

<p>A</p>	<p><u>The Meaning of Paul’s Apostolic Labours</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “ ... and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the Church” – calling us to follow Paul’s example in suffering on behalf of the Church. This does not imply that Christ’s sacrifice is somehow incomplete, but implies that we are collaborators in the establishment of God’s kingdom through the common priesthood of the faithful. “Afflictions of Christ” can mean the afflictions that inevitably accompany the mission of Christ’s followers, who like Christ, serve with love, humility, and obedience. The Good News brought to the Gentiles is “the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past ... now has been manifested to the holy ones” The ultimate goal of evangelization is to bring the Good News to everyone, so that “we may present everyone perfect in Christ”. Paul’s labour is “in accord with the exercise of his power working within [him]”. In other words, all of Paul’s effort is fulfilled by Christ’s power. From Paul’s perspective, everything we do, whether it’s good or bad, doesn’t imply the lack of freedom. Everything begins in God, follows by our collaboration or rebellion. 	<p>1:24-29</p> <p>1:24, CCSS CSB, SN1</p> <p>Mt 5:10-12</p> <p>1:25-27, CCSS, CSB Gen 3:1-10, Eph 3:5-6, Rm 16:25-26</p> <p>1:27-28, CCSS 1Th 3:13</p> <p>1:29, CCSS, Ph 2:13 CCC 308, 1742</p>
<p>B</p>	<p><u>Do Not Be Deceived by Specious Arguments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul reminds the Colossians that they have already possessed everything in Christ, therefore, do not let others “captivate [them] with an empty, seductive philosophy according to human tradition, according to the elemental powers of the world”. The Bible and philosophy are different. The Bible does not only offer knowledge but wisdom that helps one to understand one self and relationships. Such wisdom is not speculative knowledge (as in philosophy), but practical knowledge revealed by the incarnate Christ. 	<p>2:1-5</p> <p>2:1-5, CCSS 2:8</p>
<p>C</p>	<p><u>The Wisdom of Christ Versus the “Philosophy” and Human Tradition</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2:6-23 is the heart of the letter, the fifth (E) of the ten units that 	<p>2:6-23</p> <p>CCSS, SN2</p>

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<p>make up the overall chiastic structure of the letter, examines the concepts of dying with Christ and how one should live as a new creation in Christ.</p>	<p>1:3-6, CCSS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “For in him dwells the whole fullness of the deity bodily, and you share in this fullness in him”; do not trust the “philosophy”, “empty seductive philosophy”, “human tradition”, “elemental powers of the world” => including spiritual powers and angels. 	<p>2:6-10, CCSS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this chapter, Paul uses four vivid images to portray what happens when a person is baptized in Christ: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a spiritual circumcision (of the heart); 2. a burial and rising with Christ; 3. the cancelation of a debt, an IOU that is erased and even nailed to the cross, and; 4. a victory over spiritual enemies. 	<p>2:11-15, CCSS 2:11, Jer 31:33 2:12, Rm 6:4 2:13-14 2:15</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Let no one, then, pass judgment on you in matters of food and drink or with regard to a festival or new moon or Sabbath” – this pertains to the false teaching that seems to be a mix that includes some Jewish practices with Christian practices. Paul speaks of the ceremonial practices of the Old Covenant as “shadows”, pointing to the infinitely greater reality of the New Covenant in Christ, “reality belongs to Christ” => Paul teaches us how to read the Bible through typology. Christ affirms this teaching. 	<p>2:16-17, CCSS Heb 8:5, 10:1, SN3</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These false teachings encourage “worship of angels”, “inflated without reason by his fleshly mind”, separating from the mystical body, “not holding closely to the head”. Note that for Paul, the mystical body is a living and organic entity, “from whom the whole body supported and held together by its ligaments and bonds, achieves the growth that comes from God”. Such “rigor of devotion, self abasement and severity to the body ... are of no value”, since they violate the belief that we need nothing but Christ only. 	<p>2:18-23, CCSS Eph 4:15-16 Gal 5:1-4</p>

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Special Notes:

1. On exercising the common priesthood of the faithful at Mass

The ritual offering [i.e. the Eucharistic celebration], then, requires a living participation on the part of the faithful as their personal offering. Christians should not attend the Mass as an act of worship that is without their interior participation. If the rite remains external, it does not attain its object, which is to awaken an interior disposition corresponding to the exterior action...because the offering of Christ is sacramentally renewed only because we can unite ourselves to him.

The Eucharist includes, more precisely, the invitation to offer all that in our lives that is sorrowful or painful, with our gaze fixed on the heroic offering of Calvary...in order to receive there a higher dignity through an assimilation to the redemptive suffering of Christ.

Theological-Historical Commission for Year 2000, *The Eucharist, Gift of Divine Life*, pp. 97-98; LG 11.

2. The Chiastic Structure of Colossians:

- A *Grace from Paul* an apostle by the will of God (1:1-2)
- B *Thanking God* when praying for you to *walk in wisdom* (1:3-14)
- C *The gospel preached* to every creature under heaven (1:15-23)
- D *We are admonishing and teaching* every human in all wisdom (1:24-2:5)
- E *Walk and live in Christ*, with whom you have died and been raised (2:6-23)
- E' You died and were raised with Christ *from living as you once walked* (3:1-7)
- D' In all wisdom *teaching and admonishing* one another (3:8-16)
- C' You have a *master in heaven* (3:17-4:1)
- B' Pray for us in *thanksgiving and walk in wisdom* (4:2-6)
- A' Full assurance in the will of God and *grace from Paul* (4:7-18)

3. The Church, as early as apostolic times, and then constantly in her Tradition, has illuminated the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments through typology, which discerns in God's works of the Old Covenant prefigurations of what he accomplished in the fullness of time in the person of his incarnate Son. (CCC 128)