

## **Called to Transform the World**

**Baptism calls us to order the world  
according to God's plan.**

**The laity play a primary role in transforming society...**

- empowered by the Spirit**
- strengthened by the sacraments,**
- led by the Gospel**
- and the Church's teaching.**

### **Your Experience**

Name a time when you saw the effect your kindness had on someone's life.

Name someone whose faith and love had a lasting positive effect on your family's life.

### **What Vatican II Says**

Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their [the laity's] special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer. *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium) No. 31.*

Hence the mission of the Church is ... also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel. In fulfilling this mission of the Church, the Christian laity exercise their apostolate both in the Church and in the world, in both the spiritual and the temporal orders. These orders, although distinct, are so connected in the singular plan of God that He Himself intends to raise up the whole world again in Christ and to make it a new creation, initially on earth and completely on the last day.

*Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem), No. 5.*

The laity must take up the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church and motivated by Christian charity, they must act directly and in a definite way in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens with their own particular skill and on their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice of God's kingdom.

*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam Actuositatem), No. 7.*

### **What the Catechism Says**

By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will.... It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated that these may always be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer." (CCC, 898)

The initiative of lay Christians is necessary especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means for permeating social, political, and economic realities with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. ." (CCC, 899)

### **Your Experience**

Name a time when you chose to *do the right thing* when others did not care. What was the effect of your decision?

## **Praying Your Experience**

You have been reflecting on your baptismal call  
to transform the world in Christ.

Please use the space below to bring to God what is in your heart.

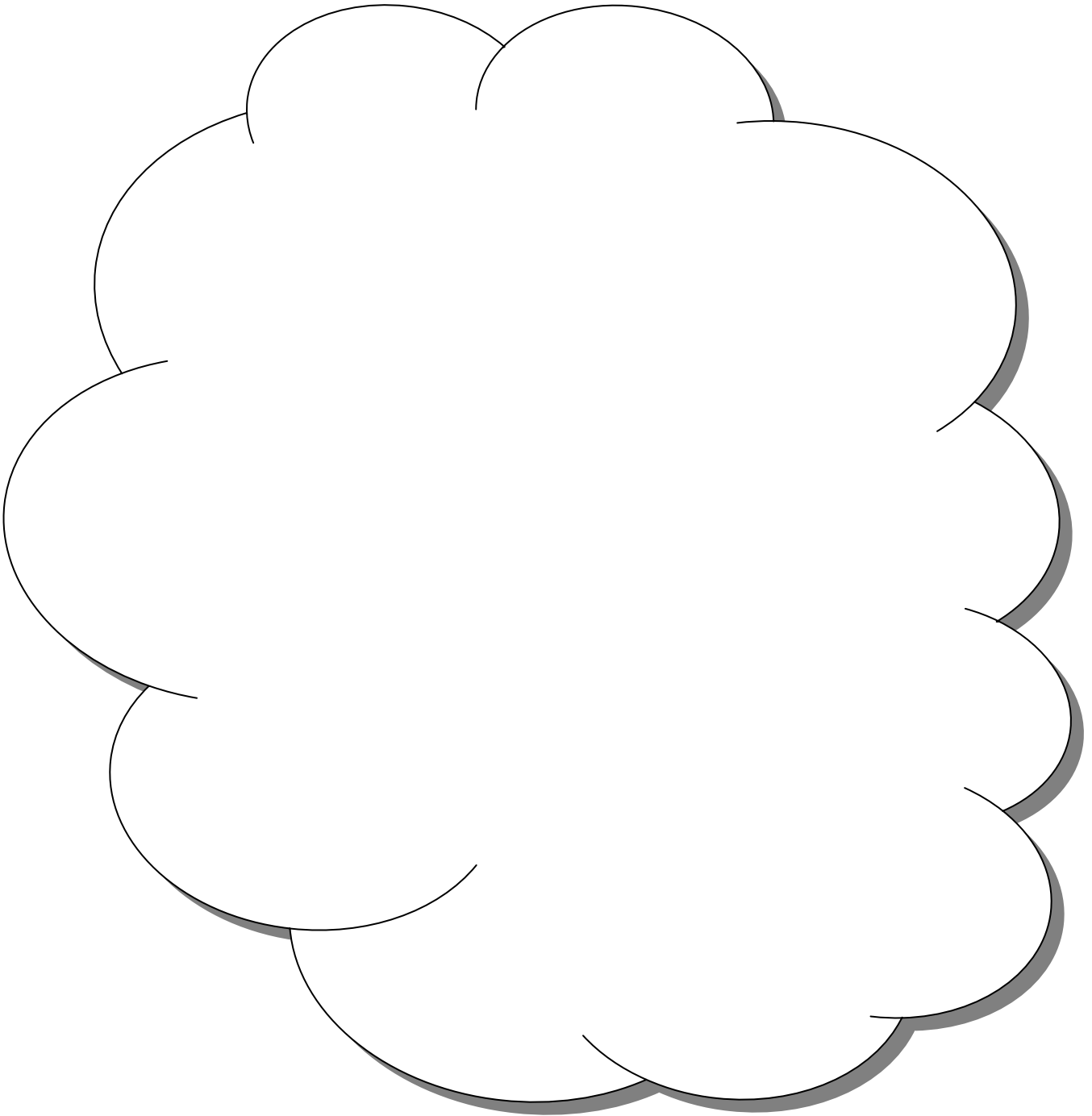
*Thank you, God...*

*Help me, Lord...*

Amen

### **Integrating Activity**

Draw an image or write a poem, word or phrase  
that reflects what it means for you  
to be called by your Baptism  
to help transform the world  
in Christ.



## Further Reading

Let everyone consider it [their] sacred obligation to esteem and observe social necessities as belonging to the primary duties of modern man [sic.]. For the more unified the world becomes, the more plainly do the offices of [people] extend beyond particular groups and spread by degrees to the whole world. But this development cannot occur unless individual [people] and their associations cultivate in themselves the moral and social virtues, and promote them in society; thus, with the needed help of divine grace [people] who are truly new and artisans of a new humanity can be forthcoming.

**Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, No. 30.**

Throughout the course of the centuries, [people] have labored to better the circumstances of their lives through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort. ...[T]his human activity accords with God's will. For [humankind], created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to [it]self the earth and all it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; (Gen. 1:26, Wis. 2:23) a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him Who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all. Thus, by the subjection of all things to [humankind], the name of God would be wonderful in all the earth.

This mandate concerns the whole of everyday activity as well. For while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work, consulting the advantages of their brother men, and are contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan.

Thus... Christians are convinced that the triumphs of the human race are a sign of God's grace and the flowering of His own mysterious design. ... Hence it is clear that [peoples] are not deterred by the Christian message from building up the world, or impelled to neglect the welfare of their fellows, but that they are rather more stringently bound to do these very things.

**Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, No. 34.**

But in particular the lay faithful are called to restore to creation all its original value. In ordering creation to the authentic well-being of humanity in an activity governed by the life of grace, they share in the exercise of the power with which the Risen Christ draws all things to himself and subjects them along with himself to the Father, so that God might be everything to everyone (cf. 1 Cor 15:28; Jn 12:32).

**Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *On the Mission and Vocation of the Lay Faithful (Christifideles Laici)*, No. 14.**

'I am with you always, to the close of the age' (*Mt 28:20*). This assurance, dear brothers and sisters, has accompanied the Church for two thousand years, and has now been renewed in our hearts by the celebration of the Jubilee. From it we must gain *new impetus in Christian living*, making it the force which inspires our journey of faith.

...we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!*

It is not therefore a matter of inventing a "new programme". The programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its centre in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live

the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfilment in the heavenly Jerusalem.

**Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 29.**

In a world that is frequently self-centred, without hope, the Church expects you to be leaven, tireless sowers of genuine and responsible thought and generous social planning, sustained by a total love of the truth that abides in Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man. In thanking you for your work, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

**Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Meeting Participants at Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*. May 16, 2011.**

What is needed is a real "revolution of love". The new generations have immense demands and challenges before them in their personal and social life. ... Among these challenges is also the social and political commitment, founded not on partisan ideologies or interests but rather on the choice to serve man [sic.] and the common good, in the light of the Gospel.

**Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the 24th Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. Rome, May 24, 2010.**