

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

" COME TO ME... I AM THE WAY."

An introduction,

In 1865, when Father Lacombe was sent to the Blackfoot Indians in southern Alberta, he found them not as receptive to his teachings as had been the Cree and the Metis in his previous voyages. One day, while discussing the truths of religion with two of the people, he enlivened his explanations with symbols which he sketched in the sand. This visual approach seemed to please the Blackfeet. The next day, around the campfire, he continued his instructions, but this time he used burned out embers from the fire to draw symbols and figures on a buffalo hide stretched between two poles.

The evident interest of the Blackfoot people in this method of teaching brought back to Father Lacombe's mind the experiences of several earlier missionaries... Father Blanchet with the Sahale Stick (or Stick from Heaven) in Oregon and British Columbia, as well as he and Father Demers with their catholic ladder; Father De Smet using his own version of the ladder among the Flathead Indians and Southern Blackfeet in Montana; Father Mengarini also with the ladder among the same tribes.

The next winter, in St. Albert, he worked at improving his own teaching methods, borrowing ideas from his predecessors and improving upon his buffalo hide sketches. He was then able to write: " I made with ink and paper a longer history with these pictures. It started at the Creation, and went down through the Bible history to the coming of Christ, then through the history of the Church and all life on our pilgrimage to Heaven... (It has become) very popular among the Indians and is of great assistance to me." Letter to Bishop Tache, of Saint Boniface, 1865)

Father Lacombe then took eight more years to perfect his pictorial missionary-aid, to prepare accompanying instructions and provide reference materials, before it was first lithographed in black and white in 1872.

The previous "ladders" were composed mostly of symbols with bars and dots to indicate the advance of events and time. Father Lacombe added pictures, the two ways, and colour. It was during that same year of 1872 that some of the sisters from the Congregation of Notre-Dame helped him prepare a coloured edition which was then printed in Montreal. Several thousand copies of this one were printed for missions around the world at the request of Pope Pius IX. The Superior General of the Oblate Fathers saw Father Lacombe's catechism in 1873 and recommended printing 10,000 more copies. Another edition of 16,000 copies was printed in Paris in 1874. It was followed by a subsequent printing in Montreal that was registered by an Act of Parliament in 1895, another by Beauchemin and Sons of Montreal, as well as a more recent one by the Institute of Missiology of the University of Ottawa. Besides this, smaller photocopies were also in use both among Indians and non-Indian children in parts of Alberta and B.C. On the prairies and in the north, it was usually referred to as the Father Lacombe Catechism.

- cf. The Catholic Ladder and Missionary Activity in the Pacific Northwest, by Father Philip Hanley, Ottawa, 1965.
- cf. Le Grand Chef des Prairies, par le Pere Breton, Edmonton 1955.

The use of this type of visual approach, with its historico-biblical background and the challenge it implies for all viewers to become vocal about the story of Jesus, was greatly encouraged at the time. For the Missionaries, it provided immensely valuable follow-up which they could leave in all the homes. For Indian people, it seemed to combine several typical Indian methods of teaching and remembering. They had never developed a written language, yet they had become masters of the oral tradition, retaining their cultures, legends, and religious rituals almost unchanged over many centuries. They had developed the art of picture writing whereby they could record historical events on buffalo hides or on the sides of teepees. This concept of a picture story of God in our world, therefore, could not have been more appropriate.

Some of the missionaries became so overwhelmed with the obvious interest of Indian people in this method of teaching religion which had been initiated by Father Blanchet that they exchanged ideas, imitated and even added to it on their own. Father De Smet, for example, developed his own version of the ladder some twenty years before the time of Father Lacombe, and after seeing its effectiveness, enthusiastically exclaimed in his writing that the idea of these ladders " would spread to the whole world! " The Bishops of Quebec and of Saint-Boniface ordered copies for distribution among the missionaries within their jurisdictions... which included most of the prairies and the north of Canada at that time. A separate thrust reached into the western States and

British Columbia when the First Provincial Council in Oregon in 1848 recognized that these charts " had been contrived by the missionaries of this region as if by a divine instinct, with great profit to souls..." and recommended them "to all who are engaged in handing on Christian doctrine, particularly among the Indians..."

Thirty-three years later, however, the Second Provincial Council in Oregon (1881) put the emphasis back upon the written word and the structured format of a catechism. For purposes of uniformity, they requested that everyone use a more traditional booklet, one that had been approved by the Bishops a long time before. Thus, the Catholic ladders fell into gradual obsolescence in most of the western regions, to the point where only a few used copies are left, stored in the archives and museums of our churches, or rolled up in some seldom used corner of our older homes. The only edition that kept on spreading was the Father Lacombe Catechism. In 1910 Fr. Morice could say: "Father Lacombe's Catechism is now in universal use in the missions of the Canadian West, from Lake Superior to the Pacific..." Nonetheless, since that time, even that presentation slowly fell into disuse. Yet, the catechetical renewal of the mid-20th. century, with its emphasis on biblical sources, on the spoken word and upon the importance of lay ministries, would probably subscribe to the approach of our early missionaries.

Many other missionaries since that time have been struck with the effectiveness of this method when they would discover in some Indian home an illiterate elder who could retell the whole story of the Bible with amazing accuracy, or some modern mother who would lament the lack of a simple tool such as this for her to instruct her own children. It would seem that, with all of our advances in audio and video techniques, there is still a need for some type of pictorial memory-aid such as these charts that invites its viewers to tell once again the story of Jesus in their own words.

One of the supporters of this historical-biblical approach is Bishop Paul O'Byrne of Calgary. He had long been hoping for some type of teaching aid that could be used in conjunction with the official Canadian Catechism, something that could be left in the hands of native parents and local catechists as a challenge to their natural story-telling abilities, something that would allow them to become witnesses to the Jesus that they had learned to love... He was looking for a teaching aid that contained

few written words of its own in order to become more easily embodied into the words of every Indian language and every Indian home... He thus requested an updated version of the Father Lacombe Catechism be produced, and agreed that this time an Indian artist should be challenged to do it. The result of Bishop Paul's vision is the painting we are now presenting, entitled "Come to Me... I am the Way."

We acknowledge and appreciate the Indian artist as well as the others who have been involved at this stage. But as we read these pages, the main thing to remember is that "Come to Me... I am the Way" is a message, the chart is an instrument, and we, the viewers, are being constantly challenged to be witnesses in whatever way we will be able to respond. This is the story of God in our world, the story of Jesus... and how He is continually present among us, continually inviting us to live close to Him. The rest is up to us, everyone of us... May this story of Jesus become so intimately a part of us that it will become our story, and we will then be able to tell it to someone else.

"As my Father sent me,

so now I send you..." (John XX, 21)

"COME TO ME...

I AM THE WAY"

F O R E W O R D

An Invitation to Friends, Parents, Teachers, Pastors...

This painting is really the story of God, the story of Jesus and of how He is important to help us find real happiness and real meaning in our lives, to help us achieve our deepest hopes, our most cherished dreams. We are all looking for happiness... but our world seems so full of troubles! It is extremely comforting for us to be reminded that, no matter what ever happens to us, there is Someone who cares. As He said: "I have come so that you may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10) "I tell you all this so that in me you may find peace. You will suffer in the world. But take courage! I have overcome the world." (John 16)

The painting itself is an updated version of the one widely referred to as the Father Lacombe Catechism. It is one more development in a series of teaching aids that owe their inspiration to centuries-old Indian methods of picture-writing. (Cf. Come to Me... I am the Way, Historical Background) Just as for any piece of art, it is never finished. It begins as an idea in the mind of an artist, it is transferred onto a canvas... and after that, it continues again as an idea in the mind of every viewer. In this case, it is the story of God... told in a very incomplete fashion, but His story nonetheless.

The guidelines that are offered to accompany it are also very incomplete. They are in draft form only, with many blanks, many omissions, many unfinished thoughts... but it is His story, nonetheless. We invite you to start using it, adding as you go all other references that you might be inspired to use from your Bible or any other sources. We also invite you to help us expand upon these guidelines, with thoughts and quotations that have been particularly meaningful to you in your teachings, or in the course of your own personal journey with Christ. In that way, a second draft could incorporate your ideas and those of many other people to make this pictorial memory-aid all the more effective for you, and all the more valuable as a means of helping other people effective witnesses of Christ also, through you.

Most Indian languages in our country make very little use of abstract words; instead, they use action words and descriptive phrases. The sentences and words used in this presentation have been chosen with the hope that they could easily be translated as spoken words into some of our native languages, and thus be transcribed onto cassette tapes, combined with slides or presented in any other way. We in Calgary will try to begin this process for the Blackfoot and Sarcee languages. It is our hope that in every other language group or Indian community, - and maybe even in other languages of the world,- someone else will be inspired to do the same for their own area.

As you look at this picture, thoughts will come to your mind, words will come to your lips. If you look at it with respect and openness, as when we approach the Bible, the words that will come to you will be words of God. If someone else is there with you, listening to you, you will effectively have become one more of God's witnesses... and that other person will be hearing about a Jesus that they also will want to know better, to love more... and then to share Him with someone else again. "Go, be my witnesses...", He was saying. May this sharing continue to happen through you, more and more.

Bless you.

P.S. As you think of quotations that could be added, or changes that could be made, please jot them down and send them to us.

And if you need extra copies, please address all correspondence as below, for the time being:

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OVERVIEW.

This is the story of God, His world and His people. See the hands of the Maker, the Creator, the Giver of life. He is the one who made us and who now invites us to come to Him. But after making us, He does not leave us completely alone. He offers to help us all along the way. The hands that create... the hands that invite... the hands that help. "Come to Me... I am the Way" (Matthew 11 and John 14)

See the rays of light and power that reach down to the world, and down to all the events that happened during our history, right from the beginning through to the present time. "I am the light of the world..." (John 8) "All power has been given to Me, in Heaven and on earth..." (Matthew 28)

The large circle represents our world, as seen from high up above. It covers the whole life story of Jesus, which has become the most important event in history, the time when God sent His own Son to live among us as a human being. Whatever happened before that time was a preparation for all that Jesus was and did. Whatever happened afterwards was influenced by His presence in our lives. It is important for us to remember His words and know what He did because He said: "I have come so that you may have life..." (John 10) and we all want to live.

The circle is also the Sacred Circle, the Circle of Life so important in the culture of many Indian nations: the circle of the seasons, the cycle of birth - growth - death - and birth again, the circle of the sky covering east, west, north and south. The whole life story of Jesus is within that circle, reminding us that, since He came on earth, He with the Creator is now the Giver of Life; reminding us that life with Him forever is the beautiful plan He has for us.

And when the feathers are added to the circle, it becomes an Indian shield to protect us, as when God said to Abram: "I am your shield." (Genesis 15) The Apostle Paul also gives us this advice: "Put on all the armor that God gives you, so that you will be able to stand up against the devil's evil tricks... At all times, carry your faith as a shield, so that with it you will be able to put out the burning arrows of the evil one." (Ephesians 6)

The smaller circle within the Circle of Life represents Christ again, this time in His people, including all of us who believe in Him. This circle is like a window in the wall of time allowing us to see the present and the future... all His people going back to Him. "My sheep hear My voice. I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish." (John 10)

The two ways show that all through our life we are searching... Sometimes, we are doing good; other times, we are walking on the wrong road, getting into all kinds of evil ways. During those times, we are really in darkness, not really happy, feeling bad about ourselves. But even there, the rays of God's power are trying to reach us, inviting us to come back... helping us along the way, offering His forgiveness, so that eventually we may cross over to the other side, on our way back home to God. "I, the light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in Me need not stay in the dark any more." (John 12)

But He does leave us our freedom of choice... and that choice is always ours. "If anyone hears my words and does not keep them faithfully, it is not I who shall condemn him, since I have come not to condemn the world but to save the world. He who rejects me and refuses my words has his judge already..." ourselves, our own actions which we know are not according to His plan. He created us to be happy. We want it, we crave for it... but lasting happiness is often hard to achieve. We search for it, we drift here and there... and we sometimes don't even recognize the help He is offering to us. He tells us: I am the Way... So why don't we follow? He says: I am the Light... We therefore should be able to see the way..He says: I am the Truth... So, why are we slow to believe? He says: I am the Resurrection and the Life... Why aren't we all crowding around Him in order to be sure of that life that will last forever?

That is probably the greatest tragedy of our lives: that we spend so much time walking the road of darkness... when the road of light that could lead us to deep happiness is really so close to us. All this time, God is right there, still beckoning to us, still offering us the help of His hand... "Come to Me... I am the Way." "Do not be afraid; trust in God, and trust also in Me. In my Father's house, there are many rooms.... I am going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, so that where I am, you may also be." (John 14)

This is His story.

Section I - " I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth."

1. The hands of the Creator, the Maker, the Giver of Life. Hands that make, hands that invite, hands that help... There is only one God. He is the one who made us to live happy with Him forever, because He wants to share His love with us: "I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11) "Come to Me..." He says, and then He offers to help us all the way home: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." (John 14)

Note: With every number, you are invited to expound, to add other quotations, to talk about God and how you have experienced Him in your life. You, too, must be one of His witnesses; someone, somewhere, is waiting for you, listening...

2. Creation. God is present through His Word. It creates. It gives life. The angels. A fundamental conflict: good vs. evil. Initial chaos. The six days. People created in the image of God. The seventh day set aside for honour and prayer.

Note: Many Indian tribes have preserved stories, legends and symbols that demonstrate a very ancient knowledge of God. In many ways, long before the coming of Jesus into the world, God must have been trying to reach the people of all nations, to help them know Him... because He loved them, and wanted them to come home also. If possible, relate one of the Indian stories of creation.

3. God's first plan: paradise on earth. Marriage, one man, one woman, for life. God's great gift to us: life forever with Him. Our rejection of that gift. Story of first sin. Freedom, a choice.
4. Consequences of this rejection: No more paradise. Life no longer forever. Work, pain, sickness, evil, death.

Include here an Indian story of the coming of good and evil in the world.

5. But God doesn't give up on His people. He promises a Redeemer, a Saviour who will deliver us from the punishment of sin. To the serpent, He said: "I will make you enemies of each other, you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring. It will crush your head and you will strike its heel." (Genesis 3) And in the book of Revelation: "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with

the twelve stars on her head for a crown."

Note also: Indian legends about a woman... about the son she would have... And see how, in # 51, the Blessed Virgin appeared to an Indian exactly as she was described in this prophecy.

6. The black bands. Scale of the 40 centuries when the people waited for that promise to come true.
7. First sacrifices. Some were sincere, and were accepted by God: smoke went up to heaven. Others were rejected: smoke came back down to earth.
8. Cain and Abel. Jealousy. Murder. Corruption of mankind.
9. Family living begins. The people went out, married, had children, began to build cities and countries. They ate. They danced. Many of them forgot about God. They began to worship false God's, and to live in evil ways.
10. Adam lived for many years. Many sons and daughters. Death of Adam. The Patriarchs.
11. More evil in the world. God decides to punish again. Warning. Noah. The Ark. The flood. The rainbow, another promise. A covenant with Noah.

Note also: Indian stories about the flood.

12. For a while, the people remain faithful and obedient. Prayer and sacrifices to God. Many walk on the road of good.
13. Then, they drift again. More evil in the world. The tower of Babel. Division of languages; no more understanding. Dispersion of nations; people going in all different directions. More punishments. Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot and his wife.

Note: Indian story about the separation of the waters, division of peoples.

14. The calling of Abram. His faith. God's promises to him, changes his name to Abraham, will give him many descendants, make him father of many nations. Unconditional covenant with Abraham. God is his shield. The Patriarchs.
15. The way of good begins, the way of faith, with Abraham and his people. His faith is tested: the sacrifice of Isaac. The covenant renewed. The death of Abraham. Jacob and his sons. The story of Joseph. The beginnings of the chosen people. Migrations in search of^a land.
16. The call to Moses. God in the burning bush. Moses leads God's people. The pillar of fire. The ark. Crossing of the Red Sea. Mount Sinai. The Law. The 10 Commandments. God's covenant to His people through Moses: a Promised Land. God, present in the Law. Departure from Mount Sinai. Discontentment of the people. Water from the rock. Lack of faith. Punishment by delay in the desert. In the desert, they learn to trust. Food from heaven. Joshua. The Promised Land. The Judges. Samuel.
17. But many people still didn't listen. More evil ways. Sacrifices to false Gods. People don't follow the Lord's ways.
18. God tries again: The Kings. Covenant with David: the Kingdom of God in answer to the cry of His people. A king must be servant. The Psalms. Solomon. God, now present in the Temple. Elijah.
19. The Prophets: Isaiah. Jeremiah. Ezekiel. Daniel. Jonah. Conversion: "Come back to Me..." Hosea. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand... Prepare a way for the Lord..." John the Baptist.
20. Finally, God sends His own Son.

Section II: "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified,
died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at
the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead."

20. The center circle covers the life-story of Jesus, the most important event in the whole history of our world. From now on, He is the Sacred Circle, the Shield who protects us and who gives us life. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14)

Smaller circles within the circle: The birth of the Redeemer at Bethlehem, as promised. The three kings. Jesus with his parents, at Nazareth. Jesus healing the sick. Jesus, master of the wind and water. Jesus teaching the crowds. The bread of life, His body and blood. His death on the Cross. His Resurrection from the tomb. His Ascension into Heaven. The new Covenant of God with the world through Jesus.

Several times, God's voice was heard in the sky, breaking through the vast expanse of the heavens to startle the world into attention:

- At His baptism, a voice came from Heaven: "You are my Son, the beloved; my favor rests on you." (Luke 3)
- At the Transfiguration, a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said: "This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favor. Listen to him." (Matthew 17)
- After Jesus entered Jerusalem for the last time, he foretold his death and subsequent glorification. But he was worried... and he prayed: "Now my soul is troubled... Father, save me from this hour. But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Some people thought at first that it sounded like a clap of thunder. But Jesus said: "It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours." (John 12)
- When He died, the sun refused to shine, thunder and lightning shook the earth... and the centurion who was standing in front of him and had seen how he died, muttered in surprise: "In truth, this man was a son of God." (Mark 15)

With these kinds of messages from God himself resounding in our ears, it is really important for us to learn all we can about the things Jesus said and did before it becomes time for us also to appear before Him.

21. Thirty red dots: His hidden life. Three square dots: His public life, teaching. Two black dots: His two nights in the tomb. (Some Indian nations measure time according to the number of moons.) Forty red dots: His days on earth, after His resurrection.

His major teachings:

22. The Church, the people of God. Pentecost. The Holy Spirit, who will now give us life and teach us all things. Everyone invited. Everyone on the move, under the guidance of the Bishop, towards Jesus. Jesus, now present in His people. Community. The Family of God. We were all created to go live with God, through the help of Jesus, in Him and with Him. The real Kingdom of God is now possible.

"Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed by Thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is
in Heaven."

But we will still need His help, as we endeavour to live according to His way.

"Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

23. The Sacraments, gifts of God to give us life. Jesus himself is the one who gives life. His death and resurrection are applied to us through the seven signs of Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders.
24. An ancient Indian symbol in the form of a cross. The seven feathers, representing seven gifts of God, could be the seven Sacraments, or they could represent the seven gifts of the Spirit.

Note: Indian languages were not written. They developed signs to express ideas. Some Indian symbols and legends demonstrate a very ancient knowledge of God, of a woman and of her son. There are also many legends about an evil person. Because there were no letters to write the word Creator, or Giver of Life, and wanting to remind themselves of God, Indian people therefore drew a circle depicting the best known symbol of life, the sun. For the Woman, the symbol of the moon. For her Son, whom they sometimes called Morning Star, they drew a smaller circle. For the evil one, no symbol was required because he was a man, though a trickster, evil and powerful, yet sympathetic and appealing.

Stories about this evil one are numerous and popular, often being used as teaching aids or for the transmission of traditional values. Stories about Sun, Moon and Morning Star are considered holy. See the sketch of Sun, Moon and Morning Star below the seven feathers on this symbol.

25. Another Indian symbol of long ago showed the same signs for God, the Woman and her Son, with sundogs on either side, painted on a buffalo skull. Because God is the Creator of all peoples, because He loves us all and because He wants all of us to come back to Him, He must have found ways to inspire Indian people to believe in Him even before the story of Jesus reached here. That is how these symbols and legends might have come to be. But now that Jesus has come, now that we know His name and have heard His words, our knowledge of God is so much more clear, more touching, more personal. We now know He loves us and wants us back. "Come to Me... I am the Way." He shows us the way, He offers to help, and asks us to follow Him.

- Note # 51, to remember that when the Virgin Mother appeared to an Indian in Guadalupe, she presented herself with these same signs of sun, moon and stars, because she knew that Indians would recognize her in that way... In her words to the Indian Juan Diego, she asked: "Don't you know that I am your Mother?"

- Note also how these same signs are part of a vision in the Bible: "... a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon at her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars..." (Revelation 12)

- 26 - 27 - 28. The three gifts that bring us closer to God: Faith, Hope and Charity. These virtues will help us overcome all of our evil tendencies, especially...

- 29 - 30 - 31 - 32 - 33 - 34 - 35. ... especially the seven deadly sins of pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, anger and laziness. Our own life experiences soon show us that these evil tendencies are usually the cause of all our problems.

Section III: " I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

36. The Church in action. The Holy Spirit. The Apostles. Peter. Our holy father, the Pope. The Gospels. The New Testament. The Bible. Commandments and practices of the Church.
37. The red bands. Scale of the 20 centuries since Jesus came into the world. The promises of God have been fulfilled. The Redeemer has come. It is now up to us to allow Him to come into us, to take over our lives and become one with God, in answer to His invitation: "Come back to Me."
38. The Church in action, continues. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world..." (End of Matthew) "Go, be my witnesses..." from one country to another, across the continents and across the oceans, until people in this country too can hear about Jesus and listen to His words.
39. The two roads also continue. Even after God sent His only Son into this world, there are some who seriously follow the good road, but there are others who also drift back on the road of evil... some religious leaders, even. Division. Lack of unity.
 - The power of the devil is always so strong, luring, enticing... Several scenes of evil-doing, on the dark side, away from the light of Christ.
 - But! the power of God is even stronger... Several scenes of good, coming away from the dark side, getting closer to the light and to the guidance of God.
 - Free will. The gift of free choice. The possibility of doing wrong, but we always have the option of returning to God because He is so good, He forgives.

40. An Indian symbol of sacrifice and penance: the one-hundred willow sweat lodge. Just like the two roads, one side is painted red to signify the good, the other side is painted black to signify the bad. The one hundred willows signify the years of happiness for which we pray.
41. The ideal of Christian living. Scenes of family life. Scenes of peaceful living and missionary activity. -- Sadly, though, evil is in our world, and we often get caught up in it. But the words of Jesus will always haunt us: "Come to Me... I am the Way." "Come back to Me..." "Do not be afraid... I will be with you all days, right to the end of the world." We can always come back to Him.
42. We can break the chains that bind us, the habits that cause us misery. Broken bottle. Broken syringe.
43. We can pray, once again.
44. We can put our faith into action by showing our love of others. Spiritual works of mercy: - correct those who need it; - instruct the ignorant; - give advice; - comfort those who suffer; - be patient with others; - forgive those who hurt you; - pray for others, both living and dead.
45. We can show compassion for the sufferings of others. Corporal works of mercy: bury the dead...
46. Visit the sick...
47. Visit those in prison...
48. Feed the hungry... 1. Give drink to those who thirst...
49. Clothe the naked... Shelter the homeless...
50. Scene of Jesus among the sky-scrappers and among the teepees. "Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in to share his meal, side by side with him. Those who prove victorious, I will allow to share my throne, just as I was victorious and took my place with my Father on his throne. If anyone has ears

to hear, let him listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches." (Revelation 3) With Christ among us, always present in us, in our families and communities, we will live in hope, the hope of being with God forever, some day.

"How happy are the poor in spirit;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle;
they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn;
they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right;
they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful;
they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart;
they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers;
they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right;
theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5)

These words can still echo down into the farthest corners of our homes, as He stands there outside of our doors, knocking, waiting for someone to open up and invite Him in.

51. The role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in history and in our lives. See # 5, the promise of a Redeemer. See her in # 20 at the birth of Jesus, at His death on the Cross, and at all the events in between. See her in Revelation 12, as in this picture, pushing back the power of the devil... a woman "adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with the stars on her head for a crown." See her at Guadalupe, as in this picture, and in all her other apparitions, inviting people to come back to Her Son, inviting us to prayer and penance, inviting us to receive Him in Communion, to pray the rosary...
52. Jesus Christ, appointed judge of the living and of the dead. At the moment of our death, our life will be judged in relation to His words: "For I was hungry...etc." (Matthew 25)

53. Purgatory... better than earth, but still is not heaven, until we have been completely purified, and ready for a new spiritual life with God. For us, it still means conversion. God still tells us: "Come back to Me..." His greatest plan for us was that we would some day be fully happy with Him, by loving Him with our whole heart, our whole mind, and our whole soul. Because many of us may not have achieved such perfection in this life, the Holy Spirit will now take over to purify us completely, and make us capable of perfect unselfish love, ready to live this new life in complete union with Him.
54. Hell. Satan and all his evil attractions: material goods, money, gambling, illicit sex, abortion, murder, war, destruction, drugs, alcohol, pride in new technologies... all things that can draw people away from spiritual values.
55. Heaven. The Trinity, the central mystery of God, - Father, Son and Holy Spirit,- will finally become clear to us. God, welcoming us home. The Triangle, the Circle, the Cross, the Dove, the fire of love (on the left side). Love, happiness complete. The Kingdom of God, complete. A new earth and a new heaven. All that God has promised to those who love Him. All that Christ has gained us by His death and Resurrection. Ever since the beginning, God has been inviting us to come home, offering to guide us and help us along the way. "Come to Me... I am the Way." Finally, now, we'll be able to answer Him and say: "Here I am, Lord."