

04. Sharing in Christ's Prophetic Mission





There is only one prophet in the Christian Religion: Christ. It is he who mediates God's word to the world. Now he, the vine, acts through us his branches.

In baptism we were anointed prophet.

Each baptised person has a unique share in the prophetic mission of the Risen Christ in the world.

Mediating God's word
to the world

Dominic spoke of our
vocation:

‘contemplata tradere’

“communicating to
others what one has
contemplated”(Thomas
Aquinas, quoted EG, n. 150).



Ignatius of Loyola used a similar expression:

‘**in actione contemplativus**’
(contemplative in action).

In prayer we are drawn deeper into communion with God. It is from this communion that we are sent into mission.



‘Jesus called them to be with him
and to go out to proclaim the message’(Mark 3:14).

Catholic Catechism 1992 n.25

(Roman Catechism, Council of Trent, 1545-1563, Preface 10).

‘The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching
must be directed to the love that never ends.
Whether something is proposed for belief,
for hope or for action,
the love of our Lord must always be made accessible,
so that anyone can see
that all the works of perfect Christian virtue
spring from love
and have no other objective
than to arrive at love.’

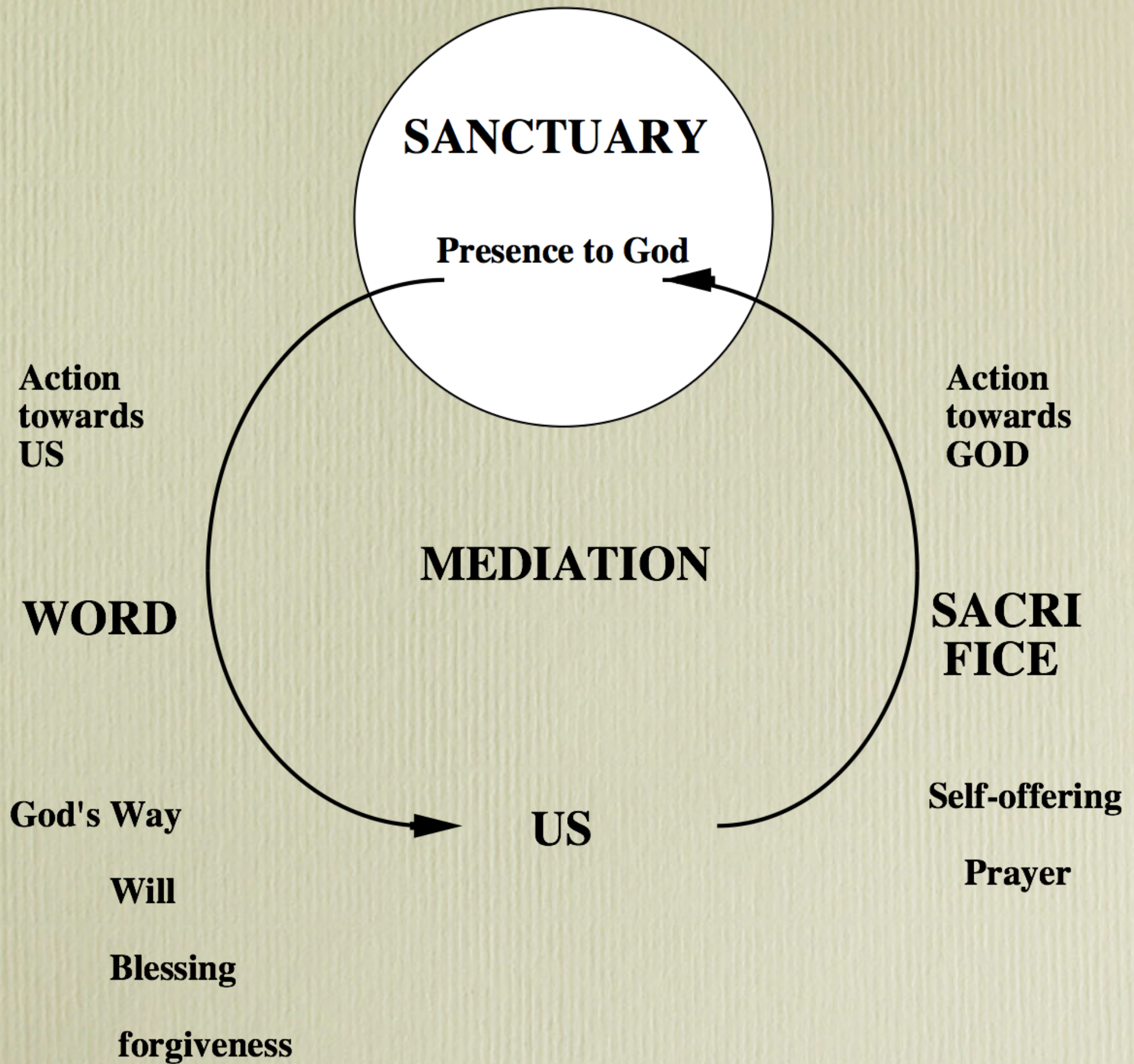
Vatican II LG 39

‘The **holiness** of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful.

And so it must be.

It is expressed in many ways by those who, each in his or her own state of life,

TEND TO THE PERFECTION OF LOVE.’



The ordained minister as a sacrament of Christ the prophet.

The ordained are called to mediate the word of the Risen Christ to the Assembled community.

The gift of prophecy cannot be institutionalised. God can choose to speak his surprising word through anyone, including those ordained.

Romans 15:15-16

‘I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister (λειτουργὸν) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service (ἱερουργουῖντα) of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.’

‘Since nobody can be saved who has not first believed, it is the first task of presbyters to preach the Gospel of God to all’(PO, n. 4).

‘Their ministration ... begins with the announcement of the gospel’(PO, n.2).

It is vitally important to ‘preach with authority’, connecting people with God, the author of revelation.

Bernardin writes: ‘we are meant to lure the believers onto healthy spiritual ground’. We are inviting them into the sanctuary. The ordained minister should know the tradition and be able to communicate it in public in an engaging way.

Pope John-Paul II speaks of the 'spiritual life that grows through the exercise of the ministry'(PDV n.25), and Tony Philpot uses the image of a car battery which charges itself up when the car is running. Our ministry is about communion. We come to others from our communion with God and Jesus draws them into deeper communion through our ministry.

In prayer we are drawn deeper into communion with God. It is from this communion that we are sent into mission.

Opening address at Second Vatican Council - Pope John XXIII

October 11th 1962

‘Our task is not merely to hoard this precious treasure, as though obsessed with the past, but to **give ourselves eagerly and without fear to THE TASK THAT THE PRESENT AGE DEMANDS OF US** – and in so doing we will be faithful to what the Church has done in the last twenty centuries. So the main point of this Council will not be to debate this or that article of basic Church doctrine that has been repeatedly taught by the Fathers and theologians old and new and which we can take as read. You do not need a Council to do that. But starting from a renewed, serene and calm acceptance of the whole teaching of the Church in all its scope and detail as it is found in Trent and Vatican I, Christians and Catholics of apostolic spirit all the world over **expect a leap forward in doctrinal penetration and THE FORMATION OF CONSCIENCES** in ever greater fidelity to **authentic teaching**. (continued next page)

God's Word is ETERNAL, so **TRADITION**

‘Starting from a renewed, serene and calm acceptance of the whole teaching of the Church in all its scope and detail as it is found in Trent and Vatican I, Christians and Catholics of apostolic spirit all the world over **expect a leap forward in DOCTRINAL PENETRATION and the formation of human consciences IN EVER GREATER FIDELITY TO AUTHENTIC TEACHING.**’

Never Abstract

Historical Situation/ Questions being addressed/ How statement received

Hierarchy of truths

Looking for the **WORD OF GOD** inspiring the human words

Opening address at Second Vatican Council
- Pope John XXIII October 11th 1962

But this authentic teaching has to be studied and expounded in the light of the research methods and the literary formulations of modern thought. For the substance of the ancient deposit of faith is one thing, and **the way in which it is presented** is another. And it is to this latter that careful and where necessary patient consideration must be given, everything being measured according to the requirements of a

TEACHING AUTHORITY

THAT IS PREDOMINANTLY PASTORAL IN CHARACTER’.

‘Today’s vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness “The deposit of the faith is one thing... the way it is expressed is another”(John XXIII 1962) (EG, n.41)

‘Let us never forget that “the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning”(J-P II Ut Unum Sint 19) (EG, n.41).

His Spirit prays in you ‘with sighs too deep for words’(Romans 8:26)

‘The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart’(Romans 10:8).

‘As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been “Yes and No.”
(2Corinthians 1:18)

‘In him, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation
of the promised Holy Spirit’(Ephesians 1:13).

‘Hold fast to the word of life’(Philippians 2:16).

‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly’(Colossians 3:16).

‘You received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit’
(1 Thessalonians 1:6).

‘The word of God is not chained’(2 Timothy 2:9).

‘An overseer must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it’(Titus 1:9).

The Homily (Evangelii Gaudium, nn. 135-159)

The liturgical context (nn. 137-138) A mother's conversation (nn. 139-141).

Words which set hearts on fire (nn. 142-144)

‘The preacher has the wonderful but difficult task of joining loving hearts, the hearts of the Lord and his people’(n. 143).

‘To speak from the heart means that our hearts must not just be on fire, but also enlightened by the fullness of revelation and by the path travelled by God's word in the heart of the Church and our faithful people throughout history. This Christian identity, as the baptismal embrace which the Father gave us when we were little ones, makes us desire, as prodigal children – and favourite children in Mary – yet another embrace, that of the merciful Father who awaits us in glory. Helping our people to feel that they live in the midst of these two embraces is the difficult but beautiful task of one who preaches the Gospel’(n. 144).

‘I have come that you may live, and live to the full’(John 10:10)

Mature persons are **generative**. That is, they are able to spend their life in creative communion which is life-giving both to themselves and to those with whom they relate.

To be generative, a person must have experienced **intimacy**: the kind of loving and being loved which is experienced as being the fruit of being deeply known and accepted by another whom we intimately know and accept.

To be truly intimate one must have a sense of one's personal **identity**: a sense of self that is experienced as being affirmed by another who is significant to us.

Finding our identity within the church

‘How much do our statements from university podiums, from pulpits and from the holy tribunals of the Church have such a ring that we fail to perceive clearly that these statements are virtually trembling with the last bit of the creature’s modesty that knows that all speech can be only the last moment before the holy silence that fills even heaven itself with the clear vision of God face to face’(page 406).

‘I would like only to testify to the experience that theologians are only truly theologians when they do not think complacently that they are speaking with transparent clarity, but are frightened at the swinging of the analogy between Yes and No over the abyss of the inconceivability of God, and at the same time experience it as holy and testify to it. I would like only to confess that I, as a poor theologian, in all my theology, think too little of this analogous character of all my statements. We talk too much about the subject and ultimately, in all this talking, forget the subject itself’(page 407).

Bernard Lonergan SJ

‘Just as theology in the thirteenth century followed its age by assimilating Aristotle, just as theology in the seventeenth century resisted its age by retiring into a dogmatic corner, so theology today is locked in an encounter with its age. Whether it will grow and triumph, or whether it will wilt to insignificance, depends in no small measure on the clarity and accuracy of its grasp of the external cultural factors that undermine its achievements and challenge it to new endeavours’(Second Collection page 58).

It is vitally important that we ‘preach with authority’, connecting people with God, the author of revelation.

Bernardin writes: ‘we are meant to lure the believers onto healthy spiritual ground’.

We are inviting them into the sanctuary. The priest should know the tradition and be able to communicate it in public in an engaging way. The following definition of the magisterium is a reminder that orthodox teaching is teaching that remains in touch with the Spirit in people’s lives.

Jeremiah 23:16-19

Thus says YHWH of hosts: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you; they are deluding you. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of YHWH. They keep saying to those who despise the word of YHWH, “It shall be well with you”; and to all who stubbornly follow their own stubborn hearts, they say, “No calamity shall come upon you.”

For who has stood in the council of YHWH
so as to see and to hear his word?

Who has given heed to his word so as to proclaim it?

Jeremiah 23:21-22

I did not send the prophets, yet they ran;
I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.
But if they had stood in my council,
 then they would have proclaimed my words to my people,
and they would have turned them from their evil way,
 and from the evil of their doings.

Jeremiah 23:25-29

I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in my name, saying, “I have dreamed, I have dreamed!” How long?

Will the hearts of the prophets ever turn back – those who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart?

They plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal.

Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let the one who has my word speak my word faithfully.

What has straw in common with wheat? says YHWH

Is not my word like fire, says YHWH,

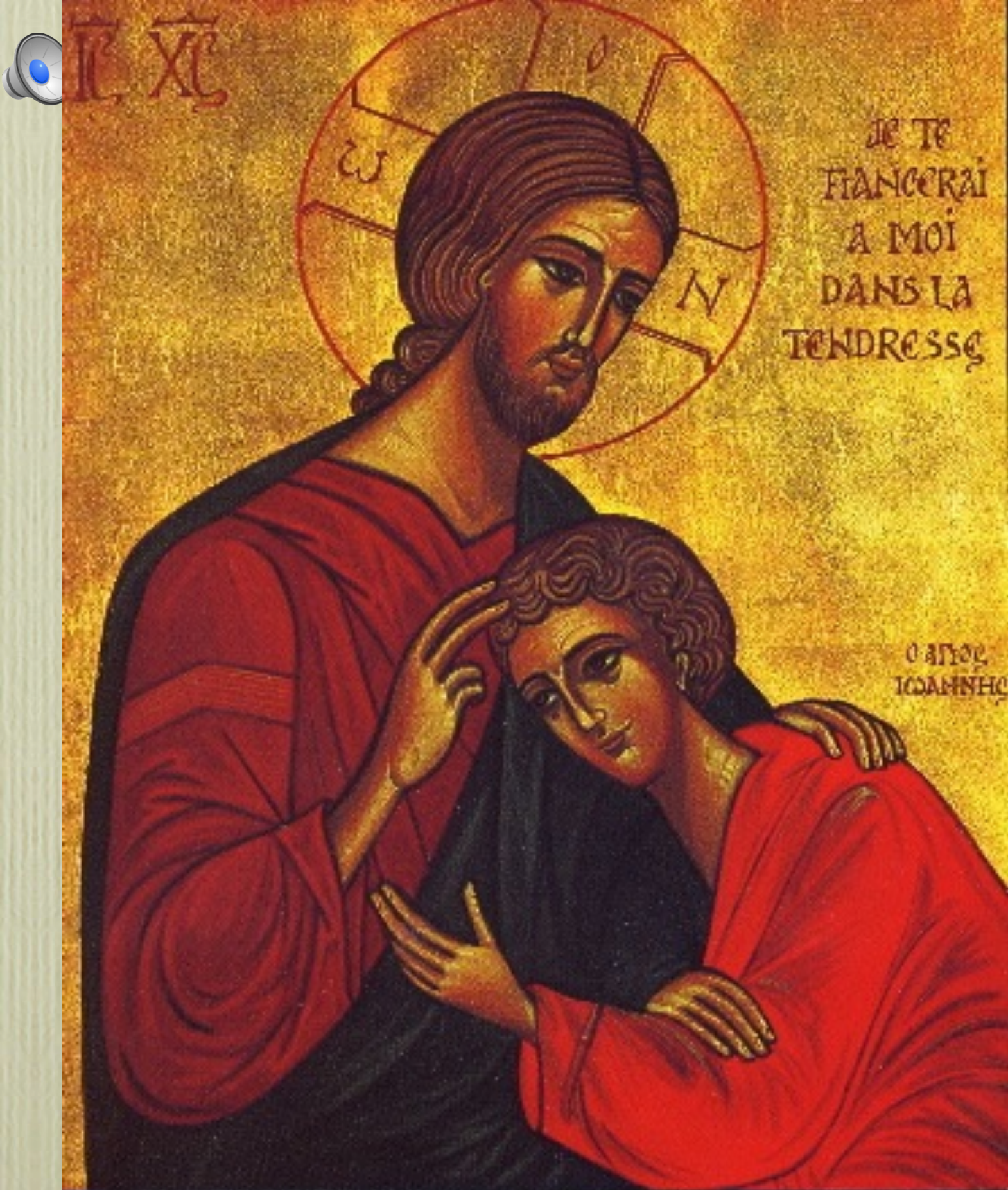
and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?



Focus on essentials



“When we adopt a pastoral goal and a missionary style which would actually reach everyone without exception or exclusion, the message has to concentrate on the essentials, on what is most beautiful, most grand, most appealing and at the same time most necessary’(n. 35).



You are my breath

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La ilaha illa 'Llah



You are my breath
Breathe in me
You are my light
Reveal me
You are the sweetness
in all things
Oh My Beloved.

La ilaha illa 'Llah



There is only one love
and I see it in your face
Everywhere I go
I am surrounded by grace
The moment I awake
I am lost in the embrace
of My Beloved

La ilaha illa 'Llah



You are my breath
Breathe in me
You are my light
Reveal me
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