mentality. Discrimination and marginalization cannot be seen as constitutive or innate to the human race. There is a different way out: "If anyone has enough money to live well and sees a brother in need but does not show compassion, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let our love not remain in words; let us show the truth through our actions" (1 John 3:17-18).

Jesus attended to physical needs. By healing the man with the withered hand, the Master goes beyond physical disability (Mark 3:1-6). Jesus focused on the dignity and value of the

human person. The same thing happened with the paralytic. By forgiving his sins, the illness disappeared and the sick man got up. It was no longer the stretcher that carried him; now the one who had been sick was carrying the stretcher (Mark 2:1-12). There is a different attitude in Jesus, admired even by his opponents (Mark 1:22). Jesus' uniqueness lay in his value of the individual. For the Messiah, humanity is above animals, religious laws, and traditions: "He said to them, 'Which one of you, if you have a sheep that falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath'" (Matthew 12:11-12).

Jesus' deduction that it is right to do good at all times was central to his ministry. Although his adversaries refuted him, in the end they were defeated (Mark 22:46). The social and religious leaders, intransigent and staunch opponents, were silent in the face of Jesus: "Then he turned to his accusers and asked them, 'Does the law allow good deeds to be done on the Sabbath, or is it a day for doing evil? Is it a day for saving life or for destroying it? But they did not want to answer him'" (Mark 3:4). The new value of physical service has its source in the incarnation of the word of God. The moment the Word took on flesh and human form in the person of Jesus Christ, a change of mentality took place. From God with us (Matthew 1:22) to God like us (Hebrews 2:17). In addition to being a historical and visible God, He was now a palpable and tangible God. Totally God and completely human. The Word became flesh like us (John 1:14), with the inevitable consequences of humanity (Philippians 2:5-8).

The incarnation is the initiating mystery of the Christian faith (1 John 4:2). From the incarnation onwards, God is a close and active being. He is present in reality, in the world, in time and space. Therefore, the personality and spirituality of Jesus are dynamic. The interrelationship between humanity and God becomes a constant discernment of the Spirit of God, who acts in the world in love and service. With God's physical presence in the world, human beings acquire and recover their spiritual dimension. True Christians view the world with indifference and cling to the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:15-16). New believers do not condition their being on material circumstances. With the Incarnation, human beings have acquired the experience of the transcendental.

Third Examination:

What is the new value of physical service?

Option 1 To get everyone to work together toward a common goal.

Option 2 Respond to the needs of each person.

Option 3: Eliminate discrimination that exists in humanity.

Option 4 To proclaim the incarnation of the Word of God as a mystery.

5.3 Service must be permanent

The call to serve was a permanent message in Jesus' public ministry (Luke 22:27). The Master came to earth to serve (Matthew 20:28). For his part, the Messiah considers blessed those who serve permanently (Luke 12:37). The apostle Paul had the same attitude of service as Jesus. He used the criterion of service to identify his laborious mission of revealing divine mysteries: "So then, Apollos and I—consider us as servants of Christ, who were entrusted with the task of explaining the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians 4:1). However, although service should be permanent, from time to time, there are glimpses and signs of fatigue. We often faint. There are times when our bodies can no longer endure. Our spirits falter.

In the same way, Jesus also experienced fatigue and endured a loss of vitality: "There was Jacob's well. Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down by the well near noon" (John 4:16). In the boat, while the disciples were frightened by the storm, they had to wake Jesus (Matthew 8:25). After long days and fatigue from performing his ministry, Jesus invited his disciples to rest (Mark 6:31).

But there was another time when discouragement was not a reason to take a break or neglect the commitment to the mission. It was necessary to go to the very end. For example, Jesus did not approve of his disciples sleeping while he was praying in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:43). And Jesus himself explains that tiredness and weakness are part of our physical nature, because spiritually we will always be ready to serve constantly, without ever faltering (Matthew 26:41).

The same warning to always be caring for and watching over God's work against the enemy's attacks was given by the apostle Peter: "Be alert! Be on your guard against your great enemy, the devil, because he prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The service of spiritual vigilance is permanent. We must be constant and persistent watchmen to avoid being taken by surprise, because we will always live in danger of losing the grace to attain holiness. Assiduous, frequent, and continuous vigilance is also necessary because there will be signs before the end of time that may confuse us, leading us to think that the second coming of Jesus is about to happen. The coming of the Son of Man should not take by surprise those who have been in prayer and constant vigilance, following the revelations and recommendations of the Master: "And since you do not know when that time will come, keep watch! Be alert!" (Mark 13:33). So we must always know how to discern (1 Corinthians 2:14), be attentive, and be sober (1 Peter 1:13). We must learn to live in the Spirit and not in the simplicity of the physical and the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

There is a time to work and a time to rest. Sometimes in the lives of the early disciples, sleeping was a positive action. After sleeping, the disciples saw the glory of Jesus in the scene of the transfiguration: "Peter and the others fell asleep. When they woke up, they saw the glory of Jesus and the two men standing with him" (Luke 9:32). Resting is not negative. Indeed, fatigue is a warning sign that it is time to stop. When you rest, ideas flow, energy is restored, the body repairs itself, the spirit takes a breath, and motivation is renewed. But resting is not simply a matter of conserving energy. It is a time to evaluate what has been done, observe what is happening, and tally the effects and

results. Rest is time used to express values, set boundaries, compare spaces, verify achievements, and guide efforts toward proposed goals. We must remember whom we serve: "Work willingly in everything you do, as if it were for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will reward you with an inheritance, and that the employer you serve is Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24).

Furthermore, God will renew our strength after we have spent it working in His service. What once tired us becomes joy and rejoicing when we serve God: "For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love for him by serving other believers as you still do" (Hebrews 6:10).

God sustains those who serve him sincerely. Serving God produces freedom from physical and material things. Greed, anxiety, and uneasiness about tangible things disappear. Work in the ministry has its reward: "Behold, I am coming soon, and I will bring my reward with me, to repay each one according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12). Let us not grow weary in doing good (Galatians 6:9). In due season we will reap. We may sometimes feel tired from working in God's service. What we must not do is grow weary of God's work. Therefore, when we feel tired and overwhelmed, the best rest is to come to Jesus (Matthew 11:28-29), so that we can continue to persevere in the service of the evangelizing mission: "Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Always work for the Lord with enthusiasm, because you know that nothing you do for the Lord is useless" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The energies and strengths we possess are to be invested and spent in God's work. For if we do not use our strengths to do good, we expose ourselves to doing evil. On the contrary, when we use them for good, God restores and renews them: "In his kindness, God called you to share in his eternal glory through Christ Jesus. And after you have suffered a little while, he will restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast" (1 Peter 5:10).

They say that there is no cold, but rather an absence of heat; there is no darkness, but rather an absence of light; there is no hatred, but rather an absence of love. Service must be permanent because human beings have been created and live to serve. That is why the apostle Paul was happy to serve: "I will gladly spend and be spent for you, even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me" (2 Corinthians 12:15).

We can become double-minded. Some days we do good, other days we don't, or worse, we do evil. Because we are destined to always do our best: "For we are God's masterpiece. He created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we might do the good things he prepared for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:10). It is clear that service must be ongoing. It must be fresh and appealing. When service becomes a habit, it helps us maintain our focus and interest in helping others.

Therefore, permanent service must be practiced until it becomes a natural habit. No one is born serving. Generosity in service develops over time. To become permanent servants, we must be people of commitment, discipline, and dedication. Behind those who serve is total commitment. Only with dedication and courage can we achieve permanent service in God's work.

Fourth Examination:

Why must service be permanent?

Option 1 Because human beings were created and live to serve.

Option 2 Because it was the attitude taught by Jesus and practiced by Paul.

Option 3 Because we are constant and persistent watchmen.

Option 4 Because service produces freedom from possessions.

5.4 Service builds relationships

The inescapable purpose of Jesus' mission was to serve (Matthew 20:28). Jesus himself emphasized to his disciples that service to others was the golden rule of his doctrine (Matthew 20:25-27). Therefore, the reason for our existence is to be instruments of service to others. The mission to serve is such an extraordinary task in Christianity that, in its highest expression, it means giving one's life for others (John 15:13). Service is the result of loving to the extreme, a sublime act of God's love that reconciles humanity (John 3:16). Jesus' great purpose is that we may be one, so that the world may believe in his redemption (John 17:21). Only service can connect us to Jesus. Service establishes coherent, stable, unbreakable, harmonious, consistent, and reasonable relationships among the members who form a perfect, useful, and effective body: "He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. And each part, by fulfilling its specific function, helps the others to develop, and then the whole body grows and is healthy and full of love" (Ephesians 4:16).

Service is the foundation of human relationships. It is the adhesive that unites and gives splendor to humanity. Human relationships reach their highest degree of sincerity and integrity when service is the fundamental essence that merges personal interests into social benefits:

"Since God chose you to be his holy and beloved people, you must clothe yourselves with tender compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience" (Colossians 3:12). Service begins by establishing relationships with oneself. That is why Jesus said to love others as you love yourself (Matthew 22:39).

It is knowing oneself in such a way that one knows what one is good at and what one is useful for. Then one moves on to brotherhood. To mutual correspondence between like-minded people who are perfectly united in the same mind and the same feeling (Acts 4:32). It is the same exhortation to unity that the apostle Paul makes when he says: "Dear brothers and sisters, I beg you by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ to live in harmony with one another. Let there be no divisions in the church. On the contrary, be of one mind, united in thought and purpose" (1 Corinthians 1:10). The vitality of the church is achieved when we find ourselves surrounded by the lives of others. We are useful when others live for us. Human beings reach their fullness and are totally complete in the presence of other living beings. Service builds relationships because it unites us with others. In the experience of the early Christians, the Spirit of Jesus commands that his servants be set apart (Acts 13:2). It is by the Spirit that the disciples are sent to specific places to exercise the ministry of service (Acts 13:4). And it is the same Spirit who empowers his ministers for the good service of ministering the gospel with power and strength (Acts 13:9). No one survives without dependence on mutual relationships of service. To the point that it is better to be united than to be right. By putting aside selfishness and self-love, we allow our hearts to be healed and our souls to shine through forgiveness: "Be understanding of each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember that the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others" (Colossians 3:13). For the fact that we no longer practice sin (1 John 3:9) does not mean that virtues exist in our lives. Nor does it mean that, because virtues now guide our lives, the enemy has left us alone (1 Peter 5:8). Charity will

always have selfishness as its adversary; piety, spiritual coldness; consideration, jealousy. Generosity, greed. The same is true of self-denial and sacrifice, which are opposed by resentment, hatred, and the thirst for revenge. Only the desire to serve respects and values the autonomy of each human being. When the gift of service is practiced, free and voluntary cooperation brings mutual benefits to people. Relationships based on service keep the mind healthy and the heart free from pettiness. It is when individuals can associate and achieve great tasks that they could not accomplish alone. Social problems are the result of people being too preoccupied with themselves. They do not care enough for one another. For physical, mental, and spiritual health facilitates human relationships, moral integrity, and consequently mutual respect.

No one can achieve happiness in isolation from others. Our fellow human beings are the ones who approve of our good way of life. The concept of the people with whom we have social relationships nourishes the meaning of our lives. Jesus begins his ministry by manifesting his glory and making the disciples believe in him through service (John 2:11). Jesus ends his ministry by teaching about service (John 13:14-15). Throughout his public ministry, Jesus was consistent in his commitment to serve (Matthew 9:35-36). For Jesus' apostles, service is a consistent sign of messianism. In his preaching, Peter highlights the miracles, signs, and wonders of his Master (Acts 2:22). Therefore, the disciples use the same formula of Jesus' service (Acts 2:43). The virtue of service is recommended until the end: "Finally, all of you should be of one mind. Have compassion for one another. Love one another as brothers and sisters. Be kindhearted and humble" (1 Peter 3:8). Service establishes a

relationship with God through the talents that a person receives. Service is the beginning of discovering gifts and putting them to work. When we begin to serve, we discover our gifts and talents, just as the apostle Paul did: "Though he was crucified in weakness, he now lives by the power of God. We too are weak, just as Christ was, but when we deal with you, we will be alive with him and have the power of God" (2 Corinthians 13:4). Service builds us up, restores us, and renews the promise of a complete life in Christ Jesus.

Fifth Examination:

Why does service build relationships?

Option 1 Because it brings people together for common purposes.

Option 2 Because it is useful for achieving goals and results.

Option 3 Because it unites us with others.

Option 4 Because it is better to be united so as not to be defeated.

5.5 Service must be timely

There is chronological time, which measures events in sequence, and God's time, called *kairos* (Mark 1:15), which is the moment of God's purpose. Both times suggest functions and mark the history of human beings. Precisely, the changes we experience and the modifications we see happen in the measure of time, whether *chronos* or *kairos*. God, in His infinite eternity, communicated with humanity in the past, but He does the same in our time and will do so forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus acted in time. He was born at a specific time, was a Jew from Galilee, and a carpenter by trade (Mark 6:3). Everything he did, he did in the here and now. His service was timely. He left nothing for later. Moreover, even before his time to act had come, he turned water into wine (John 2:4). He always performed his service at the right time. His desire to serve at the right time was his constant (Mark 1:40-42).

In all his miraculous healings, his actions were prompt and timely. This happened with the paralytic who was lowered through the roof (Mark 2:11-12), with Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:41-42), and with the dead young man of Nain (Luke 7:14-15). Everything happened at the right time, to reveal a mystery. A truth about Jesus' personality was accompanied by a sign and a signal. That is why, when the time came for Jesus to reveal that he was the living water, he turned water into wine (John 2:7-8). To confirm that he was the bread of life, he multiplied the loaves (John 6:11). To testify that he was the light of the world, he healed the man born blind (John 9:5-6). When he announced that he was the resurrection and the life, he raised

Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43). Jesus' acts are manifested in time through faith (Matthew 17:20), as is the coming of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:17). Jesus maintained his characteristics as a teacher, with clear teachings of temporal wisdom (Luke 12:22-31). Divine providence acts in time (Matthew 10:26-31), just as God's justice came at the right time (Matthew 5:45). His methodology was timely. His parables were appropriate and suited to the teaching methods of his time. His pedagogy was illustrative and simple, easy to understand and remember.

His prophecy was also very appropriate for the people of his time. Although some confused him (Matthew 16:14), everyone recognized his gift as a prophet (Matthew 21:11). We, as ministers who succeed Jesus and his apostles, must also bear fruit in season (John 15:5). If we have foliage, there must be fruit, because otherwise we would be like the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14). Even if it is not the season, we must still be useful and serve. Service must be rendered in season, because there is always time to serve and be useful to God. Our task is to bear good fruit at all times (Matthew 7:16-20).

The time will always be right (2 Timothy 4:2). We must be alert, vigilant, and active. By our fruits, we will be identified as having the Holy Spirit working in us (Galatians 5:22-23). As Christians, we must imitate the attitude of Jesus, who centered his ministry on serving humanity. Moreover, to be first, one had to be the servant of all and occupy the last place (Mark 9:35).

Our concern should be that wherever we are and whatever time it is, we are found doing God's work. Even if we are resting, eating, or sleeping, let it be the right time, that is, God's

time: "The apostles returned from their journey and told Jesus everything they had done and taught. Then Jesus said to them, 'Let us go to a quiet place by ourselves and rest a while. He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles did not even have time to eat' (Mark 6:30-31).

In Jesus, the time to serve responds to the request of his people who constantly ask for it. His service is determined by the needs of the people who seek him. For Jesus, the hardships and shortages suffered by human beings are a priority in his mission. He does not spare costs or measure consequences. The results of his work consist of caring for the people who ask for it:

"That evening, after sunset, they brought to Jesus many who were sick and possessed by demons. The whole town gathered at the door to watch. Then Jesus healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, but he did not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was" (Mark 1:32-34). Jesus' logistical service was quantified in terms of time. Jesus felt a duty to feed those who had invested time in listening to his teachings. His proposal was to focus on solving hunger at the moment and at the time when the need arose:

"I have compassion on them. They have been with me here for three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will faint on the way, for some of them have come from far away" (Mark 8:2-3). Service must be timely. However, with the attitude of Jesus' servants, with the illustration of the multiplication of the loaves, we see that there can be excuses to argue and justify the difficulties of not serving in a timely

manner. On the two occasions when Jesus proposes to his disciples that they feed the crowd, two responses on their part feign excuses to avoid fulfilling the Master's request. In the first situation, Jesus' apostles justified their inability to do the work on time by alluding to a lack of money: "Jesus said to them, 'You give them something to eat. They asked, 'Where are we to get enough bread for all these people to eat? We would have to work for months to earn enough to buy food for all these people!

The second justification was not a lack of money, but a lack of raw materials to make the food: "His disciples answered, 'How are we to get enough food to feed them here in the desert?'" (Mark 8:4). But Jesus' teaching is that a shortage of food or a lack of money does not prevent us from providing service on time if there is a need. The priority is to serve at all times. You serve with what you have.

Jesus' questions in both instances were the same. On the first occasion, he said: "Jesus asked them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and find out.' They returned and reported, 'We have five loaves and two fish'" (Mark 6:38). In the second scene of distress, anguish, and helplessness of the disciples for not finding a way out, Jesus asks them, "How many loaves of bread do you have? Jesus asked. Seven loaves, they replied" (Mark 8:5), "and a few fish" (Mark 8:7). The logistics Jesus used were simple. He had everyone sit down, divided them into groups of fifty, gave thanks, and began to distribute the food (Mark 6:39-44).

No one imagined that with this strategy there would be enough food for everyone, and even some left over. Providing service at the right time is effective and makes us useful in

God's work. For we are not alone; the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17) and Christ are with us always (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, the working hours of Jesus' disciples are all the time. The salary they receive is more than any simply human job. It is the salary of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:14).

However, since the gifts and talents to be useful in time have been received freely, service must also be given freely (Matthew 10:8). The service we render is not only to the person or people who ask us for help, but to God Himself (Ephesians 6:5-8).

It is a worthy task and befitting of our true employer: "Work willingly in everything you do, as if it were for the Lord and not for people. Remember that the Lord will reward you with an inheritance and that the Lord you serve is Christ" (Colossians 3:23-24). All the service we do has its reward, for God's promises are always just. Thinking this way is very wise (Colossians 4:5). That is why we must have an appropriate response to every need: "For God is not unjust. He will not forget how hard you have worked for him and how you have shown your love for him by serving other believers as you still do" (Hebrews 6:10). There is no doubt about it. Service must be rendered in season and out of season. That is, at all times. Or rather, we must be helpful at all times:

"Suppose you see a brother or sister who has nothing to eat or wear, and one of you says to them, 'Goodbye, have a nice day; keep warm and eat well,' but you don't give them food or clothing. What good is that?" (James 2:15-16).

Time is the space of opportunity that God grants us to reach maturity as people. We have a responsibility to prepare

God's people to carry out God's work and build up the church, that is, the body of Christ:

"That process will continue until we all reach such unity in our faith and knowledge of the Son of God that we are mature in the Lord, that is, until we reach the full and complete measure of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

Finally, at the heart of timely service is love. For we do everything out of love. To live is to love. But we must love promptly and quickly, because time is short and Christ is in control: "One way or another, the love of Christ controls us" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Sixth Examination: Why must service be timely?

Option 1 Because there is always time to serve and be useful to God.

Option 2 Because the customer is always right in their needs.

Option 3 Because profits are measured by customer service.

Option 4 Because we must keep up with technology.

5.6 The usefulness of practical service

Service must not only be timely, but also practical. That is, effective and functional, but also practiced, habitual, and appropriate. Useful service must be up to date. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5), it was a necessary practice that was used in his time. Jesus was not creating the custom of washing feet.

What Jesus did was give new meaning to the washing of feet. He relied on the custom that people had in order to impart his message of service. For his teaching on practical service, he used an everyday illustration with a realistic and objective basis. Jesus was projecting a new reference point. Jesus' proposal was that, from now on, this service would not be left only to the servants and slaves of society, but also to his disciples (John 13:14).

From that moment on, there would no longer be a first or a best. Instead, there would be many who could be first and win the prize as the best if they did what Jesus was telling them to do (John 13:17). His disciples were to be like servants in the exercise of their evangelizing ministry. Jesus was decreeing the measure of the quality and excellence of his disciples. The great paradox, unfair to some, incomprehensible to others, but revealed by Jesus:

"And consider this: some who now seem least important will be most important on that day, and some who are now most important will be least important on that day" (Luke 13:30). The purpose of washing feet was being related to a new way of being and a different way of thinking. It consisted of a

change of attitude toward what was known as service: "Jesus sat down, called the twelve disciples to him, and said, 'If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all'" (Mark 9:35). The fact that Jesus sat down to speak meant that what he was about to say was very important. He was teaching as a Master. In other words, he was speaking with authority and conclusively about how his disciples should be.

With the act of washing feet, Jesus was expressing the inner reality of his message. His proposal is explicit. There is no dilemma, no alternative. Jesus defines the attitude his disciples should have: "But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be a slave to the others" (Mark 10:44). With the act of washing feet, Jesus is indicating everything that is written in the message about practical service. The washing of feet was the basis and source of his communication with his disciples: "The most important among you must be the servant of the others" (Matthew 23:11). The theme of Jesus' message was service. The work of Jesus' minister applies to an objective reality such as the washing of feet. From now on, his disciples would remember that their real function on earth was to serve.

Every time they saw someone washing another's feet, it was a reminder to continue serving as agents of Jesus Christ. And it was not accidental or isolated to see someone washing feet. The unusual thing was not to do so: "Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Look at this woman kneeling here. When I entered your house, you did not offer me water to wash the dust from my feet, but she has washed them with her tears and dried them with her hair'" (Luke 7:44).

Jesus warns his interlocutor, who has invited the Master to dinner at his house, that he has been a poor host from the beginning. Despite criticism from the Pharisees, Jesus accepted the invitation and responded to Simon's request, but he did not receive good treatment. Jesus' presence was a great honor for Simon. However, Simon did not treat his guest of honor well because he did not think of himself as a servant. He did not follow the number one rule: to serve. On the contrary, he behaved very badly and even thought badly of his famous guest:

"When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is touching him. She is a sinner!'" (Luke 7:39). The mistake of Simon, the Pharisee, was to have invited Jesus and not to have behaved as a practical servant. Instead of serving, he began to judge and criticize. Jesus, who knows everything, teaches that service is the priority of those who desire to have him and live with him.

With Jesus' teaching, the church would have many important examples of practical service, worthy of imitation and following. The leader of the church would distinguish himself from others by his capacity for service. Church leaders must be worthy of imitation. Just as animal species do when they follow their leader. Or as parents and guardians are role models for their children to learn to walk, eat, talk, interact with other living beings, and with the objects around them.

Thus, Jesus invites his followers to be guides consistent with their position of leadership in the church. For the usefulness of practical service is the sure sign that the action is true. The washing of feet is the concrete and real object that refers to practical service. With this teaching of Jesus, the referential

meaning would be as common from now on as a person's name. Everyone will be called servants. The washing of feet would become an icon of the attitude of Jesus' disciples in fulfilling their mission. The sign of washing his disciples' feet was marked in the personality of his followers. If the disciples were to have any resemblance to their Master, if they were to be like their Lord and resemble Jesus, they had to be servants. Any analogy with Jesus would be practical service.

From then on, the act of washing feet would be the hallmark and mark of Christ's servants. Jesus' direct relationship with his disciples is practical service. Wherever Christ's servants went, they would leave the same nostalgic memory that Christ left among his contemporaries, who maintained a conventional bond with Jesus, and in turn, the Master was a symbol of practical service:

"And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Afterward, Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Service is a practical way to honor and give glory to God. The value of service is measured according to the parameters and dimensions of Christ and not by the tricks of authorities and rulers:

"In this world, kings and great men treat their people with arrogance; yet they are called friends of the people. But among you it will be different. The most important among you must take the lowest place, and the leader must be like a servant" (Luke 22:24-26).

The privileged way to wield power and display wealth among Jesus' disciples is through the practice of service. This

takes the form of effective service, is confirmed in appropriate service, and is personified in practiced service.

Seventh Examination:

What is the usefulness of practical service?

Option 1 It is the sure way to earn more in business.

Option 2 It is the measure used by world leaders.

Option 3 It is the sure sign that the action is genuine.

Option 4 It is the best way to spend your life being very useful.

5.7 Service is common sense

In the course of existence, there are common sense truths. These are universal themes or principles that most people do not take the time to understand or explain, much less analyze. Service is a common sense value because it is inherent in human nature. In nature, flora and fauna have common sense figured out in a simple way. Food, cold, and reproduction are conditions of genetics, environment, and experience.

The supreme value of life surpasses any spontaneous or improvised initiative of the creature itself: "Look at how the lilies of the field grow. They do not work or sew their clothes; yet even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are" (Matthew 6:28-29). Survival drives these living beings to move in groups, in communities, not individually. Existence is collective. Life is better in society, integrated, participating, and serving one another. Service builds relationships, to live longer and better.

The flock of birds has the common sense to migrate, to go and achieve what is desired at the right time and in the right place. Inner knowledge leads them to do and live correctly: "Look at the birds. They do not plant or harvest or store food in barns, because the heavenly Father feeds them" (Matthew 6:26). Things of common sense, because they are common to humanity, often go unnoticed by most people. Realities such as light, darkness, water, earth, and wind are things we take for granted, as if they had to be that way or as if they should always exist, or as if they have always been that way. But creation has not been unchanging. At one point, the things that are

there, the things we see and others we do not see, began to exist, and at another point, they will no longer be found: "But we eagerly await the new heavens and earth that he promised, a world filled with God's righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

It is common sense to know and understand that existence has not always been the same: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more" (Revelation 21:1). The same is true of good, evil, reason, ignorance, intuition, and service, among countless other elements, which very few, with wonder and a sense of admiration, take the time to ask themselves why they are there. Because most likely one day they will not be there: "The creation waits for the day when it will be united with the children of God in the glorious freedom from death and decay" (Romans 8:21). So the values of life are common sense. Knowing how to cook, living hygienically, and keeping clean are common sense because they ensure health and life in all circumstances. Cultivating the value of good nutrition influences well-being and health. We are what surrounds us, so it is necessary to know and respect our surroundings, the environment, and our nature:

"When you see clouds forming in the west, you say, 'Rain is coming.' And you are right. When the south wind blows, you say, 'Today will be a hot day.' And so it happens. Fools! You know how to interpret the signs of the weather on the earth and in the heavens, but you do not know how to interpret the present times" (Luke 12:54-56). Interpreting the present time is common sense. It is knowing what to do at the right time. It is simple. You just have to look carefully from the inside out.

Collective experience, intuition, and inner knowledge are the components of interpretation.

It is common sense to know that we all produce more than we consume. Therefore, we must learn to budget and not spend more than we earn. It is common sense to spend only what we have, not what we do not have. That would be beyond our means. Jesus himself, explaining the costs of being a servant of God, told those who wanted to follow him that they must first calculate the price they would have to pay. The value of a disciple's service is so great that it is greater than his own life (Luke 14:25-27). Therefore, in order to serve as a disciple, one must begin by making calculations, just as one plans a building:

"Who would start building a house without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? If not, you may end up with only the foundation before you run out of money, and then everyone will laugh at you. They will say, 'There is the man who started a building and couldn't finish it!'" (Luke 14:28-30).

You have to analyze situations, grow and mature, until you can think for yourself, along with accumulating the experience of others, too. In life, you have to plan, have purpose, and chart paths, knowing or intuiting a point of arrival. Thinking ahead forces you to prepare, train, educate yourself, and equip yourself to emerge gracefully at every level of life. It is common sense to learn to stay safe, prevent accidents, and protect life.

Service is common sense, like avoiding putting your hands in the fire, watching where you walk, fleeing temptation, always doing good, and respecting the law. These are common sense safety behaviors, as the Bible itself explains:

"It is what comes out of a person that defiles them. For from within, out of the heart of a person, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evils come from within, and they defile a person" (Mark 7:20-23).

In the common sense, there is service. There is nothing more important in life than service. In our daily lives, service is the most natural thing there is: "Be dressed, ready to serve, and keep your lamps lit, as if you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in when he arrives and knocks. The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded" (Luke 12:35-37).

To serve is to live, and we live because we serve. When someone acquires knowledge, learns a skill, or perfects something, they will never be unemployed, because they become indispensable to society in what they know how to do. Through lived experiences and social relationships, service is inherent to humanity. Getting up early, saving money, arriving early, doing tasks quickly, studying in youth, learning a trade, a profession, or an art, and producing in maturity leads people to give meaning to their existence until the end of their lives.

A person who chooses a meaningful life and frequent service to humanity succeeds and fulfills their purpose in life. That is why serving is common sense. Service is contrary to greed and avarice, which are often promoted by social leadership and passed on as misguided values to new generations. Individualism has become so normal that it is now believed to be common sense to be selfish.

But the true value is to serve, which is a very different vision from the voracity of egocentrism. To serve is to cultivate generosity and detachment, for altruistic interests: "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. That will store up treasures for you in heaven! And heavenly bags never get old or worn out. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it, and no moth can destroy it. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Luke 12:33-34). Service, although common sense, is often misunderstood today. Service is part of evangelical values. But we do not understand these gospel values today because very different paradigms have been planted in our minds. Many emotions, practices, or beliefs that we have in life are unproductive bad habits. They are only there out of habit and because of the wrong use of vain methods we have acquired; they are more vice than virtue:

"Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And if you cannot do even that small thing, why worry about bigger things?" (Luke 12:25-26). That is why we must once again cultivate values such as service within our collective consciousness. The good and new habits we acquire in life help us to be flexible and adapt to new situations. They help us to be open, to learn, and to listen to others. We must begin to listen to the messages and observe the actions of people who serve today. We must accept the influence of positive people to whom we should devote our time. We must accept new ideas about service. This helps us move forward. We must learn to trust once again in all the words of the Gospel. We must trust others again, and above all, have great confidence in ourselves based on our intuition. Observe, see, and understand what is best when faced with a decision that must be made:

"Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? When you are on your way to the trial with the one who accuses you, try to settle the matter before you arrive. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will put you in jail. And if that happens, you will not be released until you have paid the last penny" (Luke 12:57-59). Let us return to being good servants. Let us be faithful in the stewardship of the world that God has entrusted to us from the beginning (Genesis 1:28). Stewardship must be upright, as Jesus Christ confirmed: "A faithful and wise servant is one whom the master can put in charge of the other servants and feed them. If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward" (Luke 12:42-43). Let us learn to live by serving, if we want this world to be worth living in.

Eighth Examination: Why is service common sense?

Option 1 Because it is inherent in human nature.

Option 2 Because everything we learn has value.

Option 3 Because people practice service innately.

Option 4 Because it is a value found in the Word of God.

5.8 The vital service of tables

Service is tangible and measurable. Service or Diakonia is not simply the intentional desire to do good. It is not just good intentions. Nor is it reasoning that emphasizes how to serve. Good intentions and honest purposes are projections of motivation. Starting a new year, moving to a different place, beginning a relationship, changing jobs, or facing a dire situation are just circumstances that spark enthusiasm.

That naive desire to serve is comfortable and convenient, since it usually does not come to fruition. It remains in laudable cravings and sterile feelings. In the end, excuses are personified in pretexts, justifications in setbacks, and evasions feeding apologies. Therefore, the important thing about service, the essential and powerful thing, is to put it into practice. Let service become a habit. Make service a daily exercise. Serving is a way of life.

To this end, the attitude of service must be embedded in the subconscious. It is acting without thinking or reasoning, but simply serving for the sake of doing so. Serving because God is always there, here and now. At the wedding at Cana, in the multiplication of the loaves, in the washing of the feet, and in the election of the seven deacons, there is a clear sign of life in service. It is the vital service of the tables, which is the presence of God in the daily work of the Christian.

At the wedding at Cana, the master of ceremonies sent for the groom and said to him, "A host always serves the best wine first, and once everyone has had enough to drink, he begins to

offer the cheaper wine. But you have kept the best wine until now!" (John 2:10).

In the service that Jesus has just performed, he has changed the social paradigm. He has ended a deep-rooted and strong custom that had been imposed on celebrations. But Jesus presents a new image of serving hosts, showing the benefits of efficient and effective service. Good service, provided at the right time and in the right place, is of essential value, and God's action is palpable. In the context of the wedding at Cana, God's glory was revealed. The best service is when the act that is performed shows the glorious divine revelation: "This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee marked the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him" (John 2:11). The multiplication of the loaves also manifested God's glory through the substantial change Jesus made to the Passover celebration. This feast, in Jesus' time, had become corrupted over time. It was almost time for the Jewish supper (John 6:4). This meal had been mandated by divine prescription (Exodus 12:1-3), and pious Jews followed it with strict rigor for a time. But later, this celebration lost its original value. This was denounced many times by the prophets. Among them was Amos, who lived in a time of great splendor and wealth for a few, in contrast to the misery of the people: "I hate all your great displays and pretensions, the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies" (Amos 5:21).

In the midst of this decadence, Jesus proposes the true service of Passover and unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:10), when he lifted up his eyes and saw that a large crowd had come to meet him (John 6:5). In the context of the Jewish Passover celebration, of scarcity and hunger, of empty ritualism, of feasts of

life turned into signs of death, Jesus proposes the solidarity of sharing, which not only satisfies all those present, but also overflows to help many others with the surplus:

"Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. He did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. Once they were satisfied, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Now gather up what is left over, so that nothing will be wasted'" (John 6:11-12). In the washing of the feet, Jesus once again demonstrates and teaches the true value of service. Jesus transforms a social custom into an effective gesture of solidarity. What was once an act will now be an attitude rooted in the subconscious of his disciples.

In the same context of Passover, at suppertime (John 13:1), by washing his disciples' feet, Jesus was instituting the ministry of concise, evident, perceptible, and measurable service, which his disciples were to continue to repeat: "I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

By washing their feet, Jesus conveys a lesson that his disciples must learn, changes the custom of a simple social rule, and makes a supreme divine revelation: "Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them" (John 13:17). God's blessings are spread and reaped when service is put into action. Giving is how we receive, how we achieve and accomplish more than we had before helping others.

Very early in the origins of the early church, the followers and practitioners of Jesus' doctrine had to attend to a matter of service at the tables. The election of the seven deacons was to address a priority visible to all (Acts 6:1). Although Jesus had entrusted them with preaching and teaching the word of God,

the apostles wisely discerned that, without ceasing to exercise the ministry of the word, they had to effectively address a need that was arising: "Therefore, brothers, choose seven men who are well respected, full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility" (Acts 6:3).

The apostles' prompt action ensured that the work of the church did not come to a halt. Likewise, the way in which the church leaders clarified and resolved the problem through the vital service of the tables allowed God's glory to remain and continue to be manifested: "So the word of God continued to spread. The number of believers in Jerusalem increased greatly, and many of the Jewish priests also became believers" (Acts 6:7).

The vital service of the tables is a clear and obvious sign of God's will on the part of the church leadership. Neglecting to help those in need tarnishes the face of Christ, which is the church. Indifference that prevents us from serving humanity wrinkles our community of faith, which is the church.

It is gratifying to see a church that serves. Its members are united in their purpose to help those in need. It is a good duty and advisable not to forget the poor and those in need.

Precisely, helping the disadvantaged and less fortunate in society was the task given to the apostle Paul's ministry by the apostles who were in Jerusalem: "The only suggestion they made was that we continue to help the poor, something I always want to do" (Galatians 2:10).

Ninth Examination:

What is the vital service of the tables?

Option 1 To provide food for all members of the church.

Option 2 Contributing to various social solidarity events.

Option 3 The presence of God in the daily work of Christians.

Option 4 Doing charitable works and providing assistance ministries.

5.9 Service that helps social good

Service is a social duty. However, nowadays, profitable entities and lucrative institutions want to appear as organizations that serve the social good. There is a big difference between social service and commercial bartering. But in the normal mindset of people, there is no opposition. It has become common for companies, businesses, and corporations to use the term service in their utilitarian and everyday language.

Today, even the most honorable and generous circles of kindness have changed. Throughout history, many so-called non-profit associations have accumulated vast amounts of wealth, surpassing any other commercial entity in terms of riches. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), also known as incorporated societies, have accumulated so many possessions and increased their capital so much that they offer exorbitant salaries to their executives and certain privileged employees.

These organizations, which initially had sincere aspirations to serve, have now amassed great wealth and preponderant power in their bank accounts, infrastructure, and operations. Today, there is much talk of solidarity. In essence, solidarity means joining forces with another person when they cannot get out of a difficult situation on their own; it means supporting the less fortunate members of humanity. However, the term solidarity has also been commercialized. Solidarity economics is taught in academia. Students are taught that solidarity is not charity, but rather the implementation of other mechanisms of economic control of productivity.

Solidarity, then, would be to put the economy to work in certain alternative labor relationships. It would be a matter of thinking about supply and demand in small-scale markets in order to compete with macroeconomic structures. This system of solidarity economics consists of teaching the poor how to become rich. It focuses on cooperativism, self-management, and the creation of associative enterprises to drive the social economy.

Another aspect of apparent social service is charity, almsgiving, direct aid, and care for the needy. It is giving the poor food, clothing, certain medicines, humble housing, decontextualized education, entertainment, and recreation. The satisfaction of basic human needs is a right of every person. Precisely, among the unprecedented teachings of Jesus the Master, he emphasizes giving as a privilege. Providing for the needy is the measure and standard of our behavior, for judgment at the end of our earthly existence:

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothes. I was sick, and you took care of me. I was in prison, and you visited me'" (Matthew 25:34-36).

But meeting basic needs is only the beginning of true and complete service. The beginning is basic, but the end is more demanding. It is very similar to the statement that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God (Proverbs 9:10). The fear of the Lord is only the foundation of wisdom. But we must

continue and move forward, since knowing the Holy One results in good judgment. This is a higher level that we must climb to.

It is very clear and evident that the presence of Christ is in the most needy and disabled in society, as the Lord says: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Service that helps the social good is centered on the subject and not on the object. In other words, serving is an inner condition and an attitude of spiritual essence. It is not giving, but giving of oneself. It is not contributing physical things, but sharing the natural essence of life.

Service should not remain only at the essential level. For when Jesus affirms that to serve one of these little ones is to serve him, it is only the basis, the principle, and the beginning of reaching categorical service. Serving is more than giving. The problem is that, as we have remained at the root and bottom of the dimension of service, we only perform maintenance, care, and support services. Service that contributes to social good elevates the formation of values to live life with quality and excellence. It speaks of multicultural appreciation, the foundation of faith, believing and trusting in oneself.

The supreme value of service helps us live with vital purpose. It integrates the vast majority of modest and humble people into the invisible threads that hold society together. To serve is to listen to the diverse voices of those who have very little. It makes it easier for them to contribute ideas, dreams, and desires. Decisions are incorporated on how to make the world a place of peace, harmony, and loving and respectful daily relationships between human beings. Therefore, if we

truly think about service that helps social good, our paradigm that we have had so far about service, that way of understanding it, changes. To serve is to remain loyal, cultivate friendship, maintain balance and serenity. To serve is to detach ourselves fully and completely from what we have and what we are. It is to reach fulfillment, to reach wholeness. Service that helps the social good is to be and remain complete. According to biblical language, it is to become perfect: "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

Jesus often referred to the attitude that a genuine servant should have. When Jesus spoke about the concerns of daily life, he presented money and possessions as false securities. Jesus called us to seek the kingdom of God above all else, for all things would be given to us as a result of belonging to his kingdom. The physical comes by itself (Luke 12:31), after the Father has delivered his kingdom into our hands.

When Jesus spoke of service, he elevated it to the level and hierarchy of total detachment. To serve is to renounce what is yours and not claim anything as your own. Jesus chose a well-assured prosperity: "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. That will store up treasures for you in heaven! And heavenly bags never get old or wear out. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it, and no moth can destroy it" (Luke 12:33).

Service that helps the common good means giving up everything, avoiding greed, and never falling into covetousness. Serving the common good is not about giving, but about living with what is necessary so that others also have access to everything they need to live. Serving the common good means not living in excess, nor in deprivation and deficit. It means

maintaining a constant balance of equity in opportunities, goods, and services for all.

Service that helps the common good is permanent, daily, and becomes a way of life. It maintains a continuous standard of living. Of stability and balance for all people. Service enlightens human beings to remain vigilant: "Be dressed, ready to serve, and keep your lamps lit" (Luke 12:34). To choose service that helps the common good, one must cleanse the mind and heart of the paradigms of selfishness that govern the modern mentality. It means freeing oneself from the voracious slavery of earthly ambitions:

"Therefore, cleanse yourselves from within by giving your possessions to the poor, and you will be completely clean" (Luke 11:41).

Tenth Examination:

What is the service that helps the common good?

Option 1 The one that allows others to possess the same.

Option 2 The one that shares everything it has with the poor.

Option 3 The one that is centered on the subject and not on the object.

Option 4 The one that has a big heart to share with everyone.

5.10 From efficient actions to effective service

Efficiency is very different from effectiveness. An efficient person is someone who works hard and achieves few results. An effective person is someone who achieves greater results with well-organized efforts. There is a significant relationship between the resources used in a project and the achievements made in that same project. When fewer resources are used to achieve the same goal, it is said to be effective.

In other words, effectiveness consists of achieving more goals with the same or fewer resources. Actions can be efficient, but service must be effective, which goes beyond simple human planning: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Romans 12:2).

Furthermore, effectiveness must be consistent with the achievement of goals and objectives. Effectiveness is the measure that qualifies our ability to achieve what we set out to do. We are effective when we make better use of resources such as time, space, infrastructure, labor, among others. In the light of faith, these resources are transformed into values.

Values go beyond the physical. When resources acquire the status of value, they become spiritual forms. What were once called resources are now the deepest, purest, and simplest essence of human beings. These values determine what one says or does. Converting simple resources into values is key to living in God's heart and avoiding acting on human vices: "For

out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander" (Matthew 15:19).

The way we view the physical or material represents the state of our spirit. Therefore, when the use and best use of resources are integrated with the ability to achieve the objectives set, there is effectiveness. To be effective, it is not enough to accomplish a task and develop a project. It is necessary to accomplish a task or project with fewer resources and in less time. Not only as a human task or job, but as God's will and purpose: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). But this does not mean that we are passive. To achieve goals, we must pursue them. Therefore, it is well regarded when agreed deadlines are met, but the work must be done well, always striving for excellence and quality. Among other aspects, flexibility is very positive, as long as it complies with the regulations. Often it is necessary to delegate, but there are things that someone must be responsible for and do themselves.

For God equips each of us, individually and particularly, for the mission entrusted to us. No one can replace another. No two spirits are alike: "He has qualified us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is not a covenant of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death, but according to the new covenant, the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

To be effective in service, we must understand that the long-term vision guides us toward the goal, but daily work leads to its completion. In other words, objectives and tasks go hand in hand. We must take action and be proactive, but often

when faced with the unexpected, we must be highly skilled and react.

In church ministry, we often have to set and achieve goals based on few physical and visible resources. In other words, despite having few resources, we must carry out the work as if we had a large amount of resources. Our planning is based on God's vision: "Apollos planned to go to Achaia, and the brothers in Ephesus encouraged him to go. They wrote to the believers in Achaia to welcome him. When Apollos arrived, he was a great help to those who had believed through God's grace" (Acts 18:27).

We rely on what we have. We carry out our plans with God's support, who will always be there observing the disposition of our hearts, which will always be full of motivation and convinced of the ministry we are called to carry out. The apostle Paul set his goals and achieved them, despite the circumstances. He never gave up when adverse situations cornered him: "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Censure, danger, and death threats did not deter the apostle Paul from his purpose of spreading the Word of God as an effective service of his ministry: "I have worked harder, been imprisoned more often, been flogged countless times, and faced death repeatedly. On five separate occasions, the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and the next day adrift at sea. I have been on many long journeys. I faced dangers from rivers and thieves. I faced dangers from my own people, the Jews, and also from the Gentiles. I faced dangers in cities, in deserts, and

at sea. And I faced dangers from men who claim to be believers but are not. I have worked hard and long hours and endured many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty, and often I have had nothing to eat. I have shivered with cold, without enough clothes to keep me warm. In addition to all this, I carry the burden of my concern for all the churches every day" (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

Like the apostle Paul, we must be clear that the ministry of Jesus Christ must be continued. There can be nothing and no one to stop it. Neither criticism nor strange voices can interrupt the desire to achieve our goals, for God's help is encouragement in the struggle to achieve what we have set out to do. Effective service goes far beyond efficient action. We are not efficient; we are effective. It does us no good to do many activities if we do not hit the mark.

But if we manage to reap the rewards, in the end we will say, like the apostle Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). It is a matter of repeating the same dynamic as Jesus. From the beginning, there was a plan in Jesus' life, not designed by human strategies, but by God himself: "She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The early Christians were so certain that Christ's mission was solely part of God's plan that they were able to say: "This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost" (1 Timothy 1:15). God's design was never distorted or ambiguous. The early Christians confessed and explained it very often: "Christ suffered for our sins once and for all. He

never sinned, but died for sinners to bring them safely to God. He suffered physical death, but came back to life in the Spirit" (1 Peter 3:18).

Effective service is the essential core of our ministry. We are servants at all times, in imitation of Christ: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). At the end of life, at the twilight of our earthly journey, comes the reward. When we cross the threshold of death, the meaning of our life takes on a transcendent significance: "But what we do see is Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels; and because he suffered death for us, he is now crowned with glory and honor. Indeed, by the grace of God, Jesus tasted death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9). We move from efficient actions to effective service when our work is not only a humanitarian service but a sign of God's purpose. When our work is good and also spiritual.

Our effective service, although physical, has spiritual value. That is why the seven servants of the tables (Acts 6:2) were chosen for their spiritual qualities (Acts 6:3). Although it was a tangible service, their mission to preach and spread the Word did not disappear (Acts 6:8). Our effective service must be material and visible, but with the essence of carrying the evangelizing message of salvation:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching us what is true and for showing us what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We are not only philanthropic, altruistic, and humanitarian. Even though we give physical

bread and meet vital human needs, our ministry has to do with extending the kingdom of God through his Word:

"For the word of God is living and powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow. It lays bare our innermost thoughts and desires. There is nothing in all creation that is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and it is to him that we are accountable" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

We must do things skillfully and produce the desired effects. Our duty is to be efficient and effective. What is an effective church? It is one that accomplishes the task God has given to churches: the great task of bringing the gospel to the whole world: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5).

Eleventh Examination:

When do efficient actions become effective service?

Option 1 When we get great results and profits.

Option 2 When our work is good and also spiritual.

Option 3 When we work hard and achieve all our goals.

Option 4 When we use the best resources and achieve goals.

5.11 Functional areas of service

Service is any work or action done for the benefit of others, without profit. Those who serve do not seek their own interests and renounce personal dividends. Although it may seem strange, to serve is to privilege others. There are several areas where service works best. In some aspects and criteria of life, service is just a disguise that hides the egocentricity of those who claim to help. The functional areas of service are not sufficient on their own, if we want to fulfill true service. The areas of service are complementary.

The following are the main functional areas of service:

1. *Productivity*. Some people value service only for its goals and results. The policies of almost every organization state that the entity does not exist for itself, but to achieve goals and produce results. Socially, work is focused, structured, and oriented according to its performance. In a productivity mindset, service excellence focuses on effects. But in true and genuine Christian service, the emphasis is on God's will and purpose: "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds, a rich harvest of new life" (John 12:24). For according to Jesus' criteria, giving is more valuable than storing up. When a person thought of securing his life through productivity, God warned him: "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'" (Luke 12:20).

Measuring service by simple results does not measure up to God's standard. The apostle Paul, in his instructions to his

disciple Timothy, tells him to teach and persuade the right judgment of life and human coexistence: "Teach the rich of this world not to be proud or to trust in their money, which is so unstable. They should put their trust in God, who gives us everything we need to enjoy in abundance" (1 Timothy 6:17). Letting go is more fruitful than waiting to receive in order to have more. In the teaching of Jesus the Master, to lose is to gain, to let go and let go is more than to receive: "Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who do not value their life in this world will keep it for all eternity" (John 12:25).

2. *Area of investment and costs.* When Mary took the jar of precious perfume and anointed Jesus' feet, Judas' acquisitive mind calculated the expense rather than the investment. Judas rightly and with good business judgment stated, "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It would have been better to sell it and give the money to the poor" (John 12:5). Judas forgot the parameters and the difference between investment and expense. His proposal did not favor integration, interaction, and global analysis. He only valued self-management and decision-making, which are domesticating attitudes. The illustration of the perfume shows that those who emphasize expenses and costs do not always think about service. The evangelist John clarifies what is in the mind of the businessman Judas:

"It was not that Judas cared about the poor; in truth, he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself" (John 12:6). Jesus, who knows the intentions of each person and what is in their hearts (John 2:24), warned that focusing on expenses and costs is not always consistent with service.

The goals and values envisioned by the organization are not always in accordance with God's will. Jesus the Teacher defined and expressed what the evil Judas should do: "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. There will always be poor people among you, but you will not always have me" (John 12:7-8). The important thing is to do what is right. And what is right and proper is to be at peace with God first.

3. *Area of content.* We think that whoever gives more is giving more. It is an academic and magisterial attitude. In our human context, the one who gives the most is the one who has the floor and who guides, visualizes, and directs. In society, the one who possesses and contributes the most has the most power and therefore can and is allowed to prescribe and set standards. They choose the content of the service, as they know best what people need, according to their personal tastes, without taking into account people's real priorities.

A society that evaluates its civic health by simple content is a manipulative and manipulated society. Those who direct the destiny of humanity. Those who receive obtain physical help with mental obedience. What they receive is in the form of a deposit; there is no awareness, they do not know the objects of the process. Much less does giving more mean that the person is giving everything. God asks for the best from each of us. That is why Jesus the Teacher draws attention to those who emphasize only the contents of service with the following observation:

"I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are offering. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, in her poverty, gave everything she had to live on" (Mark 12:43-44).

In conclusion, the three functional areas are important and are part of an integral process. Separately, each area is fatal when it comes to serving. If we want to be efficient and effective in service, we must have all the functional areas of service.

Twelfth Examination:

What are the main functional areas of service?

Option 1 Create non-profit centers that generate profits.

Option 2 Collaborate with the poor and marginalized in society.

Option 3 Productivity, investment and costs, content.

Option 4 Projects, objectives, and results that produce benefits.

5.12 Emergency assistance service

Service is the selfless help that someone gives to those in need. The person, group, or community is the receptive cell of the service. In some areas, sectors of thought, and solidarity-makers, it is said that it is better to teach someone to fish than to give them fish. This statement has become a credible popular saying.

However, giving bread or fish is often the beginning of a service that ultimately proves to be efficient and effective. It is the end of a foretold death and the beginning of a progressive prosperity of unexpected abundance. When Jesus healed, he did so without teaching the patient how he had treated them, without showing them the formula, and without expecting the sick person to learn the healing process. Jesus served because his mission was to serve (Mark 10:45). Jesus presents himself as the appropriate prototype and exemplary paradigm for our authentic Christian identity (John 13:15). Effective service is immediate and timely. It is taking charge of a present situation that is right in front of us. Sometimes it is a sudden, fortuitous, unexpected, and even unthinkable priority.

Service must be here and now. In Jesus' earthly time, those who came to him did not always seem to receive immediate help, but in the end no one left empty-handed and without an obvious response of relief for their need. This happened with the Syrophenician woman, whose situation did not seem to impress the Master (Matthew 15:22-24). Only after going through humiliation and tremendous despair did Jesus act on her behalf (Matthew 15:28).

Something similar happened with the blind man, who had to cry out many times, overcoming the obstacles of those who wanted to silence his voice, but in the end Jesus stopped to heal him (Luke 18:38-40). With his friend Lazarus, whom Jesus loved and for whose death he wept (John 11:35), his help seemed to be delayed (John 11:4), for even Lazarus' sisters complained about his tardiness. First Martha (John 11:21) and then Mary made the same request (John 11:32). But in the end, urgent assistance prevailed.

So there is no doubt that service must be provided at the right time and in the right place. As happened with the Good Samaritan. Unexpectedly and spontaneously, this traveler acted with urgent assistance: "Then a despised Samaritan passed by and, when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day, he gave two silver coins to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of this man. If the expenses exceed this amount, I will pay you the difference the next time I pass through here'" (Luke 10:33-35).

Those who assaulted, robbed, and mistreated the pilgrim acted out of greed. Greed is the vice that violates the commandment not to covet the property of others (Exodus 20:17). Jesus not only rejected greed, but taught the practice of going the extra mile (Matthew 5:41-43), an instruction that the early Christians appreciated and practiced frequently: "They suffered alongside those who were thrown into prison, and when all their possessions were taken away, they accepted it with joy. They knew that better things were waiting for them in the future, things that will last forever" (Hebrews 10:34).

In the fatal event where the Samaritan acted very well, the Levite and the priest proceeded like vile misers (Luke 10:31-32). They thought of themselves, not of the one who was badly injured. They put the religious precept of contamination first and did not use Jesus' transforming judgment through the universal value of charity. Except for the Samaritan, none of them acted in the image and likeness of God's love (1 John 4:8) through sincere and generous service. With their attitudes, they denied that service to others is a priority value for inheriting eternal life (Luke 10:1).

Urgent assistance is to proceed in the same way as the Good Samaritan acted (Luke 10:37). We must always serve with selfless love. Those who serve, serve. Those who do not serve, do not serve. For the constant exercise of mercy is the fruit of our faith and is also what identifies us to the world as disciples of Jesus: "So now I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must love one another. The love you have for one another will be the proof to the world that you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35).

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus laid out the complete and comprehensive rule of his doctrine. Love is personified and made concrete in the needy, in those whom one encounters by chance, whoever they may be. This is what the first followers of Jesus did. In the early days of the first Christian community, the norm was that no one should be in need (Acts 4:34). As Christianity spread, urgent assistance was a very common practice. It was the action of love for his spiritual brothers that motivated the apostle Paul to organize collections among the congregations of Achaia, Galatia, Macedonia, and the district of Asia to benefit those in need in

Jerusalem: "Now then, let us consider the question about the money being collected for the people of God in Jerusalem. You should follow the same procedure that I gave to the churches in Galatia. On the first day of every week, each of you should set aside a portion of your income. Don't wait until I arrive to try to collect everything at once. When I go, I will write letters of recommendation for the messengers you choose to deliver your offering to Jerusalem" (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Paul not only thought about teaching how to fish, he also cared about giving the fish. The churches in Macedonia are a model of urgent service. The apostle Paul specifies that, although they were churches that had been tested by many afflictions and were very poor, they overflowed with generosity and great joy: "For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but even more. And they did so willingly. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the offering for the believers in Jerusalem" (2 Corinthians 8:3-4).

The apostle Paul instructed the members of the congregations he had established very well. He had given them excellent reasons to cultivate a generous attitude. For it was a matter of imitating the generosity of Jesus the Master (2 Corinthians 8:9). Therefore, he rightly informs them: "Each one must decide in his heart how much to give, and do not give reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

No one is forced to give beyond their means. In the simplicity of Christian life, the early believers were trained in a permanent willingness to help those most in need. Paul corroborates this attitude when he addresses the Christians of Corinth for the second time: "Actually, I don't need to write to you

about the ministry of giving to the believers in Jerusalem. For I know how eager you are to help" (2 Corinthians 9:1-2).

As it was common practice to provide urgent assistance, Paul responded with conviction to the request made by the apostles, who were considered pillars of the church (Galatians 2:9), at the meeting in Jerusalem fourteen years after his conversion: "The only suggestion they made was that we continue to help the poor, something I am always eager to do" (Galatians 2:10).

In the early days of Christianity, the value of emergency assistance as a bond of human brotherhood was well understood. Each donor had a spirit of unity and friendship with others. Therefore, the help is mutual. Those who give and those who receive benefit equally. Those who receive are also giving and contributing. Those who think that when they give they are not receiving anything are living in deception and fallacy. The recipients of urgent assistance are not a burden, much less abusers of society. The apostle Paul clearly explains the dual function of benefit between those who give and those who receive:

"Now I tell you, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia enthusiastically gathered an offering for the poor believers in Jerusalem. They did this willingly because they feel indebted to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel that the least they can do for them in return is to help them financially" (Romans 15:26-27).

So from now on, there are reasons to put the urgent relief service into operation, even if we encounter opposition when giving the fish. Paul was possibly accused of taking advantage

of what he was going to collect, which is why his first attempt failed (2 Corinthians 8:20-21). He then encouraged them to complete the collection (2 Corinthians 8:10-11) and later brought the aid, accompanied by witnesses (Acts 20:4). Against all odds, amid controversy, the important thing was that the apostle Paul ultimately succeeded in his mission to provide urgent assistance.

Thirteenth Examination: What is urgent assistance service?

Option 1 Proceed in the same way as the Good Samaritan did.

Option 2 Practice the law of teaching to fish instead of giving fish.

Option 3 A way of helping those marginalized by society.

Option 4 Practice the universal norm of giving without expecting reward.

5.13 Service is measurable and evaluable

The common definition of the term measurable is something that can be measured. Of course, the expression assessable is what can be determined and calculated to have significant value. Measurable service is not imaginary, nor does it simply remain in the good intentions of those who could provide help. For its part, in the evaluation of service, the merit of those who provide cooperation is appreciated and viewed favorably.

On one occasion, Jesus prayed the following prayer: "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think they are wise and intelligent, and for revealing them to those who are like children" (Matthew 11:25). This is a clear expression that God acts in practice and not in theory. Although we are all made in God's image (Genesis 1:27), God nevertheless distinguishes and differentiates between us. In the same way, service must prioritize its beneficiaries.

The same was true of Christ's service. Although his work benefited everyone (1 John 4:14), only many, and not all, receive the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28), and in the end they will be separated from one another (Matthew 25:32). There are conditions for receiving redemption. Although it is for everyone, people must believe in order to receive salvation (John 3:16). To receive the gift of eternal life, people must understand, recognize, and trust in Christ the Savior: "That is why we labor and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all mankind and especially of those

who believe" (1 Timothy 4:10). Jesus is the Word of God, who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Jesus' presence on earth was not conceptual. Jesus came to perform a tangible, physical, and palpable service: "Christ died and rose again for this purpose: to be Lord of the living and the dead" (Romans 14:9).

Jesus' work was not abstract, nor was it indeterminate. Far from being a theoretical service, it was a very practical and physical action on our behalf. It was about suffering, dying, and rising again to give us salvation: "Just as God our Father planned, Jesus gave his life for our sins to rescue us from this evil world in which we live" (Galatians 1:4).

Furthermore, Jesus was very aware of his mission. His behavior and words are those of a true and authentic servant. Aware that he was the Son of God, whom he called Abba (14:36), he emptied himself of his divine status (Philippians 2:6-8) and proclaimed how his unsurpassed service to humanity would be: "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law. They would kill him, but on the third day he would rise again" (Matthew 16:21).

The mission entrusted to Jesus Christ can be measured and evaluated by the manifestation of its fruits (Matthew 7:16). That is why, at the end of his ministry, Jesus showed an evident attitude of contentment, for having honestly performed his work and for having completed his task: "I glorified you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4).

Jesus' evaluation of his work was so evident that he was able to measure the consequences. After his resurrection, before his joyful, amazed, and surprised apostles, Jesus made an assessment and appreciation of the fulfillment of his mission: "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

Jesus' service was measurable because he was able to compare, observe, and determine its scope before his death and after his resurrection. Service must be measured, either by the quantity or quality of attitudes and actions, both of those who provide the service and those who receive the help. When a service is provided to someone, that action produces results that can be identified and measured, either by its difficulties, the physical events that occur, or the frequency with which the events are recorded.

In service, there are goals and objectives that often go beyond expecting numerical and quantifiable results. But service is always an action that can be measured and evaluated to see if it is truly effective. The Word of God itself manifests the precise and determined power of its action: "For the word of God is living and powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword; it penetrates between the soul and the spirit, between the joint and the marrow of the bone. It lays bare our innermost thoughts and desires" (Hebrews 4:12).

In any service, in order for it to be measured and evaluated, the capacity of the agents, adequate training, and the necessary resources to ensure that the goals are achieved must be taken into account. When planning a ministry of service, time, materials, money, and other resources are essential. Any service

work that can be measured and evaluated is commendable: "Who would begin to build a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to complete it? (Luke 14:28). Therefore, social service is not just a spontaneous, isolated inspiration from someone in a congregation. Nor is it solely intellectual and cognitive purposes. They are eminently practical projects, directed at the person, group, or community affected by some situation of deterioration and signs of death.

Therefore, it is necessary to train leaders, people who acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve the objectives of the service. Service agents must develop knowledge and skills among the people who need help to bring about change. Service is measurable and evaluable because it is an ongoing process of social commitment. Social assistance and human promotion are the variables of the effectiveness of the integral development of humanity.

That is why Jesus Christ gave power and authority to his disciples. The purpose was for them to transform people and environments of destruction into environments of life. Therefore, Jesus' disciples had to go to the regions well trained and equipped: "Jesus gathered his twelve disciples and gave them power to heal diseases and authority over all demons. Then he sent them out to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2).

Among those sent by Jesus is the authority and power to manage and administer the service. Jesus delegated responsibilities to his disciples and equipped them with what they needed to carry out their mission. Because the disciples were prepared for the mission, they succeeded. Upon their return,

the apostles were happy and victorious because they had fulfilled the mission entrusted to them by Jesus the Teacher:

"When the seventy-two disciples returned, they reported joyfully, 'Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!'" (Luke 10:17). This same training continued throughout the history of the church. Paul chose Timothy from among his disciples and took him with him (Acts 16:1-3). The same happened with Titus, who was considered his son in the faith (Titus 1:4) and whom he took with him on his important trips (Galatians 2:1-2).

Jesus did not serve alone either (Mark 13:3). His disciples went out two by two (Luke 10:1), and Paul always sought help and collaboration from other team members and from other people or churches that joined his evangelistic project. In the closing greeting of his letter to the Romans alone, the apostle Paul mentions 16 collaborators (Romans 16:1-27). He was a man of relationships who knew how to involve others in the apostolic ministry. Paul chose men and women, married and single, rich and slaves, of Jewish origin and among the Gentiles, as companions in his mission. He treats all his collaborators with love and respect, as true brothers and sisters who are indispensable to the mission (Romans 16:13). Because of his well-organized and planned work, the apostle Paul was able to measure and evaluate the results of his mission (1 Corinthians 4:9-13). He found that the struggle to evangelize humanity could be won, despite controversies (2 Corinthians 4:7-10). He was able to measure and evaluate his service and make comparisons with other servants (2 Corinthians 11:23-29).

Like the apostle Paul, we must serve with vision, passion, and dedication. We must take to heart the recommendations

he makes to his disciple Timothy: "Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is right or not. Correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with patience and good teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2). If we act with purpose, we can measure and evaluate the results of evangelistic service.

Fourteenth Examination:

Why is service measurable and evaluable?

Option 1 Because it is possible to know the amount of help that is given.

Option 2 Because it is an ongoing process of social commitment.

Option 3 Because it seeks to defeat marginalization with social assistance.

Option 4 Because community development plans can be made.

6. KOINONÍA:

The popular term *koinonia* is well known in Christian circles. It expresses communion between people. It is ecclesial communion. It is also the common unity between the members of the Church and God. When we live in *koinonia*, the Church becomes visible. For when we are in communion with one another, forming the body of Christ in his Church, the structure of the Church becomes evident.

Koinonia has a social character, in everyday life, in its various environments and in a variety of dimensions, whether social, political, economic, family, union, group, gender, race, cultural, among many other sectors of the environment. Approaching the Greek language, *koinonia* is synonymous with "eirene," which means peace. From "symphonia," which is unanimity. From "homopsychia," which is harmony. From "homonnoia," which translates as unity.

When the Holy Spirit came, "they were all together in one place" (Acts 2:1). The Holy Spirit acts precisely when there are no obstacles: "When you come together, each one of you has a psalm, has a doctrine, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification" (1

Corinthians 14:26). Communion with Christ is, by its very essence, communion with one another. We are no longer side by side, each on our own. Rather, each of the others who commune is for me, so to speak, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23).

The Church is not born as a simple federation of communities. It is born from the one bread, the one Lord; and from him it is from the beginning and everywhere one and unique, the one body, which derives from the one bread: "When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, do we not share in the blood of Christ? And when we break bread, do we not share in the body of Christ? Although we are many, we all eat from the same bread, thereby showing that we are one body" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). It is confirmed that the "bread" is the new manna that God gives us (John 6:32-33). It is for all people the one and the same Christ. Truly, the one and identical Lord is the one we receive in the Eucharist.

At the Lord's Supper, Jesus presents himself to us as the bread of life (John 6:36), with the guarantee that if we eat it we will have life, for he is eternal life and will raise us up on the last day (John 6:54). Koinonia is the force that preserves, increases, and renews grace. God himself gives us the potential to grow when he makes us new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). Therefore, grace is not static; we must make it grow: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Koinonia must be lived rather than simply understood, for it remains a profound mystery of good living. It is the transparent but solid mystery of love, manifested in the unity

produced by the Holy Spirit: "Do you not realize that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves, for God bought you at a high price. Therefore, honor God with your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The body is the externalization of what is inside (Matthew 12:34). We must praise God (Psalm 135:1-2) and be worshipers in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). That is why we must take care of our bodies, just as we must take care of the church: "No one hates his own body, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church. And we are members of his body" (Ephesians 5:29-30).

Koinonia is the soul of faith. It is the summary of the entire purpose of the church throughout the centuries, which is to be a sacrament of salvation, in the sense that the sole purpose of the church's existence throughout history is for salvation (Mark 16:16). The church is the one who provides the possibility of being born of water and the Spirit, as the only possibility for entering the kingdom of God (John 3:5). This means that salvation comes from Christ, who is the head, through his body, which is the church (Colossians 2:18-19). Christ is the one who welcomes us and takes us into himself and for himself. It is not we who assimilate the bread, but Christ who assimilates us. That is why we become configured to Christ, as Paul says. We become members of his body. The communion of blood is also insertion into the dynamic of this life, of the "blood shed." It is the energizing of our existence, thanks to which we can become beings for others, as we can see clearly before us in the open heart of Christ.

We are all torn from our closed individuality and inserted into a greater one: into the body of Christ, which is the Church,

in which, united among ourselves, made identical, we become members of one another in Christ. Communion with Jesus becomes communion with God himself, communion with light and love; it thus transforms us into righteous living, and all this unites us to one another in truth. Only if we consider communion with this depth and breadth do we have something to say to the world: "I ask that they all be one, just as you and I are one, that is, as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me" (John 17:21). The Church is one, not because of a centralist government, nor is it identified with a federalist government. Unity is provided by Christ. Unity that is not simple human unity. Therefore, our life totally surrendered to Christ leads us to serve him in the world:

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Matthew 25:35-36). The Word made flesh is a gift of "koinonia," communion, with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:37). It is a true communion with the living God in order to have life in the Word of life. Koinonia is a reciprocal communion: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then we are in communion with one another" (1 John 1:7).

First Examination: What is koinonia?

Option 1 It is maintaining good human relationships without conflict.

Option 2 It is always being together and working together with purpose.

Option 3 It is the uniformity that exists among people of the same profession.

Option 4 It is the force that preserves, increases, and renews grace.

6.1 Unity is much more than just being together

Unity is the totality and fullness of meaning with complete sense. Unity is the indivisible. Unity in the church is the preservation of essence and integrity, in the diversity of gifts, functions, and ministries (1 Corinthians 12:4). When we speak of unity, we refer to cooperating, participating, and working as a team using different means without fragmenting or altering the purpose of the organization. It is to remain one, preserving its purpose, as Jesus implored in his intercessory prayer:

"I pray that they may all be one, just as you and I are one, that is, as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me" (John 17:21). If the world believes in Jesus, it is because Christians have remained united. But such unity is not the result of the singular effort of Christians. Human means cannot sustain unity. Unity is a gift from God in Jesus, who is always with us (Matthew 28:20), as is the Holy Spirit (John 14:17).

Therefore, unity is not just staying together, nor is it being united or bound together. Unity is also not unanimity or consensus. It is not an ideology, such as democracy, socialism, or communism; it is not political doctrine or economic agreements. Unity is much more than being together, because each individual in the group retains the same essence. Despite personal individualities, everyone on the team shares the same spirit.

When the first believers in Jesus were filled with the Holy Spirit, there were about 120 people in unity (Acts 1:15). This unity was sustained by the following components: they were

all together in one place, with one accord (Acts 2:1). Being together in one place was not a temporary or isolated criterion of unity among the first Christians, but a constant and conscious attitude. That is why they chose Matthias to replace Judas, so that they would be complete (Acts 1:25).

The desire for unity was not a sporadic endeavor. Unity was a constant and persistent pursuit among the early Christians: "They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with Mary, the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus" (Acts 1:14). Unity allowed them to encourage one another and learn from one another. Through unity, they would achieve the purposes that Jesus had entrusted to them: to proclaim the gospel (Mark 16:15), to teach the doctrines of their Master (Matthew 28:19-20), to be witnesses (Luke 24:48), and to keep alive the following of Jesus (John 21:19).

Because they were confident of the results that unity produces, there was close fellowship among the believers. The apostles and disciples met continually, shared what they had, and the number of congregants increased: "They worshiped together in the temple every day, gathered in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity, all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And every day the Lord added to that Christian community those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46-47).

Jesus was always interested in maintaining the unity of his group. He insisted that they remain united in doctrine (John 17:3), in his teachings (John 17:7), and in mission (John 17:15). Today, Jesus expects us to remain united. With the power and strength of unity, Jesus sends us into the world to evangelize

(John 20:21) and entrusts us with the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), in a work of relational unity (John 17:24).

Unity is much more than acting together. Unity is an organized entity composed of individuals with similar purposes. It is living together in diversity, being unanimous in the desire to seek first God and his kingdom (Matthew 6:33), as the apostle Paul affirms: "For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13).

The kingdom of God cannot be divided. The church represents the body of Christ, and although we are many members, we form one vigorous body (1 Corinthians 12:12) to fulfill our mission of evangelizing the whole world (Mark 16:15). Unity produces order, coherence, organization, clarity, and transparency. The opposite of unity is division, which causes chaos. For when spirits and wills are divided, various visions are created, and no end is reached, nor are the proposed objectives achieved:

"Brothers and sisters, I appeal to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to live in harmony with one another. There should be no divisions among you. Instead, be united in mind and purpose" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Division is a tactic used to cause confusion. The apostle Paul himself used the strategy of dividing his enemies. On one occasion, he was able to prevail, despite the accusations before the Jewish high council (Acts 23:7).

In every situation and circumstance, division interferes with the dynamism of processes and distracts members and participants of any enterprise from their goals. Although in the following biblical passage, Jesus refers to the kingdom of Satan,

his statement can be understood as alluding to a general problem: "Every kingdom divided by civil war is doomed to failure. A family divided by strife will disintegrate" (Luke 11:17). Unity is akin to good and contrary to evil. Division is not of God, but of the spirit of the evil one. That is why the apostle Paul exhorts us to imitate Jesus' attitude: "Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" (Philippians 2:5).

Sometimes we think that the more connected and close we are, the greater the unity. It is also believed that unity means everyone doing the same thing, in the same place, at the same time. By no means is unity just about staying together. Unity is working together to achieve common goals; it is complementarity. What one lacks, the other has. Sometimes we think that similarity is better than difference in achieving unity. On the contrary, to achieve a goal, it is better to use differences than to try to achieve objectives with similar or identical elements.

It is more productive to put divergent intelligences to work as a team than to bring together equally talented people. Hence, unity is finding harmony and balance in diversity: "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be so proud that you refuse to associate with ordinary people. And do not think you know everything!" (Romans 12:16).

Holiness is the fruit of unity. We act in favor of unity when we encourage each other to achieve holiness through unwavering devotion to God through service to ongoing evangelization. The work that most unites us in the church is to proclaim Christ always and in all circumstances (2 Timothy 4:2), both to those close to us and to those far from the faith. The message we proclaim is one. That is why we remain united in evangelizing:

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:3-6). There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:3-6).

The mission of the church is to evangelize. This evangelization keeps us united and gathered together as the body of Christ. When we bring the word of Christ to everyone, especially those who do not yet know it, we are united with one another in Jesus' purpose. When we have the courage to witness to the gospel in the streets and squares, in the valleys and mountains, we are joining in the great worldwide work of extending the kingdom of God. When we promote evangelization, following the Church's guidelines, we are promoting unity: "If anyone—whether we or even an angel from heaven—preaches a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be cursed. I repeat what we have already said: if anyone preaches a gospel other than the one you have received, let that person be cursed" (Galatians 1:8-9).

But unity is not uniformity. Unity understands and accepts the diversity of cultural values. Unity does not deny the difficult situations that every society faces. Of course, unity supports efforts to achieve personal and social development and advancement. But no human circumstance, need, or priority can eliminate the desire for unity.

Unity is living intensely an encounter of faith. The word of God, baptism, the Lord's Supper, evangelism, fasting, and

prayer are means of grace that, when practiced, honor unity. Piety and fervor keep us firm and secure on the path of holiness, which is the beginning, the means, and the end of our pilgrimage toward eternity with God (1 Timothy 6:12).

So what makes unity possible? What allows unity is humility, which is the ability to avoid imposing one's own will on others. Humility is not thinking more highly of oneself than one ought to think (Romans 12:3). For no one is more important than the rest of a team. Unity is also promoted by a good disposition of meekness (Galatians 5:23). Submission is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. To be meek is to do God's will, not to be quarrelsome (Titus 3:2), and to clothe oneself with love (Colossians 3:14).

Unity does not refer to the uniqueness of an individual's personality. In some religions, the spirituality achieved by a solitary person is valued. Individual enlightenment is emphasized as a supreme virtue. But in Christian spirituality, unity has a high content of life within a community. Spirituality is a long journey of holiness, amid interpersonal controversies: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). In unity, diversity is highly valued. Unity does not discriminate or exclude anyone. In the following expression, Jesus explains the great power of evangelization when unity is promoted: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not work with me is actually working against me" (Matthew 12:30). In the same circumstances, the apostle John said to Jesus one day: "Teacher, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons, but we told him not to do so because he does not belong to our group" (Mark 9:38). Jesus' forceful instruction was very clear: "Do not

stop him! No one who does a miracle in my name can then speak evil of me. Anyone who is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:39-40).

Therefore, seeking and preserving unity is the great challenge of the church. Today, the church must confront the proliferation of division if it wants to continue fulfilling its mission of evangelizing the whole world (Matthew 24:14).

Second Examination:

Why is unity much more than just being together?

Option 1 Because each individual in the group retains the same essence.

Option 2 Because distance does not prevent us from sharing the same vision.

Option 3 Because it values the diversity of cultural expressions.

Option 4 Because it refers to the spiritual uniqueness of each individual.

6.2 United by the Word

Jesus is the only Word of God. As the divine Word, he reveals himself in human language, which we call the Bible. The writings of the Holy Scriptures treasure God's message, whose authors were commissioned to write by God's inspiration and revelation. In order to see the Word of God in the biblical writings, we need to be united by the presence of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). If there is spiritual unity, the texts of the Bible are more than literary writings. Literature conveys the Word of God.

Many people are interested in the facts and events narrated in the Bible as a simple historical source. Since various literary genres were used to convey the message of God's Word, it is believed that they are simply human scripts and plots. It is true that there is a diversity of human sources in the Bible. The Bible is composed of narratives and written texts of sayings, deeds, and events that took place over many years; they were preserved and integrated into the canon.

The Bible is precisely a collection of books with diverse characteristics in form and content. Lovers of prose, poetry, epistles, lyrics, and drama find a rich source of originality. They confuse the Word with semantic associations, morphology, and other grammatical or linguistic rules. The Word is much more than the signs of written or spoken language.

Of course, those who wish to find imperfections, scientific and philosophical limitations, even moral backwardness and archaic religious laws, will also find them in the Bible. Just as they were scandalized by Jesus (Matthew 13:57), so too have

they been astonished, throughout history, by the sacred writings. Jesus' contemporaries could not understand that he attributed to himself the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:7-10).

Much less did they accept that Jesus was the Son of God (John 10:33), they were filled with anger (Luke 4:28) and refused to believe in him (Mark 6:3). Being the light, the world did not recognize him (John 1:10). In the same way, many people do not understand that the message of God's Word is found in the human words of the Bible. When we speak of the Word of God, we are not only referring to the descriptions and stories that make up the Bible. The Word of God is not the passages quoted in sermons and the doctrine of preachers of the Word. But in dealing with the divine, there will always be mystery, and we will not be able to understand everything while we are in this body (1 Corinthians 13:12). However, there are truths that have already been revealed, such as the divine nature of Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3).

What there is compelling evidence for is that the Word of God unites us. The Bible says that God took on the nature of human weakness. Jesus, being divine, renounced his divine privileges, was born, and lived as a human being (Philippians 2:5-11). This truth unites us in his Word. For believers, the Word of God is preserved in the biblical texts. The Bible is the testimony of God's Word to us and to the world (John 5:36). United by the Word means that we are attached to Jesus Christ in the same purpose.

We are united by the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:27-28). The living presence of the Word of God is what keeps us united. Jesus, who is the Word of life, was revealed to his witnesses, who wrote down what they saw and

heard, so that we might be united by the same Word: "We proclaim to you what we ourselves have seen and heard, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

The evangelist Luke also describes how he wrote down what he had carefully and thoroughly researched. He stated that his sources were reports circulating among believers about what eyewitnesses had said. He also said that other writers did the same (Luke 1:1-4). The Bible certainly contains human words. But in all those words there is unity and consistency of theme. The sole purpose for which the life was written is so that we may know that we have eternal life:

"But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you may have life through his name" (John 20:31). The redemption of humanity is the main topic of the Bible and unites all human beings. Throughout the Holy Scriptures, there is the unity of a single Word: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

The Word of God submitted itself to the dynamism of human languages. The divine Word acquired sound or a set of sounds with meaning. The Word of God manifests ideas, externalizes thoughts, and reveals hidden invisible mysteries: "Then the Word became flesh and came to live among us. He was full of faithfulness and inexhaustible love. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father" (John 1:14).

The Word of God is what brings together all the children of God scattered throughout the world (John 11:52). The Word

of God is Jesus, who manifests himself and is with us (Matthew 28:20). The Word never loses its validity. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 3:8). He is our strength (Philippians 4:13) and our rest (Matthew 11:28). In Jesus, the time and space in which humanity moves is condensed and simplified. Jesus is the definitive word of God. There will be no more revelation after Jesus: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. I am the one who is, who always was, and who is yet to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

The Word gave life to all creation (John 1:4), and through the Word we are children of God (John 1:12). Therefore, whoever accepts the Word is a child of God; whoever does not accept it is only a creation of God. When Jesus began his public ministry, humanity immediately began to flock in large numbers to hear his word (Luke 5:1). His message is attractive, different, and authoritative (Luke 4:32).

Jesus calls and draws human beings to God. Through the Word, God brings us together in one heart and mind, as the first disciples lived (Acts 4:32). The apostle Paul himself encourages believers to speak the same thing, urging them to remain united in mind and purpose (1 Corinthians 1:10), for there is no longer any reason for division. We are not many. Now we are one body (Romans 12:5), united by one and the same Word:

"But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. You were once far away from God, but now you have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). Jesus gathered his disciples (Mark 3:13), and his disciples were with him. When Jesus sent them out, they could not be without Jesus for long. They missed the presence of their Master. They went out

and returned quickly; they went and came back to tell him what had happened to them: "The apostles returned from their journey and told Jesus everything they had done and taught" (Mark 6:30).

Jesus himself had told them to remain with him, because without him they could do nothing: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me and I in them will bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This is how the apostle Paul understood it, who boasted of being united with Christ (Galatians 2:20). Our purpose should be to be united with God (John 14:23) through a new life in his Word, which is eternal (1 Peter 1:23).

The Bible reveals the Word of God. Therefore, when we read the Bible, we are seeing Jesus Christ, his person, his character, his personality, his history, his behavior, his attitudes, and his works. Let us not stop drawing closer to God through his Word. Reading the Bible is beginning a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. The Word of God unites us in the same spirit for missionary work. For the Word has not died; the Word continues to live; the Word has risen: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:25).

Third Examination:

What does it mean to be united by the Word?

Option 1 That we must all have the same language and culture.

Option 2 That we are united with Jesus Christ in the same purpose.

Option 3 That the words in the Bible are the Word of God.

Option 4 That the Bible is God's revelation only for believers.

6.3 The encouragement of the spoken word

The fundamental purpose of evangelism is to preach, announce, and proclaim the Word of God. Jesus and his disciples spread the gospel orally, then other methods of communication began to be used, but in the beginning it was only verbal. Media such as writing and visual testimony were resources that were used later by believers. As Christianity spread, it became necessary to preserve the authentic and genuine teachings of the truth proclaimed by Jesus:

"These things were written long ago in the Scriptures to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled" (Romans 15:4). These promises are fulfilled when we know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20). By having Christian doctrine written down, it was ensured that they would know the same message as those who were preaching elsewhere. Those who heard the Word of God and believed passed from death to life and began to live eternal life (John 5:24).

The Word of God was written down for testimony. The Bible was written for believers (1 John 5:13) and for those who did not yet believe (John 20:31), so that we would all know that by believing in Jesus Christ, we have eternal life. However, the oral preaching of the Word of God today continues to move souls to believe. Even today, the Word of God proclaimed orally moves crowds, enlivens the enthusiasm of life groups, and touches listeners.

The Word of God made known orally has always had a great impact. Crowds came to hear Jesus (Luke 5:15). Peter's first speech caused three thousand people to be added (Acts 2:41). Successively, more and more believers were added to the church (Acts 5:14). The spoken word caused great encouragement. The message reached, impacted, and transformed the lives of those who heard it. Preaching was done with enthusiasm, for they were present in the word they transmitted.

Jesus Christ was the message and the transmitter of the message. Christ himself was the Good News and at the same time the proclaimer of the Good News. Jesus is the gospel of salvation (Romans 1:19). When the Master of Galilee appears on the public stage, he affirms that Scripture has been fulfilled in him (Luke 4:21). In the same way, when the evangelist sows the seed of the gospel (Luke 8:11), he himself becomes the seed (Matthew 13:38).

Like Christ, we too are the seed that has been sown in the earth. The Word is like the grain that falls on the ground and produces fruit (John 12:24). The Word becomes life in the communicator of the Word, as the apostle Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

To speak of Christ is to bear witness to him with one's life. Christ, the message, and the agent of the message are one. For the Bible says that whoever communicates the gospel has the Word he spreads imprinted on his body (Galatians 6:17). The Word is heard (Romans 10:17) and seen through the messenger. For whoever evangelizes becomes the temple of the Holy

Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). The stimulus of the spoken word is the joy of being the herald and the content of the message.

To evangelize is to proclaim Christ. The foundation of evangelization is the spread of the Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word. Furthermore, those who evangelize live the gospel. The apostle Paul himself speaks of evangelism as his life's purpose. Evangelism is a vital responsibility. Telling what they have seen and heard (Acts 4:20) became an obligation for the followers of Jesus.

Proclaiming the gospel is not a dilemma, nor is there an alternative, nor is it an option; it is a mandate determined by Christ (Acts 9:15). Preaching the name of Jesus is the foundation of our faith (Philippians 2:9-11). Spreading the Word of God is the perennial goal of our existence: "Preaching the Good News is not something I can boast about. I am compelled by God to do so. How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Good News!" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

In the beginning of evangelization, the Word of God began to spread by word of mouth. The only tool used by the early Christians was their spoken language. Jesus is not known to have left his messages in writing. According to the Bible, Jesus used the body language of writing when the Pharisees came to accuse a woman of adultery. However, no one knows what Jesus wrote, who bent down twice to write:

"They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the dust... Then he bent down again and continued writing in the dust" (John 8:6, 8). Nor did Jesus' followers take note of his doctrine, his speeches, or his teachings. What has

come down to us is what they preserved in the memory of oral tradition.

The apostles preached according to Jesus' instructions, testified to the impact and change their Master had made in their lives, but they did not read the Gospels we know today, because they had not yet been written. It is said that the first publication of the New Testament is the first letter of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians, in the year 51 AD. Twenty years had already passed since Jesus' resurrection.

The Good News of Jesus was written after the year 65 AD. The first was the Gospel of Mark. After Jesus' resurrection and with the power of the Holy Spirit, the disciples preached and proclaimed Jesus, with the purpose of conversion and the growth of the church (Acts 2:37-41). Jesus' disciples preached the eternal Word of God orally (Psalm 119:89). The same Word that became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). For the Word of God took human form in the person of Jesus (Philippians 2:6).

Furthermore, we recognize that Jesus' words are also eternal (John 6:68). Those same eternal words were transmitted to Jesus through the Father. God commanded Jesus what to say and how to deliver the message to humanity (John 12:49-50). Those same eternal words have come down to us through the apostles (Luke 9:6). The disciples obeyed Jesus' command to preach his message throughout the world (Mark 16:15), and the succession of believers preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8:4).

Looking at the clear evidence, the beginning of evangelism or the ministry of the word was done only in spoken form. Jesus' message had not been written down. All preaching and

teaching was verbal. The apostle Peter himself confirms that the eternal word of Jesus was the message they preached. He does not say that they preached the Bible, but the message of the Good News: "But the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the message of the Good News that has been preached to you" (1 Peter 1:25).

Fourth Examination:

What is the stimulus of the spoken Word?

Option 1 To proclaim the living and risen Jesus Christ to all people.

Option 2 That in the beginning, evangelization was done by spreading the word.

Option 3 It is the joy of being the herald and the content of the message.

Option 4 The words of life have come to us without alteration.

6.4 The visual word of testimony

The Word of God becomes visible through testimony. The term testimony comes from the Greek *martyria*, which means martyr, referring to a person who dies for their faith, in defense of the cause they profess. In this case, the witness reveals Christ. Preaching the Word is not abstract; it needs the support of the tangible. Testimony reflects the Word of God. By what a person testifies, we know who they believe in and whom they defend.

The preaching of the Word of God is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10), and prophecy is physically transformed into testimony. That is why Jesus always resorted to his testimony to prove the truth of his message: "The Father himself, who sent me, has testified about me. You have never heard his voice nor seen him face to face" (John 5:37). Jesus is both the source of testimony and the testimony itself (1 John 5:9-11). The invisible God becomes visible in the testimony of Jesus and then in the testimony of believers.

The word is seen and heard through testimony. The Word of God is presented in the incarnate Word (John 1:14), who is Jesus, who in turn testified with deeds and words to the presence of God in his life, as his disciples later recalled: "And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

To testify is to defend with one's life the principles that govern that same life and the lives of those who pursue the

same aspirations. Testimony is the martyrdom that a person faces, proving their fidelity to the ideal they promote, to the ultimate consequences. The Word of God has always been preached. Sometimes through speech, other times through the sole and unique testimony. On some occasions, the message could not be announced in a narrative form. Words were silenced, but deeds preached the teachings of Jesus.

The visual word of testimony is the living and effective proclamation of Jesus' teaching. The Word has never stopped; it has been spread at all times, which is why it has reached us. The Word of God has been validated through witnesses. The most solid and greatest testimony was when the witnesses decided to capture their beliefs in written records. Writing was a meticulous and academic task on the part of the sacred authors. The evangelist Luke says that he himself interviewed the witnesses (Luke 1:2-3). In his literary work, Luke states that the purpose of writing was so that they might have full assurance of Christian teachings (Luke 1:4). Similarly, the apostle John confirms that he wrote so that we might continue to believe: "The above information comes from an eyewitness who presents a faithful account. He tells the truth so that you too might believe" (John 19:35). The New Testament is the testimony of the experiences of the early Christians. The biblical accounts were written based on the testimony of those who experienced the events firsthand and to serve as a testimony to new believers.

A testimony is the confirmation, evidence, and demonstration of the truth of what is being told. The witness makes a reliable statement, with certainty, of what he has seen and heard: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard,

which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life" (1 John 1:1). When the apostles Peter and John testified before the crowd, they moved people to believe. At the beginning of the Christian era, testimony was so effective, with such power and force, that in a single exhortation the number of believers grew to five thousand (Acts 4:4).

The word became visible through the testimony of believers in two ways. On the one hand, the apostles bore witness through preaching and miracles (Luke 4:16). On the other hand, the testimony of the multitude of believers restrained the authorities from mistreating the disciples with such insolence and impudence (Acts 4:21-22). The physical presence of the believers was a great testimony and encouraged the apostles. Through preaching, the apostles sought to convince those who listened to them, but through testimony they attracted them to become Christians more easily.

The important thing was that the Word came to life through testimony. The key was to testify; there was no other option. The early Christians, both leaders and followers, had no respite: "On that day a great persecution broke out throughout the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1). The early Christians testified through preaching and physical suffering. They were the first witnesses of the Word. They were thrown into prison (Acts 4:3) and flogged (Acts 5:40). They boldly faced riots, agitations, and revolts (Acts 13:50).

The torment suffered by the first disciples of Jesus Christ was terrible. However, it was said that the blood of the early Christians motivated others to confess and follow the Christian

life. No other era has been as mortifying as the beginning of Christianity. But the apostles endured all kinds of abuse, insults, and contempt because they saw that their sacrifice was not in vain: "Immediately a mob formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them to be stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They beat them severely and then threw them into prison. They ordered the jailer to make sure they did not escape. So the jailer put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks" (Acts 16:22-24).

The testimonies of Stephen (Acts 7:59-60) and James (Acts 12:2) led directly to their deaths. But because of the apostles' testimony, their followers also suffered severe punishment and extreme retaliation, as in the case of Jason and his brothers in faith, who were put in prison for hosting the apostles (Acts 17:5-9). The early Christians had to flee from city to city because of death threats, but wherever they went, they gave testimony (Acts 14:4-7). They endured many hardships and labors (Acts 20:1-6), imprisonment, and tribulations (Acts 20:23).

Jesus' disciples did not sleep (Acts 20:31), endured hunger (Acts 27:21), suffered attacks (Acts 9:25), and some nearly lost their lives (Acts 5:33). However, they endured suffering for the name of Jesus with joy and dignity (Acts 5:41). The apostles developed their testimony by increasing their faith through suffering. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, the Apostle Paul lists all his sufferings. His testimony is worthy of emulation, for he was an imitator of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:9).

Like Paul, the other apostles faced imprisonment and suffered great trials. However, they continued in prayer, singing hymns to God, and the prisoners who heard them (Acts 16:25) were converted, along with the jailers (Acts 16:32-34). All these

controversies and obstacles, instead of discouraging the believers, prompted them to confirm their testimony. On the contrary, they prayed that the Lord would give them more strength to continue witnessing in the midst of persecution (Acts 4:23-31).

The testimony had far-reaching consequences, and the counter-testimony faced profound consequences. Among many events, we can recount what happened to Herod. His usurpation of divine qualities led to his death (Acts 12:22-23). But the testimony of the apostles, who prevented people from offering sacrifices to them as if they were gods, gave them life (Acts 14:17-18). Today, Christians are also expected to continue to bear witness. Those who lead exemplary lives in the practice of Christian principles and values bear witness. Witness is given through words and deeds. The life and teaching of the witness must be consistent. That is why Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 23:1-12). In contrast, the disciples were willing to live out their ideals and faith in Christ at all times and in all places: "So the believers who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus" (Acts 8:4).

The witness of the early Christians was not only personal but also collective. All the apostles bore witness to the new life they had received from Christ (John 3:16-17). The disciples lived a life filled with heroism. They were not alone in their progressive journey of faith; they were supported by the community of believers. Furthermore, Christ promised to be with them until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

The testimony of the early Christians was one of perseverance, patience, and passion. They were concerned with

teaching the Word of God, overcoming circumstances, living their faith, and making the name of Jesus known. Their testimony encouraged many to follow the new path: "But the apostles stayed there for a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord. And the Lord showed that the message was true by giving them power to perform miraculous signs and wonders" (Acts 14:3).

Many listened to the apostles. In the early days of the Christian era, many people were eager to hear the message and see the signs performed by the apostles (Acts 8:6-9). The believers brought joy to the community, so they could not ignore their testimony: "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

In general, the perspective of the early Christian community was one of full testimony in word (Acts 5:42) and deed (Acts 5:12-15). The Word grew and the number of believers multiplied (Acts 6:7). Since the apostles were itinerant (Acts 8:25), their preaching reached many places. And since witness was inherent in their lives, Christianity spread with abundant fruit.

Finally, witness was not a spontaneous attitude that Jesus' disciples added to their ministry. Jesus had already warned them of the consequences they would face for spreading the kingdom of God through preaching the Word: "Be on your guard, because they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues" (Matthew 10:17). Jesus encouraged them by telling them that he would suffer persecution and insults first. That is why, on one occasion, Jesus described precisely what he was going to suffer: "Then they will hand him

over to the Romans to be mocked, flogged, and crucified, but on the third day he will rise from the dead" (Matthew 20:19).

After Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven, his work continued on earth. Not only through the apostolic work of his followers, but he himself would continue to encourage his disciples: "One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision and said, 'Do not be afraid! Speak freely! Do not be silent!'" (Acts 18:9).

Fifth Examination:

What is the visual Word of testimony?

Option 1 It is the work of Jesus depicted in paintings and audio visuals.

Option 2 It is the living and effective proclamation of Jesus' teaching.

Option 4 It is describing the life and work of Jesus in eloquent words.

Option 3 It is to make others believe through bold preaching.

6.5 The power of the written word

The spoken word is swift through the air and volatile in time. The written word moves slowly, but it is preserved forever in history. It could be said that writing contains and protects the word from transience. For the only repository of the spoken word is memory. In contrast, the written word has many means of storage. Furthermore, since one can return to the text again and again, writing allows for reflection, encourages analysis, and promotes interpretation, as the apostle Paul advises:

"Test everything. Hold on to what is good. Avoid every kind of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The spoken word is almost natural to human beings; it is the first form of interpersonal communication and has greater historical significance. But even though writing appeared later, among the various abilities of the word, text prolongs the durability of the message. Spoken discourse is heard and must be retained at the moment. In contrast, the written word is durable, transportable, and can be read and reread until the message is understood. Text favors the ordering of ideas and allows for the synthesis of content.

Information received in writing helps to discern and test the intent of the sender of the message. With the written word, there is more confidence and assurance that the recommendations of the apostle Paul will be fulfilled: "Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak on behalf of the Spirit. Test them to find out if the spirit they have really comes from God, because there are many false prophets in the world" (1 John 4:1).

What is written is no longer just the personal understanding of the author, but the result of the reflection of many in the community, who have imbued the collective memory of oral tradition with letters. "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the personal understanding of the prophets" (2 Peter 1:20). The spoken word is part of everyday life. The written word finds reasons for study and depth. In everyday conversations and in the interrelation of messages, the spoken word is used more than writing.

Writing is presence and permanence in time and space. Written words transcend borders, even if the authors of the narrative perish. Writing enlivens the message eternally. However, when Jesus invited his disciples to preach the gospel throughout the world (Mark 16:15), he was referring to the use of the spoken word. In Jesus' environment, it was common to use the linguistic medium of speech.

While Jesus was on earth, he quoted from Jewish scripture, which means that he had read or heard about the sacred history of his people. But he did not write anything, nor did anyone write about his teachings. All communication was imparted orally. Out of necessity to keep the content current and endure over time, the oral message is emphasized in the written message. Writing resolves and manages the expiration and limitation of oral communication. Sacred preachers decide to put their teachings, sermons, and exhortations in writing through various literary genres.

The power of the written word is very strong. Sacred authors produced only one copy of their message, since they wrote by hand, but group readings of their book instructed an entire community. With the invention of the printing press, the

written word was strengthened. Personal, family, and group reading took on exceptional dimensions. The power of the written word lies in its permanence, repetition, and verifiability. It transcends time, space, and language.

Therefore, readers with their own copy in hand immerse themselves in the intimacy of knowledge, critical thinking, and the open circulation of ideas. The apostle Paul says: "Such things were written long ago in the Scriptures to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled" (Romans 15:4).

With the written word begins the dissemination of objections, concepts, and opinions. Orally, it would never have been possible to preserve and transmit the depth and complexity of the expositions that are achieved through writing. Now daily life is full of books. Readers do not have to go to public places to listen to the speaker. It was the writings that began to travel, to flow, and to move along various paths. Each person could choose the best time to educate themselves by reading and discerning which book to choose.

Today, current media have transcended paper. Electronics have taken over the word. Virtual libraries and social networks continue to facilitate the circulation of the word. To such an extent that we can all write a book and read many authors. The need to communicate thoughts, feelings, and experiences makes the written word a good platform for making them known. That is why the authors of the Bible put the Word of God in writing: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching us what is true and for showing us what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right" (2 Timothy 3:16). In writing, the reader is

absent from the author of the book. The reader is so engrossed in the text that they hear the voice of the speaker and converse with the characters in the text.

The narrative creates images, memorizes events, and revives memories with nostalgia, with such power and force that the reader produces his or her own scenes. A series of new ideas and current personal and group experiences are derived from the book. The interpretation of past events is appropriately applied to the present. The text is relevant in time and space. It never wears out; the message is new every time it is read. The very life, deeds, teachings, signs, signals, and wonders of Jesus were written down in four different versions. Each one retains its own particularities, structure, and style, even though they are based on the same sources.

Much of what is oral is lost, disappears, or is distorted over time. New stories are born, and what is preserved in personal and collective memory is rearranged. On the other hand, what is put into writing is what does not let the author rest, what goes round and round in his head, what resonates and echoes until he brings it out and captures it in the written word. What comes to mind but soon goes away is not retained or preserved in any writing.

Before the advent of the word processor, the creation of text was different. Today, ideas, thoughts, imaginations, and literary creations are put into writing, knowing that they can later be corrected, expanded, or changed. Lightness, speed, and accuracy were valued. People did not write to venerate writing, but to learn the content and assimilate the teachings: "From childhood, you have been taught the Holy Scriptures, which

have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes from trusting in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

But before that, only what had already left an imprint and a trace in the neurons was put into writing. What could no longer be removed or released from the author's mind. It had to be more profound and accurate when putting the idea into writing, as it was rarely possible to make a draft. From the hands of Paul or his secretary, the text flowed smoothly, without nerves or hesitation. There was no time to set it aside and refresh it later. It was not subject to review; everything flowed smoothly and in one go. There was no content review or editing.

"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching" (1 Timothy 4:13). The writing was highly respected because it was clear, true, and accurate. The authors were witnesses or interviewed witnesses as a legacy. The author listens to his inner voice and is faithful and loyal to the message. Luke says that he investigated what he wrote down (Luke 1:3), and John was a witness (1 John 1:3). Everything they recounted and recorded in writing was the most significant and left a lesson. They wrote because it was an urgent priority to convey in the best way possible the task of proclaiming the message that Jesus had given them (Matthew 28:19-20).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became flesh (John 1:14). Now we are all that verb and that word. Through writing, we can learn new things, analyze them, and use them in our daily lives. The sacred authors took Jesus' message and put it into writing. We must update the same system and method used by Jesus' disciples.

Sixth Examination:

Where does the power of the written word lie?

Option 1 In that each reader can interpret the text as they wish.

Option 2 It is fast and swift as the wind, and it remains timeless.

Option 3 In its permanence, repetition, and verifiability.

Option 4 It is easy to memorize because it can be read and reread.

6.6 United by the Sacrament

The sacrament is a tangible and effective sign of grace, which gives us eternal life. Jesus Christ is a sacrament because he is the sign that God is among us (Matthew 1:23). Since Christ is a sacrament, he himself instituted the sacraments and entrusted them to his church. The sacrament is an extension of his presence in his church. Therefore, the church has the authority to administer the sacraments.

The sacraments unite us to God (John 1:14). From Christ we receive the grace of the sacraments (John 1:16). Jesus is the image of the invisible God, who becomes visible in the sacraments (Colossians 1:5). The mysteries of Christ's life are visualized in the sacraments. The church ministers the actions of Christ, and at the same time Christ builds up the church with his grace, in the same way that the Son is identified with the Father: "No one has ever seen God; but the Son, the Only One, he himself is God and is intimately linked to the Father. He has revealed God to us" (John 1:18).

In the law there was no sacramental sign, but in grace the whole effective meaning of the sacrament is spread. The sacramental character is a spiritual seal, conferred by the sacraments, which constitutes a promise and guarantee of divine protection: "For the law was given through Moses, but the inexhaustible love of God and his faithfulness came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). By virtue of this seal, Christians are configured to Christ, participate in various ways in his priesthood, and form part of the Church according to different states and functions. They are therefore consecrated to divine worship

and the service of the Church. Since the character is indelible, the sacraments that imprint it can only be received once in a lifetime, such as the sacrament of baptism.

The sacraments also unite us to the faith of the Church. For the sacraments not only presuppose faith, but also nourish, strengthen, and express it through words and ritual elements. By celebrating the sacraments, the Church confesses the apostolic faith: "Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Hence the ancient saying: "lex orandi, lex credendi," which means that the Church believes as it prays. The way the Church behaves is the measure of its belief. On the other hand, the sacraments are effective "ex opere operato." That is, the effectiveness of the sacrament is subject to the sacramental action that is performed. For it is Christ who acts in them and who gives the grace they signify, regardless of the personal holiness of the minister. Consequently, the sacraments unite us to God through the faith of the individual and the presence of the Church. Therefore, the fruits of the sacraments, that is, the effects of the sacrament, depend on the disposition of the recipient. Hence, the sacraments presuppose faith and at the same time nourish, strengthen, and express the faith of the believer through words and symbols.

For believers in Christ, the sacraments, although not all are given to each of the faithful, are necessary for salvation because they confer sacramental grace, forgiveness of sins, adoption as children of God, configuration to Christ the Lord, and membership in the Church. The Holy Spirit heals and transforms those who receive the sacraments. The sacraments are necessary for salvation because they are means of grace that nourish the life of holiness, for without holiness no one will see the

Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Through the sacraments, sacramental grace is bestowed, such as the forgiveness of sins, adoption as children of God, configuration with Christ the Lord, and membership in the Church. The Holy Spirit heals and transforms those who receive them. Therefore, sacramental grace is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament. This grace helps the faithful on their path to holiness, and also helps the Church in its growth in charity and witness.

Finally, in the sacraments, the Church already receives a foretaste of eternal life: "While living in the hope of the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

Seventh Examination:

To whom does the sacrament unite us?

Option 1 It unites us to God through the faith of the individual and the church.

Option 2 It unites us with all people equally, regardless of religion.

Option 3 It unites us in the same mind and thought, with the same purpose.

Option 4 It automatically unites us to grace, without the contribution of faith.

6.7 The unity of the sign and its content

A sign is a symbol that evokes a reality beyond what we perceive. The unity of the sign consists in communicating the highly meaningful content of God's grace. The sacramental sign is a means of communicating God's grace for the good of our spiritual life; it is an instrument that we human beings use to receive God's grace.

The sign is the physical, the means or the visible that we observe when the sacrament is administered, but the content is the grace of God. When there is coherence between the sign and its content, the effective grace of God is produced in favor of the one who receives the sacramental sign. The elements that make up the sacramental sign are the matter, the form, the content, and the person who administers the sacrament. The unity of the sign and its content consists of an evident, sensible, palpable, and effective means of grace. The matter is the sign used to administer the sacrament, and the form is the words spoken at the moment of administering the sacrament.

For example, water in baptism is the matter. That sign signifies purification, new life, or a new beginning. It conveys the grace of birth into spiritual life: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3-5).

The bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are the elements that signify the presence of Christ's body and blood: "As they sat down to eat, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:30-31). The anointing with oil designates and imprints a spiritual seal of healing and compassionate courage: "But a Samaritan, who was traveling, came near him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion; and approaching, he bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and putting him on his mount, he took him to the inn and cared for him" (Luke 10:33-34).

Oil is a sign of anointing, both of purification and strength, as well as healing and comfort: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15). The oil of anointing heals and takes away suffering. From the moment the disciples were sent out by Jesus to minister throughout the world, they began to use oil to confer the grace of healing on the sick: "Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, calling on people to repent and turn to God. They also cast out many demons and healed many sick people by anointing them with olive oil" (Mark 6:12-13).

Believers are equipped to minister God's grace. With the power of the word, they defeat the enemy, become immune to exposure to contaminated food, and their hands are anointed with the gift of health: "These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: they will cast out demons in my name and speak new languages. They will pick up snakes with their

hands, and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well" (Mark 16:17-18).

In other words, in addition to oil as a sign of consecration, the laying on of hands is a vital sign of the transmission of God's grace. Through the sign of the laying on of hands, the faith of believers is also confirmed: "When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John there; who, when they arrived, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet come upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17).

As we see, the laying on of hands is not only a sign of healing and blessing, but it is also a tangible sign that causes and brings about the coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers: "Paul said, 'John's baptism required repentance from sin, but John himself told the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then, when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:4-6).

For its part, the cross represents Christ's victory. It symbolizes the passage from death to life. With his death, Christ destroyed sin, and with his resurrection, Christ gave us new life. The cross is the sign of the source of eternal salvation: "The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18).

Like the cross, a sign with the hand is a form of blessing. The same is true of bodily postures in prayer, praise, and worship, which signal what a person is doing to receive God's grace. A sign can be a word, such as amen or hallelujah, an image or illustration, just as smells and colors, and many other signs, represent the abundant grace of God that surrounds us constantly.

The Bible is a sign or sacrament both for believers and for the world, which sees in these books the presence of God's word. The Holy Scriptures are a collection of books with sacred content, which preserve God's interventions in human history. The Bible communicates God's saving truth. Therefore, the Bible itself is a sign, because people who approach its content must interpret what God wanted to communicate and what the sacred writer wanted to say through language, genres, and literary style.

Everything in the Bible is a sacramental sign: the words and their expressions, the people and the protagonists of the events and happenings; the places and times in which the events took place and are narrated; the circumstances of the author, his problems, and the situations of the recipients. In short, there are signs that represent the end of time and the return of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Several biblical passages narrate that there will be signs on earth, that there will be distress in various places on earth, and that humanity will suffer tribulation (Matthew 24).

Eighth Examination:

What is the unity of the sign and its content?

Option 1 It is a resource created by people to receive grace.

Option 2 It is an instrument that contains form, matter, and content.

Option 3 It is an evident, sensible, palpable, and effective means of grace.

Option 4 It is an act of faith, in which believers believe they receive grace.

6.8 The structural form of the sacrament

Every sacrament is determined by a structure that gives meaning to the sign. This structure is formed by the words spoken by the minister, according to his intention when administering the sacrament, which must be consistent with what the church believes. It is the words that give form to the sign so that it becomes a sacrament containing the effective grace of God, and these words form a structure. The words that accompany the matter of the sign are what produce the meaning of the sacrament.

Words are fundamental elements required for the sign to acquire effective value. The specific form, established by the church, is what gives the sign its identity and meaning. Therefore, the structural form of the sacrament is the faithful formula of the words spoken by the minister. When something is added or removed from the structural form, the effectiveness of the sacrament is altered. This happens when the words are changed or varied, whether by transposing them, corrupting them, interpolating them with others, or interrupting their meaning. The words are united with the matter of the sign, which is the symbol being used, whether water, bread, wine, oil, or the laying on of hands. They give meaning to the sign and make it understandable and effective for receiving God's grace. The form determines the meaning of the matter, as its essential part. The structure, formed by the words, is an important part of the meaning of the Sacrament. The sign accomplishes what the words express and produces the spiritual effect of grace, according to the constitution of the sacrament.

Thus, the matter of baptism is water. But on its own, water would have no meaning if the form were not introduced, which is the words pronounced by the minister of the sacrament: I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. These words contain a structure. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, united by the conjunction "and," which links the name of God in his titles of divine fullness and the fulfillment of Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

In the book of Acts, we find Peter baptizing in the name of Jesus: "Peter replied, 'Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 2:38). The same thing happens in Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48, Acts 19:5, and Acts 22:16. In all these instances, baptism in the name of Jesus is mentioned. This means that the authority with which baptism is administered is Jesus, but the formula for baptism is in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For example, the formula for water is H₂O, but the name is water. No one asks for H₂O in a store, but rather for water. The same thing happens when a police officer says, "Stop in the name of the law." The name means that the authority is the law, and the police officer has the power to do what he does in the name of the law.

The argument that the name of Jesus means authority and not the formula is found in the following event: "They brought the two disciples in and asked them, 'By what power or in whose name have you done this?'" (Acts 4:7). Peter responds with confidence, clarity, and forcefulness: "Let me tell you

clearly, both you and all the people of Israel, that it was by the mighty name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth that he was healed" (Acts 4:10). The same sense of authority is found in Acts 4:17-18; Acts 5:28, 40; Acts 8:12; Acts 9:27-28; and Acts 16:18.

The Lord's Supper, also called the Eucharist, also has form. The matter is unleavened wheat bread and pure grape wine. The form is the words that maintain a coherent structure: "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, 'Take it and eat it, for this is my body.' Then he took a cup of wine, gave thanks to God for it, and gave it to them. He gave it to them and said, 'Each of you drink from the cup, for this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many'" (Matthew 26-28). Therefore, St. Paul continued to uphold the same structure created by Jesus when he gave instructions for public worship regarding the order of the Lord's Supper. It is the same structural form that continued for years throughout the history of the church, has come down to us, and is preserved intact today: "For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you. On the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks to God for that bread. Then he broke it into pieces and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant between God and his people, an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this in remembrance of me whenever you drink it. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Like the previous sacraments we have described, all sacramental signs contain a

structural form. The form of confirmation is: "By this sign receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," supported by the passage from Acts 8:14-17. Penance: "I absolve you from your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," is supported by John 5:14-15.

As for the anointing of the sick, the structural formula is: "Through this holy anointing and by His loving mercy, may the Lord help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that He may free you from your sins, grant you salvation, and comfort you in your illness," words based on James 5:14-15. The presbyteral order is based on 2 Timothy 1:6 and that of marriage on Matthew 19:6.

Ninth Examination:

What is the structural form of the sacrament?

Option 1 It is the grace of God that is received in all the sacraments.

Option 2 It is the rite that is performed when a sacrament is administered.

Option 3 It is the sign that contains the sacramental form and matter.

Option 4 It is the faithful formula of the words spoken by the minister.

6.9 The symbol evokes value and feelings

Every sacrament holds great value. Those who receive the grace of the sacraments, as well as those who attend the ceremony, are enriched and blessed by the sacramental effect. Furthermore, the sacramental symbol alone awakens deep feelings in believers. The symbol of water is present in many religions and their various rituals, as well as in mysticism and the mysteries of nature. Water has vital, fertile, and mythological characteristics.

Water is abundant on the planet, and it is still unknown why life reproduces where there is water. Furthermore, water is so valuable that even a glass of water is important in the work of Jesus Christ: "If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will certainly be rewarded" (Mark 9:41).

Water is the heritage of life. It is not denied to anyone. God himself makes no exceptions; regardless of a person's condition or behavior, everyone receives their share of water: "In this way, you will be acting as a true child of your Father in heaven. For he gives the light of his sun to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike" (Matthew 5:45).

The very Word of God is compared to water. Cleanliness and life, the life of grace, consecration to God, are represented by water. The new message of Jesus Christ, when accepted by the believer, begins to produce torrents of happiness, peace, joy, and eternal life: "On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let

him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, let him come and drink. For the Scriptures declare: From his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37-38).

In its various states of liquid, gas, and solid, water inspires art in its various expressions, just as it symbolizes the presence of the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our Christian faith. Life comes from Christ, who is the source of truth; from the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies, transforms, and nourishes the soul; and from the Father, who does not forsake his creatures and opens paths and springs in the desert (Isaiah 41:17-18). God marks the new beginning of the believer's Christian life: "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life'" (John 4:13-14). The symbols of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper inspire feelings of thanksgiving, sacrifice, devotion, filial affection, and detachment from physical ties. The Eucharist is a sign of surrender and security in God's divine and eternal promises: "And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These promises make it possible for you to participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world caused by human desires" (2 Peter 1:4). In the Lord's Supper, the elements of bread and wine express and respond to human concerns about understanding the scope and cost of eternal salvation. The Eucharist enlightens the minds of even the most indifferent and skeptical of faith to understand that the body and blood of Christ are present: "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (John 6:55-56).

The symbols of oil, the sign of the cross, light, colors, the laying on of hands, vestments, or any other representation that forms the meaningful fabric used in sacramental signs evoke and enliven similar values and feelings. Invisible, divine, and spiritual realities acquire relevance and sure evidence, clarity, and certainty in sacramental symbols. The symbols used in sacramental rites are not only gestures, actions, and human language, but they become the real presence of God in the midst of humanity. Symbols evoke value and feelings because God makes himself present through the sacraments. The only way God speaks to human beings is through creation itself. Hence, symbols evoke value and feelings in humanity, carry out God's will, signify the action of the Holy Spirit, and perpetuate the saving action of Christ, until eternal glory is attained.

Tenth Examination:

Why do symbols evoke value and feelings?

Option 1 Because sacraments represent God's grace.

Option 2 Because symbols are myths and legends of cultures.

Option 3 Because God is present through the sacraments.

Option 4 Because God wants all human beings to be saved.

6.10 United by the Congregation

The church is the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12). Just as the human body remains united, healthy, vital, and growing, so must the church. The healthy development of the church is the responsibility of all its members. The unity and integrity of its members guarantee the well-being of the church. The term church comes from the Greek *ekklessia*, which means assembly or gathering of people. In the Acts of the Apostles, there is an account of a riot in Ephesus against Paul and his followers. In this disturbance, the word *ἐκκλησία* is used, which is translated as assembly, congregation, or church:

"There was confusion in the assembly (*ekklessia*). Everyone was shouting something different, and most did not even know why they had gathered" (Acts 19:32). It is understood that the assembly (*ekklessia*) that attacked Paul and his companions were not Christians, for they were people who had been stirred up by Demetrius, who, along with other religious merchants, saw their idolatrous businesses threatened by the temple of Diana (Acts 19:24-28). However, *ekklessia* among Christians referred to the multitude of believers in Christ (Romans 10:9). It was an assembly of believers. In other words, the word *ekklessia* was taken from the religious language of the time, but with a different meaning. Now the church or assembly is in favor of the Christian faith.

The apostle Paul sends greetings to the churches that meet in homes (Colossians 4:15; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 1:2). He greets the church that meets in the house of Priscilla and

Aquila (Romans 16:6). He affirms that all the churches of Christ send them greetings (Romans 16:16), and he also refers to the church that Gaius receives in his house (Romans 16:23). Although the church is often confused with the temple or the infrastructure that houses a group of people, the truth is that the church is made up of believers in Christ, as the apostle Paul interprets very well: "All of you together are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of that body" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

In no way does the church consist of a democratic system, since power would come from the people who make up that structure. Instead, in the church, power comes from Christ, to whom all authority has been given: "Jesus came and said to his disciples, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'" (Matthew 28:18). In a way, the church has a hierarchical organization. But it is very different from the simply political power of government. A collegial or ministerial structure is visibly perceived, but it is granted or sustained by the grace of Jesus Christ. Authority emanates from Christ, and without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). We understand hierarchy to mean that Christ is the head (Ephesians 5:23) and the rest of us are his members (Colossians 1:18). The church is one, the body is one; there are not two ecclesial corporations in the world. Belonging to the church must be genuine and radical, because we are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:26-28).

The body of Christ has many members, but it is one body (Romans 12:4-5). Jesus himself warns that we must be one (John 17:21). That is why the apostle Paul himself writes to the church in Ephesus about who is the authority, who keeps the church united, and whom the church must obey: "God has put everything under the authority of Christ, whom he made head

of all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is the body of Christ; he completes and fills it, and he is also the one who gives fullness to all things everywhere with his presence" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church of Christ, which has many members (1 Corinthians 12:20), is made up of congregations. The apostle Paul himself explains that the members have different functions (1 Corinthians 12:15-20). In the same way, congregations differ in the work and ministry they do in the world on behalf of the church: "Just as our body has many parts, and each part has a specific function, so also the body of Christ. We are the different parts of one body and belong to one another" (Romans 12:4-5).

We are united by the congregation, which means that each member of the church has a specific function. God defines the function of each congregation in the church (1 Corinthians 12:24-25). All congregations form a unity, and together they form the church. Each congregation is useful and necessary in the church.

The charismatic emphasis marks and defines the ministry of each congregation. Sometimes the emphasis is doctrinal, other times pastoral, and on many occasions social, evangelistic, prophetic, missionary, educational, focused on children, youth, the elderly, families, professionals, among many others:

"Now to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it, that is, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12). Work in the church must be genuine and given by the Holy Spirit. For sometimes there are false and

deceitful workers (2 Corinthians 11:13), pretentious and lying (Revelation 2:2). Each ministry, congregation, or particular church has a person with a specific gift, who brings originality and authenticity to the work that God has entrusted to them (2 Corinthians 12:12). It is clear that there is only one church, with only one message of the gospel. The difference lies in the form, emphasis, or manner in which evangelistic work is carried out, depending on the diverse environments, cultural context, and different needs of humankind.

Just as there are personal charisms (1 Peter 4:10), there are also congregational charisms (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). These are edifying ministries, diverse and unique in nature, functioning for the benefit of the body of the church, inspired by the Holy Spirit to fulfill a specific mission within the church and in the world, on behalf of the universal church, at a specific time and place.

In conclusion, plurality is strength and vitality in the church. The diversity of congregations, the different ministries, the infinity of churches with specific charisms and evident fruits, are strengths for the unity and healthy functioning of the body of Christ that is the church.

The members and ministries of the church are connected to one another in order to be useful and to serve. Unity and communion in the church come from the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13) and not from human whims.

Eleventh Examination:

What does it mean that we are united by the Congregation?

Option 1 Each congregation forms a church that is different and unique.

Option 2 That each member of the church has a specific role.

Option 3 That each church has the privilege of its own ministry.

Option 4 That each person should wait for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

6.11 The Church is called together

The verb "to call" means to summon or summon the presence of people at a specific place and time for a specific cause. The call is made aloud or through writings, notices, or public announcements. The call is made formally to the people who make up the group or congregation. They are invited to participate in meetings or various celebrations scheduled by the organization.

In the same sense, the church is called together. The term church itself designates a gathering. There can be no church without a gathering. Therefore, the church is called together in the sense of its real nature as living stones of the spiritual temple (1 Peter 2:5). Precisely, the main characteristic that defines the church is the gathering. The group of Christians is called a church because its members are called to belong, to develop, and to form a visible body and sacramental sign for the world.

In the church, people are invited to form a collective body. As in any profession, trade, or social work, people do not call themselves to serve. Someone summons, invites, and requires the worker to labor in their enterprise. In the same way, the members who form the body of Christ are servants of God: "For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9).

Since the beginning of the Christian era, Jesus has been the one to call people. Therefore, belonging to the church is not a right acquired by birth, culture, or social status. Joining the church is a privilege granted by divine will: "You did not choose me, but I chose you. I appointed you to go and bear

fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" (John 15:16).

Consequently, the ekklesia is the assembly of God's people, led by leaders whom the Holy Spirit has appointed (Acts 20:28). Therefore, if the church is founded on the authority of Christ (Matthew 16:18), it is natural that He Himself should call its members: "Some time later Jesus went up a mountain and called those he wanted to accompany him. They all came to him" (Mark 3:13). Jesus does not choose his followers at random. The Master knew in advance whom He would call to be leaders of His church. Jesus saw Nathanael under the fig tree long before he was called (John 1:48). It was not Matthew who first saw who would be his Master; it was Jesus who set His eyes on him (Matthew 9:9). Likewise, the first disciples were surprised by Jesus' invitation to join his church while they were engaged in their daily work of fishing (Matthew 4:18-22). At the end of his public life, at the table of communion, that is, of *koinonia*, Jesus declares that he knows all his disciples, whom he himself has chosen. He expresses his intimate and solid relationship with the knowledge he has of the events of his sacrifice, as a living service of redemption to humanity: "I am not saying this to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me'" (John 13:18).

The initiative to summon the members of the church to the farewell supper marks the noble character of the power of communion. Jesus had summoned the members of the church to maintain a close relationship with him, in permanent discipleship. Similarly, he had called them to be his collaborators in his

mission: "Jesus called them and said, 'Come, follow me, and I will teach you how to fish for people'" (Mark 1:17).

Now, at the Lord's Supper, definitive communion (*koinonia*) is sealed at the price of his body and blood offered in propitiatory sacrifice (1 John 2:2). Christ is salvation for those who have been called to await the redemption of their sins (Hebrews 9:28). The Eucharist impresses upon us the supreme value of communion. Jesus had already warned us long ago when he said that there is no stronger communion, nor greater love, than that of one who lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13).

Jesus' followers remained faithful to their Master's call. Paul and Barnabas, in their missionary journeys, left deep traces of the frequent gatherings of the early Christians: "When they arrived in Antioch, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27).

There are many biblical accounts of how the early Christians gathered together in their daily practices (Acts 2:42), to resolve doctrinal issues (1 Corinthians 4:17), disciplinary matters (Hebrews 10:25), and festive celebrations of significant events (1 Corinthians 11:17-22). Jesus had taught how to resolve conflicts by calling a meeting among the members of the church (Matthew 18:15-17). The early Christians continued this practice when they resolved the conflict over serving tables (Acts 6:1-7), defined an inclusive church (Acts 15:1-35), and decided to form effective work teams (Acts 15:36-41). The apostle Paul, who participated in several gatherings in the early church, continues to express his interest in his disciples following his instructions: "I left you in Crete so that you might finish

our work there and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).

In conclusion, the gathering of Christians is a sign of mutual coexistence, fellowship, and fraternal help; it is a sign of frequent reconciliation, the search for community holiness, and the spirit of simplicity and humility, a reference to a holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

Twelfth Examination:

In what sense is the church called together?

Option 1 In its true nature as living stones of the spiritual temple.

Option 2 To offer sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving.

Option 3 For the purpose of resolving conflicts in the world.

Option 4 Because it continues the guidance that Jesus imparted to his disciples.

6.12 The Church is equipped

The church is the union of believers in Christ. It is a living body, formed, organized, and constituted to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-15). Based on its essence, Jesus entrusted the church with the work of evangelism. In this regard, the sacred writers described five ways to fulfill the mission that Jesus Christ had given them:

1. *Preach*: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all" (Mark 16:15).

2. *Teach*: "Go and make disciples... teaching them" (Matthew 28:19-20).

3. *Testify*: - "You are witnesses of all these things" (Luke 24:48). - "You will be my witnesses, and you will tell people about me everywhere" (Acts 1:8).

4. *Follow*: - "Follow me" (John 21:19). - "As for you, follow me" (John 21:22).

5. *Send*: - "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). - "As you sent me into the world, I send them into the world" (John 17:18).

Consequently, because of its nature and delicate task, the church has been provided with multiple instruments to carry out its work. The church is equipped in the sense that it has everything necessary to fulfill its mission: The church is governed, guided, and nourished by Christ (John 10:9). Jesus promised to always sustain his church with his permanent presence (Matthew 28:20). Likewise, the church, which was instituted by Christ (Matthew 16:18), possesses the kingdom of God (Luke 12:32). Likewise, the church is the repository of the

truth, which is Christ (John 14:6). This visible, tangible, and human institution has the power to judge the people of Israel (Matthew 19:28) and has the authority to bind and loose, to release and retain: "Truly I tell you, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven" (Matthew 18:18).

Church leaders are protectors of the truth that has been entrusted to the church (Acts 20:20-21). In the letters of the apostle Paul, we often see that his position is in line with God's will, and that his teachings are normative for the permanence of a vital and healthy community: "So that, if I am delayed, you may know how people ought to behave in the family of God. This is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). The church is also endowed with the Word of God. The revealed Word (John 1:1-9) has remained intact, whole, and complete in the church throughout history. In the beginning, the word of God was preserved orally (Luke 1:1-4) and then written down (Luke 24:44). The biblical writings have preserved the Word of God (1 Corinthians 4:6). The entire Bible is Scripture containing the Word of God: "In dealing with these matters in all his letters. Some of his comments are difficult to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something very different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture. This will result in their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16).

Both the Old and New Testaments are called Scripture by Peter, which in biblical language means "inspired word" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The term inspiration means breath of God. This breath of God is what the church has guarded with great zeal, amid struggles and trials, throughout the years. The

doctrinal body of the church has safeguarded the truth, which was given to human beings little by little, until it reached its full manifestation in Christ, who is the total truth of God, revealed to humanity.

"Long ago, God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now, in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as his inheritance, and through the Son, he created the universe" (Hebrews 1:1-2). In addition to the Word of God, which is the precious treasure and supreme wealth of the church, the church also has the Holy Spirit, with his extraordinary gifts and great talents.

The entire life of the church is sustained by the Holy Spirit. The church is born and formed from the risen Christ. When the church is established, Jesus is no longer in the flesh, but in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-13), which is the power announced by Jesus himself when he was about to ascend to heaven (Acts 1:8) and promised earlier in the public life of the Master of Galilee:

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will be with you forever. I am referring to the Holy Spirit, who guides you into all truth. The world cannot receive him because it neither seeks him nor recognizes him; but you know him, because he now lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16-17). Now the entire revelation of God is realized, which resulted in the church, a chosen people (1 Peter 2:9) redeemed from all iniquity, for Christ's possession (Titus 2:14). The essence of the church is communion and reconciliation. With the church, the disparity of languages ends, and we begin to speak the only language of God, the spiritual language (1 Corinthians 14:2).

The universal calling of the body of Christ is to praise God in constant worship (Luke 18:1). Perpetual crying out is the very nature of the church, which in its prayer sanctifies the name of God (Jesus) and asks for His Kingdom to come (Luke 11:2). The church is not a mere human institution, nor is it an organizational structure of morality and proselytizing dominance. The church is a visible sign of the Holy Spirit and a sacrament of unity for the human race.

The Holy Spirit unites us as children of the same Father and true brothers and sisters to one another: "But you received the Spirit of God when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him Abba, Father. For his Spirit joins with our spirit to confirm that we are children of God" (Romans 8:15-16).

The church is equipped with the Holy Spirit to be a witness as God's people through worship and praise. The sole purpose of the church is worship. Prayer must be constant in the church because the Holy Spirit produces this desire for perpetual worship (Ephesians 6:18).

There is personal and group prayer, but there must also be church prayer, as the body of Christ, in its entirety: "The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised us and that he has purchased us to be his people. God did all this so that we would give him glory and praise" (Ephesians 1:14).

In conclusion, the church is equipped by God to carry out its complete and full mission on earth. It has all the tools it needs to be an instrument of salvation (1 Timothy 2:4). The church is the kingdom of God on earth (Luke 17:21).

Thirteenth Examination:

In what sense is the church equipped?

Option 1 In that it possesses all the infrastructure necessary to do its work.

Option 2: In that it has always been kept static and unchanged.

Option 3: In that it has everything necessary to fulfill its mission.

Option 4 In that the current leaders of the church are more resourceful.

6.13 The Church is sent

The church is a community that is called, equipped, and sent. The church does not live or express its vigor while looking at the footprints of the past. Nor is it sustained by the reliable longing for the future. The church is the eternal present of the kingdom of God. Just as a ship was not made to stay in port but to sail the open sea, so the church was not created to remain anchored on the social periphery but to set sail and navigate the turbulent social currents of existence (Luke 5:4).

The church does not exist, nor does it fulfill its purpose, if it remains immobile and focused on itself. The church functions as the body of Christ when it goes out into the world to witness (John 15:27). This organism becomes the church when the world observes it acting in the interwoven social and cultural fabric of humanity. No one recognizes the value of the church if the church itself spends all its time entertaining itself with self-contemplation.

The church exists in the world, but it is not of the world (John 17:15-16); it finds the meaning of its being when it goes out of itself. The church exists to look at the world through the eyes of Jesus and for the world to see the face of Christ in it. The church is not meant to shut itself off: "After testifying and preaching the word of the Lord in Samaria, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem. Along the way, they stopped at many Samaritan villages to preach the Good News" (Acts 8:25).

Jesus called (Luke 6:12-16), trained (John 13:15), and sent (Mark 6:7-13). Not only was he concerned with increasing the number of his disciples from twelve to seventy, but he also

asked for prayer so that more workers would be sent (Luke 10:2). In addition, Jesus encouraged those who returned from their evangelistic work with the assurance that their names would be written in the book of life (Luke 10:20), and he promised them that they would also gain a hundredfold and ultimately eternal life (Mark 10:28-30).

Because of all these blessings that the apostles would receive, Jesus rejoiced (Luke 10:21-24). The church exists to evangelize. The sole reason for the church's existence in the world is to spread the Christian faith. That is why the work of evangelism was commissioned by Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20), driven by his apostles (Acts 4:33), and continued to this day by the current leaders of the church. That is why, from about 120 believers who were gathered in the upper room (Acts 1:15), they grew to three thousand (Acts 2:41).

The apostolic message spread rapidly after Christ's resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit: "But many who heard the message believed, so the number of believers grew to about five thousand men, not counting women and children" (Acts 4:4). The church is sent in the sense that it must go throughout the world proclaiming the good news.

That is why the church bears fruit. Thanks to the obedience of Jesus' disciples to his command to go, the church exists today. They all accepted the Great Commission and continue to perpetuate the mission of evangelism today. That is why, in a short time, there was already talk of a multitude: "The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32). There were truly a large number of believers. They were many. When some

leaders who were opposed to the faith wanted to harass the Christian leaders, they refrained from taking action against the apostles for fear of confronting God (Acts 5:38-39).

At other times, it is described that the leaders enjoyed popularity among the people (Acts 4:21). In addition, the church prayed fervently for evangelism to be more effective. The work was arduous, but the power of the Holy Spirit confirmed His accompaniment (Acts 4:23-31). The church leaders preached the name of Jesus. The church speaks of Jesus to non-believers to lead them to become people of faith in Christ. When people heard about Jesus, they became true believers in the risen Jesus, despite the obstacles and controversies on the part of the adversaries of the Christian faith:

"Nevertheless, more and more people, multitudes of men and women, believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 5:14). Through evangelization efforts, perseverance, and dedication to the work entrusted to them by their Master, the Christian message spread and the number of disciples multiplied, first among the Jews, including their religious leaders (Acts 6:7), and then among the Gentiles, thanks to the talent and vigor of the apostle Paul and his companions (Acts 11:21).

The effects of the apostles' work began to bear fruit. Now Jews and Gentiles began to integrate into the body of Christ, into one church: "Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greeks and a large number of prominent women" (Acts 17:4, 11-12, 34). When people discover Jesus the Teacher, they become his loyal disciples, and they no longer desire to return to being mere believers. From believers, they became disciples, and from disciples, apostles. Understanding that the ministry

of an apostle was given to those sent to preach the Word everywhere: "So the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went" (Acts 8:4). As we can see, there is a third step in the life of Christ's followers. It is to confront the Christian life. People are encouraged to overcome struggles and trials, any obstacle, in order to maintain and live a life of total surrender to Christ.

The disciples fall in love with Jesus with their whole lives. They not only have faith in Jesus, nor do they only trust in their Lord, but they also take on the commitment to evangelize, leaving everything behind and renouncing even their own rights (1 Corinthians 9:12), giving their lives (Acts 12:1-3), and those who were not killed faced illness and mistreatment that brought them close to death (Philippians 2:30).

The task of proclaiming the gospel is a daily effort made by those called and sent by Jesus to serve all humanity. The goal of evangelism begins within each person. The apostle knows how to use his energy, keeps his spirits up, and moves among hundreds of faithful, good, dedicated, and excellent candidates for promoting the gospel of Christ, until they become great and active leaders of the church.

Fourteenth Examination:

In what sense is the church sent?

Option 1 It must go throughout the world proclaiming the good news.

Option 2 All disciples and apostles send out non-believers.

Option 3 The church, like ships, must reach the shore to work.

Option 4 The world and the church must be in unity in evangelizing.

Correct Answers

1. Kerygma Option 2 is the proclamation of the Good News.
 - 1.1 Option 3 Only those who trust in Christ have eternal life.
 - 1.2 Option 3 To know, accept, and follow God's plan of salvation.
 - 1.3 Option 1 10 elements.
 - 1.4 Option 4 It is grace because it is a free gift from God.
 - 1.5 Option 2 The glorious goal set by God.
 - 1.6 Option 1 Eternal death.
 - 1.7 Option 4 Because he died and rose again to pay for our sins.
 - 1.8 Option 3 Saving faith.
 - 1.9 Option 4 Because it helps us grow, be strong, and stay focused.
 - 1.10 Option 2 It is the means to ask and God's means to give.
 - 1.11 Option 4 It is an instrument for proclaiming the saving work.
 - 1.12 Option 3 It is the visible and tangible sign of God's presence.
 - 1.13 Option 1 It is a supernatural power to make things happen.

2. Didaskalia Option 2 A sign that indicates where we should go.
 - 2.1 Option 3 In the brain, where the neurons are located.
 - 2.2 Option 1 We must make an effort and be consistent and disciplined.
 - 2.3 Option 4 He taught with authority and knew what was in man.
 - 2.4 Option 3 The disciples incorporate the personality of Jesus the Teacher.

- 2.5 Option 2 Because they are two tools that facilitate learning.
 - 2.6 Option 3 A manual of doctrinal teaching for Christians.
 - 2.7 Option 4 It reflects the church's concern for teaching.
 - 2.8 Option 4 Through study, reason, and experience.
 - 2.9 Option 1 It is the life of Christ engraved in the believer.
 - 2.10 Option 2 The pedagogical system used by Jesus the Teacher.
 - 2.11 Option 3 Experience, study, attributes, and contending.
 - 2.12 Option 1 Leads to discovering, inventing, and abandoning beliefs.
 - 2.13 Option 4 Changing the way of thinking.
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- 3. Parenesis Option 3 is the prayer, praise, and worship of believers.
 - 3.1 Option 2 Because it is the extension of Christ's humanity.
 - 3.2 Option 1 Because it is the Holy Spirit who worships in us.
 - 3.3 Option 1 Because we are temples and worship is always within us.
 - 3.4 Option 4 Because it is a conduit that connects humanity with God.
 - 3.5 Option 3 Because it moves and directs the soul and focuses it on God.
 - 3.6 Option 1 It is to make known what God says in intimacy.
 - 3.7 Option 2 The supernatural in their lives is revealed in their faces.
 - 3.8 Option 4 Who knows how to discern the signs of the times.
 - 3.9 Option 1 To make known a message of life and salvation.
 - 3.10 Option 1 Because people need to hear the word of God.
 - 3.11 Option 2 The tool for nurturing new believers in the church.
 - 3.12 Option 4 The novel proclamation of the good news of salvation.
 - 3.13 Option 2 Refers to the aesthetic way of communicating content.

4. Karisma Option 1 It is God's grace in gifts and talents to serve.
 - 4.1 Option 3 It is what a leader offers and what his followers value.
 - 4.2 Option 2 Its traits and signs are physical, mental, and spiritual.
 - 4.3 Option 1 These are God's gifts developed by human beings.
 - 4.4 Option 4 It is the result of human behavior.
 - 4.5 Option 2 Because we must discern and be vigilant in faith.
 - 4.6 Option 2 Because actions must be of quality and excellence.
 - 4.7 Option 1 Because they are the result of practicing good habits.
 - 4.8 Option 4 Because they are the result of people's character.
 - 4.9 Option 2 Because they are the fuel of the evangelizer.
 - 4.10 Option 4 Because they are the tool for effectively serving Christ.
 - 4.11 Option 3 Because they revitalize believers for evangelism.
 - 4.12 Option 1 To turn believers into ministers of the church.
 - 4.13 Option 3 To think that power is negative and charisma is positive.

5. Diakonia Option 2 Social and physical service of a Christian to others.
 - 5.1 Option 4 Assumes human needs with solidarity.
 - 5.2 Option 2 Responding to each person's individual needs.
 - 5.3 Option 1 Because human beings have been created and live to serve.
 - 5.4 Option 2 Because it is useful for achieving goals and results.
 - 5.5 Option 1 Because there is always time to serve and be useful to God.
 - 5.6 Option 3 It is a sure sign that the action is genuine.
 - 5.7 Option 1 Because it is inherent in human nature.
 - 5.8 Option 3 From God's presence in the daily work of Christians.
 - 5.9 Option 3 The one that is centered on the subject and not on the object.
 - 5.10 Option 2 When our work is good and also spiritual.
 - 5.11 Option 3 Productivity, investment and costs, content.

- 5.12 Option 1 To proceed in the same way as the Good Samaritan did.
- 5.13 Option 2 Because it is an ongoing process of social commitment.
6. Koinonia Option 4 A force that preserves, increases, and renews grace.
- 6.1 Option 1 Because each individual in the group preserves the same essence.
- 6.2. Option 2 Because we are united with Jesus Christ in the same purpose.
- 6.3 Option 3 It is the joy of being the herald and the content of the message.
- 6.4 Option 2 It is the living and effective proclamation of Jesus' teaching.
- 6.5 Option 3 In its permanence, repetition, and verifiability.
- 6.6 Option 1 They unite us to God through the faith of the individual and the church.
- 6.7 Option 3 It is an evident, sensitive, palpable, and effective means of grace.
- 6.8 Option 4 It is the faithful formula of the words spoken by the minister.
- 6.9 Option 3 Because God is present through the sacraments.
- 6.10 Option 2 That each member of the church has a specific function.
- 6.11 Option 1 In their real nature as living stones of the spiritual temple.
- 6.12 Option 1 In that it has all the infrastructure to do its work.
- 6.13 Option 1 It must go throughout the world proclaiming the good news.

Conclusions:

Evangelization is progressive. Evangelization develops in each person throughout their life. The church, the body of Christ, which is made up of every believer, fulfills its mission when each of its members prepares, equips themselves, and perseveres until the end of their earthly life.

Therefore, the task of evangelizing is the reason why the church lives out its active and permanent role of proclaiming Christ. Missionary work is vital and necessary. Jesus, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8), continues to knock on our door (Revelation 3:20).

Today, there are many evangelizers who travel day and night throughout the world. Thanks to the selfless efforts and tenacious struggle of these tireless and persistent evangelizers, we live each day on the threshold of hope that we may become true imitators and followers of Christ.

Although many doors are closed to the proclamation of the Gospel, there are always voices that testify with certainty and confidence that human beings remain open to receiving Christ in their hearts and allowing themselves to be profoundly transformed, as many did in the time of the early Christians:

“When they arrived in Antioch, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27). Today, there are many workers who, overcoming the utopia and chimera of ministerial practice, devote themselves unconditionally to proclaiming the reality of the kingdom of God. However, more and more workers are needed, austere, selfless, and mystical, laboring in the rigorous cultivation of Christ. In fact, just as no one expects to be recognized in victory when they have been absent from the struggle, so demanding is the task that Jesus Christ has entrusted to us. All Christians, at the end of their earthly lives, must express with grace the certainty of receiving the crown as a reward for having worked in the work of evangelization, as the apostle Paul affirmed in his final words:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

He does not say to some, but to all who hope for his coming. As Christians and church leaders, we are the ones who bring about the coming of Christ and his presence in the world. Therefore, we cannot neglect to make the message of Jesus Christ known everywhere (Mark 16:15). Today more than ever, the gospel awaits those who dare to accept the challenge of proclaiming, announcing, receiving, and living the Word of God.

Christians have been entrusted with the mission of glorifying the Word of God and spreading the Good News of salvation. However, we ignore this recommendation, and at other

times, we boycott the fulfillment of the missionary purpose. The greatest evil in the world is to try to silence those who proclaim the truth. But the worst attitude is that of those who, having the duty to proclaim the truth, hide and conceal it, as if trying to camouflage a lamp after it has been lit (Mark 4:21-23).

When society is in chaos, it is not because of the anarchy of evil, but because of the absence of order and the lack of organization of its members. The same is true of the delay in the complete establishment of the kingdom of God in the world, which was announced, introduced, and completed (John 17:4) by Jesus Christ as the main project of his work (Mark 1:15).

At the end of his ministry, Jesus knew that everything was already done. There was nothing left to do. After working, the only thing left is thirst, due to dehydration from physical labor, so Jesus asked for water (John 19:28). In other words, since the building of the kingdom was finished, he could say with satisfaction, "It is finished" (John 19:30). Every Christian is like a soldier in an army, a worker in a company, a member of a club, a customer in a supermarket, a student at a university, a unit in a fire department or civil defense, an athlete on a competitive team.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, like the apostle Paul, to simply say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. Now the prize awaits me, the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return; and the prize is not only for me, but for all who eagerly await his coming" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Total and complete evangelization has not reached its fullness because of a lack of interest and passion on the part of

Christian leadership. We are each a unit of one body. For the kingdom of God to function in this world, it is the action of units evangelizing. Every person in the church is an evangelist.

Although evangelism has not stopped, the momentum and vehemence that the leaders of the early Christian community transmitted to us has faded and, at times and in certain places, has even vanished. At times, apathy and negligence have been so evident among those involved in evangelism that the stones have been on the verge of bursting and breaking out in cries.

However, the stones still remain, because it is their habitat and also because the voices of leaders still rise from various platforms, crying out from on high what they hear within (Matthew 10:27). In any case, there are evangelists who are very committed. And it is the perseverance and tenacity of some missionaries that have made evangelism a serious occupation within the church. Evangelists continue to consider the mission of evangelism as the overriding priority of their ministry; they are a light in the midst of so much darkness. These self-sacrificing and selfless men of God guard the eternal meaning of the proclamation of the gospel with genuine zeal and renewed fervor.

Faced with such impudence and audacity on the part of the Pharisees, who sought to silence the voices of those who praised and proclaimed God, shamelessly daring to ask Jesus to force his followers to be silent, the Master replied: "If they keep quiet, the stones along the road will cry out" (Luke 19:40). We speak of Christ for the sheer joy and excitement of it, not because of the gestures of kindness and admiration of the great "fan base," nor because of the prestige and media success of a few popular evangelists.

Evangelizing is a duty. As the apostle Paul exclaimed: "How terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Good News!" (1 Corinthians 9:16). Total and complete evangelization, with all its elements, is not a whim, nor a simple desire to proselytize in order to gain followers. In response to the Pharisees' request that Jesus rebuke his disciples, a deeper concept is revealed. According to Jewish theology and mentality, God waits for those who are to come. In Christian thought, God comes to seek and save what was lost (Luke 19:10). Furthermore, God's love for the whole world was such that he sent his Son, so that by believing in him, we might discover how far we were from God and receive the gift of eternal life (John 3:16).

Eternal life is the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ here on earth, in this physical life, with an attitude of spiritual sobriety (1 Peter 5:8), in perpetual vigilance, not in the flesh, but in the spirit. A spirit that is always willing, even though the flesh is weak (Matthew 26:41). Therefore, a Christian's discernment must be evident, measurable, and palpable. There is no room for ambiguity. Everything is clear and precise. There is no choice: either nature is silent and the disciples speak, or the disciples are silent and nature speaks. There is no dilemma.

The Word of God is sovereign and will not be chained (2 Timothy 2:9). In absolute freedom, it follows its course, running swiftly everywhere (Psalm 147:15). No one can hinder the work of evangelism, and God's work will never be stopped (Acts 5:39). The gospel identifies us as Christians when we share it. If we stop proclaiming the message of Christ, we are the ones who lose out. Because instead of receiving the reward (Revelation 22:12), we would be excluded from His reward.

Therefore, without hesitation, at the command of our Lord, we messengers quickly mobilize to bring the Good News of salvation. The mission is not a personal decision. The work of evangelism has an apostolic character, in the sense that we are sent and emissaries of Christ (John 8:42).

That is why, at all times, nature longs for the manifestation of the children of God (Romans 8:19). And when the church relaxes the vehemence of its evangelizing presence in the world, the earth groans, just as those who remain faithful to the Spirit cry out, waiting for the other Christians who make up the body of Christ to be revealed (Romans 8:22-23). The complaint and groaning are against Christians. Those who, being believers in Christ, remain on the sidelines of evangelistic commitment, remain cold and indifferent to God and to the duty of proclaiming His Word eternally.

Preaching is done in season and out of season, with energetic warnings and useful admonitions to invigorate the spiritual life. The proclamation of the Word of God is carried out with solid and appropriate exhortations, comforting and strengthening the struggle of the inner life, comforting with patience and love, without ceasing to teach the sound and original doctrine of the Word of God.

"Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with patience and good teaching" (2 Timothy 4:2).



PLAN TEC Project Total Plan for Complete Evangelization

The PLANTEC project consists of six systematically integrated elements that work in sync to complete the process of maturity in each believer and the fruitful action of the church.

1 *Kerigma* means to evangelize. It is the first proclamation of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

2 *Didaskalia* means teaching. It is the basic information that new believers receive about the fundamentals of the faith.

3 *Parenesis* means worship. It is the praise, prayer, and exhortation that believers celebrate assiduously.

4 *Karisma* means gifts. These are the gifts that God gives to believers through their talents, so that they may bear fruit.

5. *Diakonia* means service. Church members create projects for the good of the surrounding community.

6. *Koinonia* means fellowship. The church is identified by the common unity that exists between believers and society.