

There were once two scholars. One gave the other his master work, his thesis, to read. After some time, they meet again. This one says, “I’ve been reading your work, this thesis that you brought up to me and I’ve spent hours on one page. I’ve looked at the whole thing and I said to myself that if I have to really spend that much time, I’ll never get through this.” And the man said to him, “We mustn’t deceive one another by making seem simple what is really difficult. We mustn’t cheat one another by putting into easy language so that we seem to understand that which is really difficult.” And as I listened last night, through the night, I have a real urgency to share with you what the Church is and why it exists. And I know it isn’t easy and how I would love to make this talk easy. I’d do anything to make this talk easy. But I have to bleed to get it out of me and I think you’ll have to bleed to get it into you because our urgency for the Church when we try to put it into words is so difficult.

Our word Church comes from the Greek word *kyriakon* which means “belonging to the Lord.” But the classic word for the faith community, for the gathering of the people who belong to the Lord, is the Greek word *ekklesia*. A word that we use in adjectives like ecclesial and ecclesiastic, things like that. And it is this word *ekklesia*, which in Greek has no religious connotations whatsoever; that refers solely to the assembly of the citizens who enjoy full rights within a state. And it was used to describe both the dignity that those members have as well as the legality of the assembly of real citizens. So in forming themselves into an *ekklesia*, the early followers of Christ saw themselves as privileged members, as citizens of the new Jerusalem, the heavenly city being prepared by the Father to be the bride of Christ.

If we are citizens, if we are an assembly, if we are a community, just what kind of a body is it to which we belong? We say that Marriage Encounter’s prime objective is to renew the Church. What is it? Who is it that we are renewing? Richard McBrien, a very good theologian on the Church, has written a number of books, and in the latest, not the latest, in the Fall 1973 issue of *Chicago Studies* (maybe some of you saw it) [wrote] an article called *An American Catechism*. The article was done in the catechism style: “The Church. What is the Church?” And he says, the Church has been defined in various ways: as the Body of Christ, as the People of God, as the New Israel, as the community of the Elect, as the Sacrament of Christ, the congregation of the Saints in which the Gospel is rightly preached and the Sacraments are rightly celebrated, and so forth. Although the Second Vatican Council speaks constantly of the Church, nowhere does it offer a single hard and fast definition which must be accepted by all Catholics without modification. That’s important: “without modification.”

In its deepest sense, the Church is a mystery and, he continues, according to St. Augustine, a mystery is a visible sign of some invisible grace. Pope Paul follows the Augustinian tradition when he defines the Church as “a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God.” To affirm that the Church is a mystery is to confess that God is present to His creation in and through a particular group of people who believe in and celebrate the Lordship of Christ. What’s being said here is that one shouldn’t be too hasty to define the Church in terms of the images that I use to make it understandable. It’s one thing to talk about the Church under the image of a city or the tract of land that the New

Testament or even the Old Testament uses or the Body of Christ. It's another matter to simply take one of these images and say *that's* what the Church is. So Pope Paul is very careful not to say too much.

In general, it's far easier to say what the Church is not than to say what it is. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, the Second Vatican Council defines or, maybe better, it says of the Church: "By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind. She is also an instrument for the achievement of all such union and unity." And notice how cautious that language is. "The Church is a kind of sacrament." Immediately they say what they mean – a sign of intimate union with God – I'll say it again – of intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind.

The familiar definition of a sacrament we all remember from the [Baltimore] Catechism: It's an "outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace." (This is the easy part of the talk.) The Church is called a kind of sacrament because by their outward activities sacraments effect, they do what they signify. They do this not because the person who receives a sacrament desires the effect, but because God wills the effect. Whereas sacraments are conferred externally to produce a result internally, the Church is the result of the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. However, that still doesn't tell us what it is. It's easier to say what it is not.

The Council Fathers saw the Church in two ways: as a sign of, and as an instrument to, an intimate union with God and the union of all mankind. So whatever the Church is, it must be both of these things at the same time: a sign and a means. Yet, we can never forget that a sign needn't be recognized and a means needn't be used. The fact that I don't recognize the sign doesn't make the sign invalid. I can look at some of these international traffic signs they're putting up all over the country and not know what they mean. I got a ticket right here in Washington about a year ago, nine months ago, for parking under a sign that said, and I looked at it very carefully, "No Parking 9:30-4:30 Saturdays and Sundays." So I said, "Good. It's 2 o'clock on Thursday afternoon. So, I assumed I could park there. The officer didn't. What the sign turned out to say, what the sign turned out to mean, was besides the interdiction against parking here between 9:30 and 4:30 on weekdays, thou shalt not park here ever on Saturdays and Sundays. Pay up! So signs need not be understood to be efficacious.

The problem is made worse, is complicated, when we think of the whole Church. What was once known (we still know it) as the Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant. We have a right to speak of the whole Church; a right because our faith is not limited to this time frame alone. The Constitution on the Church says: "the society structured with hierarchical organs and the Mystical Body of Christ, are not to be considered as two realities, nor as the visible assembly and the spiritual community, nor the earthly Church and the Church enriched with heavenly things; rather they form one complex reality which coalesces from a divine and a human element." We have always felt a close union with those who have gone before us. In the liturgy, we unite our prayers with the apostles and martyrs, with those who have gone to their rest in the hope of rising

again. In our litanies and in our prayers, we count ourselves one with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the prophets of old, with Abraham, our Father in faith. But the pilgrim Church and the heavenly Church, while united, are not one and the same thing.

The problem we must confront is that the Church in any age is not all good people everywhere. It's not that. It is not all the holy men and women in their lifetime. For the Church was born from the side of Christ on the cross. While we recognize that the Church's fulfillment is not here on earth, that at the end of time, all just men from the time of Adam, from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect, will be gathered together with the Father in the universal Church. Still, David did not belong to the Church. Nor even Abraham. John the Baptist didn't make it. It is perhaps this mystery that can best help us understand the place of the Church in the Father's plan. For it's not a case that David and Abraham will not belong to the Church – or even now that we can say that they do not belong. It's not a case that they will not belong to the Church, but that in their day, they did not belong to it. And yet they were saved.

This Church, the Constitution goes on to say, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church which is governed by the successor of Peter and the Bishops in union with that successor, and although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside her visible structure, these elements, however, as gifts which properly belong to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism toward catholic unity. (I told you this wouldn't be easy.)

This universal Church of Christ is the atemporal, that is: timeless, non spatial reality which the temporal, spatial pilgrim Church symbolizes and helps bring about. The universal Church of the saved exists with God and therefore it can be said to exist now and can be said to be one with the Catholic Church in which it subsists. But this is not what we are considering in our discussion of the Church. We are not talking about the universal, timeless, non spatial Church. We are trying to grapple with the notion of the Church as we experience and understand it now here, suffering, sometimes feeling alone and abandoned.

The difficulty in talking about the Church we experience is located partially in the diversity of experiences which we call church. We know of other sincere believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ, with varying degrees of participation in the sacramental life which our community recognizes. They possess, as the Council stated, real ecclesial elements which are directed toward catholic unity. However, as we mentioned earlier, the direction of understanding or the understanding of a sign, which here would be the meaning of the ecclesial elements that another community possesses, is not always understood.

So, the Council can say in its Decree on Ecumenism: our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as communities and churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those whom He has regenerated and vivified into one Body and newness of life, that unity which the Holy Scriptures and the revered tradition of the Church proclaim. For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which

is the all embracing means of salvation that the fullness of this means of salvation is attained. It was to the Apostolic College alone, of which Peter is the Head, that we believe our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the new covenant in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who already belong in any way to God's people.

Now, no matter how you look at that statement, that's very forceful language. Sometimes, we try to be more ecumenical than the Church and yet we know that the Council was praised by those in attendance who were not Catholic for its stance on ecumenism. Yet here it is definitely stating for everybody to read that others are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow. That's a very blunt statement about the position of other churches within the Body of Christ. Furthermore, the document distinguishes between those who already belong in any way to God's people and the one Body of Christ which the Church is trying to establish on earth. And if we miss these distinctions, we become hopelessly confused in trying to explain who we are.

Theologians have long held that the Church is a perfect society and that means that it does not have to go outside itself. It has the means and it has the power to accomplish what it has been established to do. We are peering (?) at examples of attempts to establish perfect societies in history. An Israeli kibbutz is a very good example because the goal of the kibbutz is to be totally self reliant. The concept of the national state as a perfect society was around for a long time, but it is crumbling today, precisely because of our experience that no one state can live in isolation. Our money stands or falls on world trade. Our peace depends on international cooperation. It's becoming more and more apparent that neither our nation nor any other nation is, today, a perfect society with the power to achieve, by itself, the goals which it sets. I suppose maybe if you have to make exceptions, we would say: very simple societies could be perfect societies as long as they are not aggressed on. So long as that tribe is out there unbound they can stay a perfect society, but the minute we find them, they either need to be protected and so they are not perfect or they are extinct or extinguished—which definitely isn't too perfect.

The Church, on the other hand, believes itself to be that kind of society and this would distinguish it from all other states, societies, communities, and churches that exist. In talking about the Church as a perfect society, we are talking about a mystery. Which means we are talking about the outward sign of God's presence which is heading towards, and has the means, power or ability to head towards, unity, community and visibility. In that sense, while we admit that ecclesial elements are in existence outside the holy, Roman Catholic Church and we even admit that these elements are dynamic forces heading toward unity (for example, Eucharist in the Orthodox Church) nonetheless, these other communities do not possess as communities the necessary power or authority to command or effect unity, community and visibility through the use of the ecclesial elements which they possess.

It is this power or ability to achieve these three ends that distinguishes the Catholic Church from every other ecclesial community. Only one church holds, or can hold, the

right, the power, the commission to effect unity, community and visibility. I'll get back to unity and community, but visibility may be a problem. If the Church is already an outward sign, why is visibility one of its aims? The visibility of the Church is not the same as the outwardness of its sign. They are not the same thing. Visibility as a goal means that the outward sign is understood and that the effect which the outward sign intends is experienced. So, if we went back to that parking sign, we'd have to say that that sign was not visible because it did not produce the effects that it was intended [to produce]. It was an outward sign saying "No Parking 9:30-4:30 Saturdays and Sundays." But, it wasn't visible. It was not understandable in itself.

So the best I can say is that I am a member of the Church through Baptism and Eucharist, but nonetheless, the Church is not always visible where I am present. And still, the Church is its outward sign and in its outward sign it can be present. The worshipping community on Sunday or this meeting today, for that matter, is an outward sign of the Church's presence in the world, but it is not a guarantee that the Church is visible even to those of us who are in attendance here no less to anybody else. So, visibility is an aim. It is not the outwardness. If the power to effect unity, community and visibility has truly been given by Christ to His Church, Then it can only exist in one Body, otherwise what we are saying is that the power and the authority Christ gave His Church were not sufficient to keep it a unity and that there are ecclesial fragments of the one true Church scattered throughout the world, none of whom can claim to be the Body which Christ established, thus doing away with unity, community and visibility.

And this theory of the fragmented true Church which will one day be brought back together is very widespread among those who prefer to call themselves "Christians." And what this theory implies, is that Christ did not, or could not, keep His promise to stay with His Church rather than the forces of this world. The forces of this world, the forces of evil were able to destroy the Church sometime after its beginning as an outward sign. But if the outward sign is lacking then it is no longer a mystery. It is no longer a sacrament as the Council calls it or a kind of sacrament. You can't have a mystery unless you have the outward sign. You can't have a sacrament unless you have the outward sign because that's what a sacrament is – it's an outward sign. If we haven't got it, then we're not it.

So, in reality, there are only two positions you could hold: either that the power to effect unity was given by Christ to His Church and then His Holy Spirit has always and everywhere safeguarded that community to which He entrusted His authority and for which He prayed; or we must say that Christ did not really entrust His authority to any visible community. Or that having done it, His prayer for unity was not effective, so, there are many ecclesial bodies which share that authority today and Christ is powerless, so let's go home.

To be a Roman Catholic is to commit oneself totally to the belief that Christ really did and could give His authority to an outward sign which we call the Church, an external community and that community continues to exist and to perform the mission which Christ gave it. All other communities, though they may contain elements that lead to

unity do not possess, as communities, the authority, the power or the commission to make those elements effective. What we are saying is the Eucharist is not magic. Baptism is not magic. None of the sacraments are magic. I am not saved because I am baptized. I am not saved because I am baptized. I am saved because Christ's body is saved and I belong to that body. Baptism is the outward sign that I have been, *have been*, not *am being*, have been incorporated into that body. The Church as a kind of sacrament is an outward sign of mankind's incorporation into His body. And while it is correct to say the Church is the body of Christ, it is not correct to say the Body of Christ is the Church.

The ecclesial elements found in other communities, namely the sacraments, for the most part, are like musical instruments. A piano, for example, can produce some of the most beautiful sounds in the world. From ancient classic dances to the most modern 12 tone serial music that we were listening to this morning. But it can do this only in the hands of one who has the power and the authority to make it do that. In anyone else's hands, the piano still has the ability to produce these same sounds, these effects, but it doesn't. It is not the piano that is at fault, but the pianist. In the same way, the ecclesial elements in other communities are not unreal. They are capable of producing unity, but their potential can only be realized in and by that community with the authority and power to do so. Let's look at it again.

A Stradivarius housed in a museum may be looked at several ways. It could be exhibited simply as an object to be looked at. The glory of Cremona; the skill of the craftsman who made it; the beauty of its design. You know, the Renaissance Church often looked at the Eucharist in exposition rather than using it as spiritual food. Even still, we do not say that the Stradivarius is not capable of, and created to, produce glorious tones nor the Eucharist to effect unity in those who receive it. The Church, then, the Roman Catholic Church is the only ecclesial community with the power to use its elements and to use all of its elements to produce unity, community and visibility.

Well, how does someone get to belong to that Church? The answer is a defined dogma of the faith: it is that Baptism is the necessary precondition for belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. And that sinners of the gravest kind subject to damnation (and let's not get into a debate on anyone being damned or not; you'll need another speaker for that one), even sinners of the gravest kind can be in the Church because the Church is an outward sign. On the other hand, the definition "outside the Church there is no salvation," which is also defined dogma, cannot be taken to mean, anyone who is not in the Church is not saved while anyone who is, is. Did you get that? It can't be taken to mean that anyone not in the Church is not saved while anyone who is in the Church is saved. It doesn't mean that.

In order to understand the rather frightening tone of that defined dogma, there are two approaches which could be taken to get to the meaning of the dogma. One approach says that everybody who is saved is a member of the Church in some way either explicitly or implicitly. I think we often read the Council documents in this way and I'm becoming less and less convinced of that meaning in the Council documents – I think it means more the Universal Church. However, nonetheless, the approach is that everyone who is saved

is a member of the Church in some way, either explicitly or implicitly. In so far as this is talking about the definitely saved, and not those who are in the process of being saved, that is what the Council documents are saying—the definitely saved are in the Church. But this is the universal Church of the End Time, not the outward sign Church here below.

When it comes to explicit versus implicit salvation, this theory has a number of defects. We used to teach that if you weren't baptized, you at least wanted to be baptized. Some of the defects: First of all, worst of all, or worst of all, first of all, the idea of understanding that had so and so known who Christ was he would have accepted Him, ties faith to knowledge and so it's just a form of Gnosticism. Gnosticism was the heresy that [said] "if I knew, then I would believe." Somehow that gets into – Catholics know more about God than aborigines, Muslims or dedicated Chinese Communists. The proposition would be stated: to know Christ is to accept Him. And that goes against the whole testimony of the New Testament. All those people there knew Him, but didn't accept Him. Or else we're saying that He didn't let Himself get known. And then, furthermore, it implies that sin is simply a lack of knowledge – "I didn't really mean to sin." "I didn't think that was a sin."

The second defect of that is the problem of infants who die unbaptized. Because, in adults, we could imagine that the dedicated behavior of good unbaptized persons could give us some grounds for thinking that they would have been Catholic if they had known better, and let's ignore what I just said about the Gnosticism that that implies. So, we say if they had known they would have been. But this saying stands as impossible with regard to infants who exhibited little more than incipient consciousness. You can't say to a baby: if you had known better you would have done something else.

Thirdly, if we accept the fact that even mortal sin does not eject one from the Church, then we must either say a) that all sinners within the Church are saved, as opposed to sinners outside of it; or b) we have to say that salvation is personal after all, so let's close up the weekend. And it really doesn't matter whether or not you are inside the Church so long as you are good. As a matter of fact, those outside of the Church have an easier time being good because they are not bound by all the stuff that we are.

Fourth, we may try to solve the problem of number three, namely that mortal sin doesn't get you outside the Church, by saying that the Church is eschatological; it is the Church of the End Times and includes all the saved. But this has to be clearly understood because it's true. Because that saying could be understood to mean that the Church will exist *only* at the End Time when it is totally revealed and that the Church now doesn't really exist. Then we would be saying that this is not a truly saving moment in the now. And more, we would deny the outwardness of the sign which the Church really is.

Or we could solve problem number three by saying that all the saved will belong to the Church someday anyway and then we deny the now moment of the Church's authority, or even its necessity. In other words, Christ brought about something which really wasn't necessary because we're all going to be saved anyway. So, what we are here being is nothing, or at least it is gratuitous. Or else we say, that all do belong to the Church, but in

different ways and to different degrees, in so far as their conscience is good and their communal knowledge allows.

But then, good conscience negates the possibility of the Church being an outward sign. For, who's supposed to judge the conscience of the unbelievers? Paul's Letter to the Corinthians has a great example of this. He says "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral persons. I wasn't speaking of associating with the immoral people in this world, the covetous, the thieves or the idolaters. To avoid them you would really have to leave the world." (I won't interpret that.) "What business is it of mine, to judge outsiders? Is it not those inside the community you must judge? God will judge the others." That's 1 Corinthians 5: 9–13, in case you don't believe it. So, to try and make everybody a part of the Church is really to do violence to the notion that the Church is an outward sign. Yet, how can we reconcile the notion of being outside the Church and the universal will of God that all men be saved? And I think this is a problem that we all experience.

A second approach to the question, outside the Church there is no salvation, departs from the emphasis that far too often has been placed on "Church" in the attempt to find the solution and to look at the meaning of "salvation" instead. Just what is the salvation that the Church claims to have? Salvation, looked at in an absolute sense, as what Christ once and for all accomplished for all mankind and not as the particular end of my life's road, [salvation] is that conclusive and definitive union of all the saved to the Father in the Son by being united in and with and through the body of Christ by means of the agency of the Holy Spirit to the glory and praise of that same Father forever. This conclusive and definitive wedding of Christ with all mankind is a real historical event of which the existence of the Church is the outward sign and is the awesome place within which this eternal covenant with mankind is made historical and therefore real. Because if it's not historical, we could never grasp it.

This unity, this union of the body of Christ with mankind, is accomplished once and for all in His Church and nowhere else, no matter how perfectly one is following one's conscience and no matter how many ecclesial elements a community may have in its midst. (So, for example, the Orthodox have all the ecclesial elements.) This union of Christ with His Church is once and for all time. And because of this, the Church is, by its very nature, the absolute sign of the unconditional and definitive salvation of all the saved. It's the sign that they are saved.

Thus, it can really be said that if the Church did not exist, there could be no hope. For hope is not a wish. It is a certainty that is granted by the Holy Spirit. Like faith and love, hope has nothing to do with the way you feel, or your intelligence or the proof you can muster. Hope is the divinely implanted gift whereby we become certain of the saving presence of God in human history. Thus, the statement that "outside the Church there is no salvation" doesn't have to resort to the intricacies of explaining how people outside the Church are really in some way inside it. But rather it is a new vision of what the Church is: The historical, outward sign of the Father's commitment to the human race as it exists now. That commitment to all mankind expressed in a fully historical event which is found in the Church and nowhere else.

The effects of the commitment to all mankind forever, however, are found and experienced elsewhere. They are found and experienced everywhere, whether inside the Church or outside it. It is only from this position, once we realize that we are the sign of the Father's commitment to the world, that we can raise the question of why the Church exists and have some grounds for being able to give an answer. The question, why does the Church exist, should be intimately connected to what the Church is.

There's a problem with the question itself. The question "Why?" can be asked from two different viewpoints. It can be asked from the viewpoint of the intention: Why did God make us to be this way? Or it can be asked from the view of the goal: Why am I doing what I am doing now? Which would be the question: What do I hope to gain from doing this? So when the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World says that the Church has a single intention – that God's kingdom may come and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass - the Council is addressing itself to the final goal of the Church: Why are we doing what we are doing – What do we hope to gain?

This final goal of the Church isn't a big problem, in the sense that it is usually what we expect the Church to be doing and saying about what it is doing. But when we pursue the question from the point of view of God's intention, we could easily be persuaded to say, well, God has his own mysterious reasons and it is actually, if not virtually, impossible to know what they are. So we'll never know why Christ, God, created us. However this is against the notion of God's simplicity. His "reasons" belong to the human category of thinking. God doesn't have reasons. He isn't up there giving reasons for Himself. His reasons and His activity are one and, therefore, in so far as we know His activity or it could be known at all, to that degree, we know His reasons for acting. They are there.

And that is why it is so necessary, or it was so necessary, to plunge into the question of what the Church is. Because the Church exists. Therefore the reasons for its existence must be somehow, in some way, as graspable as the existence of the Church is. We said that the Church is the outward sign of God's definitive action to save all mankind within the confines of human history. So, He's not going to take us outside of history to save us. He's going to save us right here.

We've also noted that sinners can exist within the Church and saints can exist outside it. And if this is so, and if we resist the temptation to perform all the logical gymnastics necessary to get all the good guys in and all the bad guys out, it becomes possible to see why the Church has been so constituted. The presence of sinners within the Church are the clearest sign in the world of God's total, uncompromising commitment to us. It's not a question of save yourself and be among the saved. That's not who we are – save yourself and be among the saved and the rest of you get out. Nor is the eternal covenant which God so long [ago] promised His people in the Old Testament based on man's fidelity to God. I – lucky God – I am really faithful to Him. St. John reminds us of what it means to talk about the love of God when he says that it's not that we have loved God, but that He has first loved us.

In a very real sense, it can be said that the Church is not about salvation at all. The Church is not the savior of the world. Christ is the savior of the world. The Church is the witness to salvation. The fact of my salvation, whether I be inside the Church or outside of it, is never known by me in any definitive sense and that's why, that is to say, that I am never certain of my salvation. That's why the virtue of Hope has to come from God. He is certain of my salvation. I am not my own certainty. But the fact of salvation, the fact that God has covenanted Himself with [all] mankind, is attested to by that community to which God entrusted Himself in His Son. The Church of the martyrs, the Church of the witnesses, the Church that keeps alive the authentic tradition of the apostles who were the first witnesses, the first martyrs. That's what we are all about.

Why should we be concerned with our salvation if that has already been accomplished by the saving death of Jesus Christ? Why? Billions of people, nonetheless, are saddled with that burden, that unendurable burden, of worrying about their salvation. But to us has been entrusted the task of removing the burden, of proclaiming the good news. How awful not to know that we have already been saved. How wretchedly futile to go through actions and motions that are meaningless. It is for us to break the yoke, to loose the burdens, to declare the year of favor from the Lord. We are saved. Otherwise, Christ's death is nothing. It was not effective. But it was. You don't do anything to gain your salvation. You are saved. We are saved. Forget it. You're saved. Forget it. Rejoice. Forget it. Enjoy. We have become what the New Testament shouts and proclaims: Bearers of the light. Heralds of the good news: You are saved. How beautiful are the feet of those who bear the tidings of good news. What is our task if it's not to be a light to all the nations? No one lights a lamp and sets it under a bushel basket. He sets it on a lamp stand so that all may see.

Why the Church? Not for salvation; for we couldn't dispense it, we couldn't earn it; we couldn't guarantee it. But to witness. To tell the world that God loves us. To tell the world that the long night of sin and death is over. To proclaim the marvelous deeds of God on our behalf. True, what this says is we might have had an easier time elsewhere. True. True. We might have had an easier time elsewhere. But now we are called to be like our Master, who came not to be served but to serve. True. We might have found it easier to be outside the Church and still have been saved. Oh, why not, outside the Church we are going to be saved, we are saved. But now, now, we are heralds of the King. Stewards of His possessions. Keepers of His flock. Tenders of His vineyard. What is there to compare with this?

Unity, Community and Visibility. These are the three tasks of the Church to assure all men that God wills to bind Himself by making us one in each other. This is the glorious mission of the pilgrim Church. To make known the wonderful purposes of God in our life. Isaiah said, when he realized this, "O woe is me. For I am a man of unclean lips and I am living among a people of unclean lips and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. And then one of the Seraphim flew to me holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from off the altar. And he touched my mouth with it. 'See,' he said. 'This has touched your lips. Your wickedness is removed. Your sin is purged.' And then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall we send?'" *Send me.*