

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

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PAUL VI AND THE BIRTH CONTROL
COMMISSION • THE ORDER OF THE
MASS WITHOUT A CONGREGATION •
READINGS FOR HOLY MASS, 1969 •
RHYTHM METHOD • PRIESTLY CELI-
BACY • DE COLORES : YOU AND
YOUR SERVICE SHEET • METANOIA,
COMMITMENT • INVOLVEMENT

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

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Fathers' Residence

University of Santo Tomas

Manila D-403

Philippines

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Paul VI And The Birth Control Commission

The threat of population explosion is fast becoming one of our most acute problems. Quite expectedly the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is once again called to play the villain's role in what promises to be a noisy debate. For the *demographic explosion* is the real favourite pretext for affirming the legitimacy of contraceptive method.

While this is to be expected, it came as a surprise to us to read in one of our metropolitan dailies about a priest unearthing what we thought an already obsolete objection against the Catholic position on birth regulation. We are referring to the now-defunct Birth Control Commission and Paul VI. It is contended that Pope Paul VI had acted *against* the advice of his own Commission, and that this was unreasonable. Being so, it is argued that we should not give it too much value and a lesser assent bordering on an outright rejection.

Not everyone can view this attitude with equanimity. And we would like to believe that there was a serious failure to grasp the real nature and function of this Commission on Birth Control.

The Birth Control Commission was instituted by Pope John XXIII, March 1963 and initially it had six members,—three laymen and three clergymen. But by October 1964 it counted with sixty members. The Holy Father granted an audience to the Commission members, mostly laymen on March 25, 1965, and called them members of the "*Commissione di studio sui problemi della popolazione, della famiglia, et della natalita.*" On March 7, 1966, fifteen new members were appointed increasing the Commission membership up to seventy-five. Of the fifteen new members, seven were Cardinals and nine bishops (residential). As stated in *Humanae Vitae*, n. 5, the Commission had as its scope "**the gathering of opinions on the new questions regarding conjugal life, and in particular, on the regulation of births, and of furnishing opportune elements of information so that the Magisterium could give an adequate reply to the expectation not only of the faithful, but also of world opinion.**" There is no ground for the *misreading* and *misunderstanding* of the pur-

pose of the commission: **"so that when it had completed its task, the Supreme Pontiff might give his decision."** ("Gaudium et Spes", footnote n. 14).

The Commission did its work well: "the majority of the Commission concluded that the weight of evidence indicated that the question of whether or not contraception was intrinsically evil was **open**, whereas the minority still maintained that contraception was intrinsically evil." This was the substance of the report of Dr. John Marshall, who was a member of the Commission since its beginning. Nobody came to the conclusion that it was intrinsically good. It is clear then that if there was any "advice" by the Commission against which Pope Paul acted, he certainly did not act against their conclusion.

Even supposing for the sake of argument that the Pope did act against the conclusion of the majority, there is no reason to find fault with the Pope for this. The Commission's task was to furnish information and to supply materials for forming a judgment; that is what it has done. It pertains to the Pope, and only to the Pope, to decide and that is what the Pope had done. He passed judgment in line with conciliar teaching, after having consulted a very large number of competent and qualified individuals and organizations, as the Encyclical affirms. Towards all of them Paul VI has displayed the greatest respect, verging almost on scrupulosity.

But this respect could not deprive him of the authority that belongs to him alone nor could it ease the burden of that responsibility that falls upon him as Supreme Pastor of the Church. Mindful of his apostolic responsibility proper and special to him, aware of the requirements in conscience of his unique teaching office in this Church and in the world, Paul V has heard all sides and spoke not as a teacher among many teachers but as the Supreme Teacher, under God, of the flock committed to him in Peter by Christ.

Failure to take cognizance of these facts surrounding the now defunct Birth Control Commission seems to us to condemn oneself to the fatal mistake of misreading the contribution of those bishops, priests and laymen who served in the commission and to contradict the theological premises on which they loyally, competently and sometimes sacrificially served.

LITURGICAL SECTION

READINGS FOR HOLY MASS DURING ADVENT, etc. 1969

Sunday, Nov. 30: — O that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down:
Is 63, 16b-17; 64, 1.3b-8 (Hebrew: 63, 16b-17; 64, 2b-7). We wait for
the revealing of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 1 Cor 1,3-9

Watch— for you do not know when the master of the house will come:
Mk 13,33-37

Monday, Dec. 1 — The Lord will gather together all nations in the eternal
peace of the Kingdom of God:

Is 2,1-5

Many will come from east and west in the Kingdom of heaven:

Mt 8,5-11

Tuesday, Dec. 2 — The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him:

Is 11,1-10

Jesus exults in the Holy Spirit:

Lk 10,21-24

Wednesday, Dec. 3 — The Lord invites to his feast and will wipe away the
tears from all faces:

Is 25,6-10a

Jesus cures many and multiplies loaves:

Mt 15,29-37

Thursday, Dec. 4 — A righteous nations which keeps faith will enter:

Is 26,1-6

Who does the will of my Father will enter into the Kingdom of heaven:

Mt 7,21.24-27

Friday, Dec. 5 — On that day the eyes of the blind shall see:

Is 29,17-24

Believing in Jesus two blind men are cured:

Mt 9,27-31

Saturday, Dec. 6 — The Lord will surely be gracious to you at the sound
of your cry:

Is 30,18-21.23-26

When he saw the crowd he was moved with compassion:

Mt 9,35-10,1.6-8

Second Sunday: — Prepare the way of the Lord:

Is 40,1-5.9-11

We wait for new heavens and a new earth:

2 Pt 3,8-14

Make the Lord's paths straight:

Mk 1,1-8

Imm. Concept. — I will put enmity between you and the woman:

Gen 3,9-15.20

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world:

Eph 1,3-6.11-12

Hail full of grace, the Lord is with you!

Lk 1,26-38

Tuesday, Dec. 9 — God comforts his people:

Is 40,1-11

God does not will that His little ones perish:

Mt 18,12-14

Wednesday, Dec. 10 — The almighty God "gives power to the faint"

Is 40,25-31

Come to me all who are burdened:

Mt 11,28-30

Thursday, Dec. 11 — I will help you, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:

Is 41,13-20

There has risen no one greater than John the Baptist:

Mt 11,11-15

Friday, Dec. 12: — O that you had hearkened to my commandments:

Is 48,17-19

They do not listen to John nor to the Son of Man:

Mt 11,16-19

Saturday, Dec. 13 — Elias will come again:

Sir 48,1-4.9-11

Elias has come already and they did not recognize him:

Mt 17,10-13

Third Sunday: — I will greatly rejoice in the Lord:

Is 61,1-2a.10-11

May your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

1 Thess 5,16-24

Among you stands one whom you do not know:

Jn 1,6-8,19-28

Monday, Dec. 15: — A star shall come forth out of Jacob:

Num 24,2-7.15-17a

The baptism of John, whence was it?

Mt 21,23-27

Tuesday, Dec. 16: — Messianic salvation is promised to all who are poor:

Soph 3,1-2.9-13

John came and the sinners believed him:

Mt 21,28-32

Wednesday, Dec. 17: — The scepter shall not depart from Judah:

Gen 49,2.8-10

The genealogy of Jesus Christ,

Mt 1,1-17

Thursday, Dec. 18 — I will raise up for David a righteous Branch:

Jer 23,5-8

Jesus will be born of Mary, the bride of Joseph, the Son of David:

Mt 1,18-24

Friday, Dec. 19: — The birth of Samson is announced by an angel:

Judg 13,2-7.24-25a

The birth of John the Baptist is announced by the angel Gabriel:

Lk 1,5-25

Saturday, Dec. 20 — Behold the virgin shall conceive:

Is 7,10-14

Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son:

Lk 1,26-38

Fourth Sunday: — The kingdom of David will remain before the Lord for all eternity:

2 Sam 7,1-5.8b-11

The mystery that was hidden from all eternity has now been revealed:

Rom 16,25-27

Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Lk 1,39-45

Monday, Dec. 22: — Anna gives thanks for the birth of Samuel:

1 Sam 1,24-28

Great things has done the Mighty One!

Lk 1,46-56

Tuesday, Dec. 23: — I will send to you Elias before the day of the Lord comes:

Mal 3,1-4; 4,5-6 (Hebrew: 3,1-4. 23-24)

The birth of John the Baptist:

Lk 1,57-66

Wednesday, Dec. 24, — morning Masses:

The Kingdom of David will remain before the face of the Lord for all eternity:

2 Sam 7,1-5. 8b-11

or, ad libitum:

The Lord is the King of Israel in your midst:

Soph 3,14-18a

The Dayspring from on high has visited us:

Lk 1,67-79

In afternoon Masses:

Is 62,1-5; Acts 13,16-17. 22-25; Mt 1,1-25 (or shorter:

Mt 1,18-25)

Christmas Day: — A Son has been given us:

Is 9,2-7 (Hebrew: 9,1-6)

The grace of God appeared to all men:

Ti 2,11-14

A Savior has been born for you today:

Lk 2,1-14

Second Mass:

Behold, your Savior comes:

Is 62,11-12

According to His mercy He saved us:

Ti 3,4-7

The shepherds found Mary, Joseph and the infant:

Lk 2,15-20

Third Mass:

All ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God:

Is 52,7-10

God spoke to us in His Son:

Hb 1,1-6

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us:

Jn 1,1-18 (or shorter: 1,1-5. 9-14)

St. Stephen: — Behold, I see the heavens open:

Acts 6,8-10; 7,54-59

Not you are the ones who speak; it is the Spirit of my Father!

Mt 10,17-22

St. John Ap.: — What we saw and heard we proclaim to you:

1 Jn 1,1-4

The other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first:

Jn 20,2-8

Sunday (Holy Family): —

Who fears the Lord honors his parents:

Sir 3,3-7.14-17a (Greek: 3,2-6. 12-14)

On the life in a family according to the Lord:

Col 3,12-21

Jesus increased in wisdom:

Lk 2,22-40 (or shorter: 2,22.39-40)

December 29: — Who loves his brother remains in the light:

1 Jn 2,3-11

The Light for the revelation of the nations:

Lk 2,22-35

December 30: — Who does the will of God remains for ever:

1 Jn 2,12-17

She spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel:

Lk 2,36-40

December 31: — You have been anointed by the Holy One and you all know:

1 Jn 2,18-21

The Word was made flesh:

Jn 1,1-18

January 1: — So shall they put my Name upon the people of Israel and

I will bless them:

Num 6,22-27

God sent forth His Son born of woman:

Gal 4,4-7

They found Mary and Joseph and the babe...

And at the end of eight days he was called Jesus:

Lk 2,16-21

THE ORDER OF THE MASS WITHOUT A CONGREGATION

• H.J. GRAF, S.V.D.

Vatican II greatly extended the possibility for concelebration, so that priests who need not say Mass for the sake of the people, may always have the opportunity to concelebrate. But even after Vatican II "each priest shall always retain the right to celebrate Mass individually, though not at the same time in the same Church as a concelebrated Mass" (Const. on the Lit., art 57 § 2,2). Therefore we find in the new Missal an Ordo for Masses without a congregation.

Even if Mass is said without a congregation, the priest should always be assisted by a server who takes the place of the people in answering to the priest's greetings and who assists, as otherwise servers do in Masses with a congregation. Rome was always extremely reluctant to permit Masses without a server and also now only *a grave necessity* — to be judged by the priest himself who wants to say Mass — justifies the celebration of such Masses. What is a grave necessity? Certainly not the little inconvenience of serving a fellow priest during a retreat, where, in addition, each one has the chance to take part in concelebration.

In Masses without a server, all the greetings are to be omitted, because there is no one to answer. The priest is not to answer to himself, because "in liturgical celebrations, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, each person should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and liturgical norms require of him" (Const. on the Lit., art. 28). Therefore, the priest leaves out the greeting after he crossed himself at the beginning of the Mass. Equally to be omitted are the greeting before the Gospel (he begins with: "At

that time...") before the preface (he begins with: "It is truly right and just ..."), the "Orate fratres", the wish of peace "The Lord's peace be with you always", and the entire concluding rite of the Mass. With the prayer after Communion the Mass without a server comes to a close.

During the service of the Word the chalice has normally its place on the credence table, in the Mass with and without a congregation. In a Mass without a congregation it is also permissible to have the chalice on the altar at the beginning of the Mass. This is certainly advisable if Mass is said without a server. In all Masses without a congregation the Missal (resp. the books that will, in future take its place) will have its place on the left side of the altar from the beginning until the end.

A general Rule

The Mass without a congregation follows in its rites as far as possible the rites, established by the guidelines for the Mass with a congregation. Only the exceptions will be noted below.

Introductory Rites

After he vested for Mass the celebrant and the server make the customary reverence to the altar, normally a bow of the body. Then both cross themselves and the priest says: "In the name of the Father, etc.," to which the server answers "Amen." Then the priest turns to the server who stands throughout these rites, extends his hands and greets him, using one of the proposed formulas, to which the server answers in the usual way.

Still standing at the foot of the altar both make their confession together. The invitation ("My brothers, to fit ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries, let us in silence remember our sins") of the Order of the Mass with a congregation has been left out. Therefore, after the greeting, both priest and server insert a short period of silence and reflect on their faults, before they start with the confession. Only the first form of the act of penance is found in the *Ordo Missae*; no reference is made to another choice. Does this mean that in a Mass

without the people, the priest has always to use the shortened form of the Confiteor? Obviously not, for no prohibition is mentioned either. But since in the first form no alternating prayers are found, it is certainly the most simple and convenient form.

Only after the penitential act the priest ascends to the altar, kisses it and proceeds to the left side where the Missal is placed. There he remains until after the general intercession (Prayer of the Faithful). He reads first the Introit antiphon. Together with the server he says the Kyrie and, when it is prescribed, the Gloria. When the Gloria (resp. the Kyrie) is ended, he says, with his hands joined and still facing the Missal, "Let us pray." After a short while of silence, he extends his hands and says the collect, at the end of which the server responds, as usual with "Amen."

The Liturgy of the Word

If the priest wants to let the server read the first (and the second) lesson, he may sit down during the readings and the responsorial psalm, if a chair or seat is available. No reference is made in the rubrics to the acclamations after the readings, which are mentioned explicitly in the guidelines for the Mass with a congregation.

For the Alleluja there exist conflicting rules in the Missal. In the general guidelines for Masses with and without a congregation, which describe the structural elements of the Mass, it is said that, if the Alleluja (or the versicles which take its place during Lent) is not sung, it may be simply omitted (art. 39). But the rubrics (not the *Ordo Missae* itself) for the Mass without a congregation refer to the Alleluja (and to the chant (!) that takes its place during Lent). It seems that the priest has the freedom either to say the Alleluja or to omit it.

Still staying at the left side, facing the Missal, the priest then bows and says the prayer "Almighty God, cleanse my heart, etc." With hands joined he adds then: "The Lord be with you," as in the Mass with a congregation and reads the gospel. When the gospel is finished, the celebrant kisses the book, saying in a low voice: "By the word of the gospel may our sins be blotted out." Then the server makes the acclamation: "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ."

If it is to be said the celebrant says the Credo together with the server, and may also insert the general intercessions to which the server, answers. Not only the introduction and conclusion, but also the individual intentions are here the priest's part.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

If the chalice has been on the credence table during the first part of the Mass the server brings the corporal, the purificator and the cup to the altar, leaving the veil on the credence table. The priest may permit the server to arrange everything and only then he comes to the center of the altar. From the first Sunday in Advent 1969 on, the offertory antiphon is also to be dropped in Masses without a congregation, even if, for a period of transition we may have to use the old Roman Missal. The server offers the priest the paten with the altar bread in about the same way as the deacon does in high Mass. For the deposition of bread and wine (this is one of the official names for offertory) one observes the same rites as in the Mass with a congregation. For the preparation of the chalice the priest does not leave his place in the center of the altar. After the two prayer formulas which accompany the deposition of the bread and wine on the altar the server does not make the acclamation "Blessed be God for ever." Only for the washing of his hands does the priest go to the side of the altar, to the one that is most convenient for him. For the "Orate fratres" he turns to the server, extends and then joins his hands while he says the formula.

Observing the rites prescribed for the Mass with a congregation the priest says the prayer over the gifts (with the short conclusion) and the Eucharistic Prayer. Also the Lord's Prayer and its subsequent embolism are said in exactly the same manner as in the Mass with the people. With the new acclamation the server concludes the reformed embolism. The priest may (need not) give the sign of peace to the server, but omits the invitation "Let us show that we are at peace with one another." While he breaks the host the priest says together with the server the "Agnus Dei." Afterwards he places a small particle in the cup, saying in a low voice "May this mingling..."

With hands joined and standing upright he says silently one of the two preparation prayers for holy Communion. Then he genuflects, takes the host and, if the server is to receive holy Communion, turns to him. Holding the host a little over the paten, he says: "Behold, the Lamb of God ..." and then together with the server adds once only: "Lord, I am not worthy..." Facing the altar he says in a low voice: "May the body of Christ..." After he has received the precious blood and before he gives Communion to the server, he says the Communion antiphon.

If the server does not receive holy Communion, the celebrant, after the genuflection takes the host, and says, facing the altar, once only: "Lord, I am not worthy..." Then he receives in the usual way communion under both kinds. This is then followed by the Communion antiphon.

After his own or the server's communion the priest wipes the paten and rinses the chalice at the side of the altar. The prayers formerly prescribed for the purification have been abolished as well as those that accompanied the communion at the chalice (e.g. "Quid retribuam"). Cup, purificator and corporal are either transferred by the server to the credence table or left on the altar until the end of the Mass. A period of silence may be observed. Returning to the left side of the altar the priest stands, facing the book and says, with his hands joined: "Let us pray." Both pray for a while in silence, unless the silence has been observed already. Then the celebrant extends his hands and says the prayer after Communion (with the short conclusion). At the end the server responds "Amen."

Concluding Rites

This form of the Mass is concluded in the same way as the Mass with a congregation: the priest turns to the server, greets him in the usual way, and blesses him. The "Ite, missa est" however, is omitted. As in the beginning the priest kisses the altar, makes the customary reverence with the server and leaves.

DOCTRINAL SECTION

THE RHYTHM METHOD FOR THE REGULATION OF BIRTH

"We need to dissipate all climate of fear, or panic or impatience... For the more serious the problem, the greater the need for calm and sobriety."

● F. DEL RIO

The population problem is with us. It is a serious problem. It is a difficult problem to solve because of its very complexity and implications for future generations. The cooperative effort of all is needed, if we honestly and earnestly wish that it does not deteriorate at too fast a tempo, and hereby renders impossible the use of means and ways leading to its effective and permanent control and solution. In the words of our bishops *"We need to dissipate all climate of fear, or panic or impatience... For the more serious the problem, the greater the need for calm and sobriety."*¹

One often hears or reads that the Catholic Church in our country, by virtue of the unconditional assent given to the doctrine of the "Humanae Vitae" by the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines² is rendering very difficult, if not impossible, the participation and cooperation of the largest sector of our population in the solution of this present problems,

¹ Manila Times, July 10, 1969, p. 11-A: "Population Issue"

² Manila, October 12, 1968: pp. 1-20. No desire on my part to make further comments on this matter. It has been both my privilege and my duty to work in this field for nearly forty years. That's about enough. This is a field which will remain "obscure" as long as "fallen man" stubbornly refuses to contemplate it in the light of reason, and above all, in the light of Faith. To-day a good many of us blissfully choose to ignore the problem, and do a great deal of rationalizing with our sympathetic heart attuned to the needs of "modern man," a new "tertium genus hominum," that for all we seem to know it is just a higher loving animal!"

thru means which are as effective and relatively unexpensive as no other known to us today, viz., the i.u.d. and the pill.

Furthermore, and as an effect of the Bishop's attitude referred to, or for some other reason, the Catholic sector of our population has taken an attitude which is not only conservative but of *sheer passivity*, bordering on "defeatism," or "who cares!"

There is no desire of being "apologetic, or controversial. I gladly take notice of the loyalty of our Bishops to the doctrine of the Church *the traditional doctrine she has been maintaining with "constant firmness"* But one can not feel equally happy about the second critical statement. But is it factual and true? Speaking at a seminar on "Youth's positive role in national development," held in Taal Vista Lodge, Tagaytay City, March 5-9, 1969, Mercedes Concepcion,³ one of the speakers, said in part: "The impact of limiting our population growth will not be felt until your children are born. No matter what we do now, we still have to live in the world of our own making for the next twenty years.

"If you ask, "What have the institutions done about the population problem?" In terms of the school, again, I can say "almost nothing." . . . If we look at the Church — at the Roman Catholic Church — I can only say, and in fact I can quote one member of the clergy who, in Cebu City, deplored the Church's *unwillingness* to open *rhythm clinics*, which under the recent encyclical is allowed. The priest felt that if *rhythm clinics* were operated in every province, from Batanes to Jolo, in an all-out drive, and if every single Catholic couple were to practice rhythm, the impact (although this method has a much lower effectivity rate when compared to *all* other modern methods) would still bring down the birth rate."⁴

I share the great concern of the distinguished scholar-demographer for appropriate action, without delay, in order to solve *gradually* the nation's serious population problem. It seems true what she says about *the school contribution*. But it sounds to me *amazingly surprising* to hear of the (Roman Catholic Church) *unwillingness* to open rhythm clinics

³ She is the Head of the Institute of Population and member of John XXIII and Paul VI "Commissione di studio sui problemi della popolazione, della famiglia, et della natalita" C c/r LOss. Rom., March 29-30, 1965.

⁴ "Youth's positive role in national development" pp. 37-38

which according to the recent encyclical is allowed. True, the *Humanae Vitae* says —" If then, there are serious motives to space out births, which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the church teaches that it is then licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions, for the use of marriage in the infecund periods only, and in this way to regulate birth without offending the moral principles which have been recalled earlier."⁵

Then she quotes approvingly "*one member of the (Catholic) clergy who in Cebu City, deplored the Church's unwillingness to open rhythm clinics.*" This is news to me, and perhaps to most of my catholic priests living and working in this sector of the Vineyard of the Lord. To the best of my knowledge the just quoted statement is groundless, and it is a matter of much regret it has received the publicity in no way deserves.

To set up "rhythm clinics" in every province, takes much money; to own or operate them efficiently necessitates more money. Each of the rhythm clinics call for at least one qualified part-time physician and subsidiary personnel, and last but not least, competent married counselors. Granted *that some* of these persons are willing to render service free, in some instances, how many bishops can afford to have the technical personnel, within reach, as well as the money, and then proceed to set up and operate one or more "rhythm clinics" in their ecclesiastical jurisdiction? In an statement issued by the Chairman, Episcopal Commission on Social Action, last July, we read this pertinent words: "Cognizant of their primary mission which is one of the supernatural order, our dioceses are still being burdened with the construction of churches, seminaries and schools. *It seems hardly known that several of our dioceses are in such state of need that they still continue to get annual subsidy from the Holy See. Several dioceses, too, not even ten years old, hardly subsist.*"⁶ We are told that Catholic Missions in the Philippines were granted during the 1968-1969 period a subsidy amounting to 2,687,200.00 pesos.

"The priest felt that *if* rhythm clinics were operated in every province, from Batanes to Jolo, in an all-out drive, and *if* every single

⁵ "H.V.", n. 16 pp. 13-14 (St. Paul Publications)

⁶ "Filipinas", July 26, 1969, p. 5, c. 4

Catholic couple, were to practice rhythm the impact... would still bring down the birth rate." A few months ago, another priest came out in the local press, suggesting "an all-out drive" with the "pill" as an effective and easy way of reaching the same goal! The fact is that the population problem is not as *simple* and its solution as *easy* as these priests choose to tell us. Let us do hard work, instead of indulging in bright dreams!

Where do rhythm clinics come in? Marital chastity has to be scrupulously observed. Marital rights can be exercised only in the light of duties to be fulfilled. This means not only the observance of the law of God, which is the law of man's nature, — the law of reality, i.e. the respect for the objective order established by the Creator; it means further that the right to beget children is qualified and conditioned by the sacred duty to educate them in accordance with postulates engraved in the very heart of men, and distinctly stated by the Church in *Can. 1113*: "Parents are bound by a most serious obligation to provide to the best of their power for the *religious* and *moral*, as well as for the *physical* and *civic education* of their children, and also to provide for their *temporal welfare*." It isn't *bearing* children that ought to be considered and pondered seriously by married couples, but rather *rearing* them, in the full sense of the word. To accept children "as they come," and leave their upbringing at the mercy of unpredictable circumstances is not human, much less Christian. Vatican II doctrine on "responsible parenthood" is briefly and clearly stated by Paul VI thus: "It is for the parents to decide, *with full knowledge of the matter*, on the number of their children taking into account their responsibilities towards God, themselves, the children they have brought into the world, and the community to which they belong."⁷ In this doctrinal context one can readily understand the "licitness of recourse to infecund periods" and the important role the "rhythm clinics" can play. "If then, there are serious motives to space births which derive from the physical or psychological conditions of husband and wife, or from external conditions, the Church teaches that it is licit to take into account the natural rhythms immanent in the generative functions" — but it is also true that only in the former case are they able to

⁷ "Populorum Progressio", par. 37

renounce the use of marriage in the fecund periods, when for just motives, procreation is not desirable, while making use of it during the agenesic period to manifest their affection and to safeguard their mutual fidelity. By so doing, they give proof of a truly and integrally honest love" (See the whole n. 16 of the "H.V.").

The knowledge we possess of the monthly agenesic periods in fertile women and the use one makes of this knowledge in "rhythm clinics" is placed first of all, as service of the best interests of the family of responsible parents, committed to the idea of "responsible parenthood" such as we have just outlined in the light of christian teaching, *consequently and secondarily it can help very effectively together with other measures towards bringing within control the population problem.* This knowledge is being misused" if made to serve primarily to control births, rejecting children, while sex pleasures are enjoyed freely, without restrain, by married couples!

Prof. M. Concepcion is of the belief that "the rhythm method has a much lower effectivity (in bringing down the birth rate) when compared to *all* other modern methods." She is entitled to her opinion, but I rather listen to gynecologists and general practitioners, many of whom think otherwise.

I honestly believe catholic physicians can make a substantial contribution to the welfare of the family and of the nation in close cooperation with other elements of the community, if provided with clear and reliable working knowledge of this so called "safe-period." It was with this objective in mind that I approached the assistant-Director of the "Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction" in UST, Dr. Bienvenido Angeles, and submitted to him the request for help in a field of knowledge where his competence is well known, and soon he obliged me with an answer, which I am pleased to offer readers of Boletin Eclesiastico, particularly parish priests, physicians in rural areas, social workers, etc. It is my fervent hope and prayer this information will serve the praise worthy objectives it is intended to serve.

BASIS: — Scientific discoveries:

1. Ovulation occurs in the great majority of women, once a month, within one menstrual cycle.

- a) In women who have "regular menstrual cycles with intervals of 27 to 32 days, ovulation occurs at about the middle of this period.
 - b) Women who have moderately prolonged cycles of 35-45 days intervals between menstrual periods ovulate a little later, i.e., 16 to 12 days before the onset of the next menstruation.
 - c) Women who have markedly irregular cycles have correspondingly irregular ovulations.
2. The released ovum "lives" only for a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 24 hours, very rarely 36 hours. This means that it can only be fertilized within that narrow period of time while it waits in the Fallopian tubes of the uterus.
 3. The spermatozoa, ejaculated into the genital tract of the woman, remains "alive" i.e., maintains their fertilizing capacity, in a great majority of cases, for 72 hours or three days, not infrequently to as long as 5 days, and very rarely up to 7 days.

OBJECTIVE OF THE DIFFERENT METHODS IN THE USE OF THE INFERTILE PERIOD:

1. Determine the ovulation time of each individual woman, every month.
2. Sexual intercourse must be limited to those days when fertilization will not be possible, namely:
 - a) at least 6 days before expected/actual ovulation.
 - b) at least 2-3 days after actual ovulation.

PROBLEMS IN THE USE OF THE RHYTHM METHOD:

I. Technical:

1. How to determine the exact date of ovulation.
 - a) In many cases, this is relatively easy and possible.
 - b) In many cases, this may be difficult, but with patience and persistence, this can be done.
2. To date, the occurrence of ovulation is detected by means of signs that are manifest after the ovum has been released from the ovary. There are some physical signs that may be noticed by the women

tending to predict the phenomenon. These could be relied upon after a time of observation and study of the pattern in each particular individual.

II. Behavioral:

1. Attitude of the husband, regarded as the key to the success of the practice of rhythm, because abstinence from marital relations is more of a strain, generally on the part of the man.
2. Motivation of the couple may be defective. If sound determination is evident in husband and wife, spurred by the love and respect of each for the other, many minor difficulties and even major problems will not constitute as obstacles to the practice of rhythm.

III. Psychological:

If the mind and the will of the husband and wife are not prepared to accept the change in the sexual pattern that they need to adopt, this could produce undue strain in their interrelations, which could also involve the whole family.

UTILIZATION OF THE FERTILE AND INFERTILE PERIODS:

Based on the method employed in the determination of the ovulation time, there are a few procedures currently being followed depending upon the degree of effectiveness desired by the practicing couple knowing their capabilities, weaknesses and needs.

It must be said that haphazard dealing with such an intricate, individual medical and para-medical personnel and other persons who undertake the task of advising the rhythm method without having obtained sufficient knowledge and training in the matter.

It must be said that haphazard dealing with such an intricate, individual and intimate problem is bound to give poor results. This gives the general impression that rhythm is not a reliable method. The fact is that many observations and studies have proven the effectiveness of the use of the infertile period quite comparable to the other current contraceptives being employed today. However, though it is not easy, there is nothing

wrong with the technique. It is the faulty administration, both on the part of the adviser and the user, whose understanding and/or motivation could be deficient, that cause the number of failures notoriously ascribed to the rhythm method.

Procedures:

I. Calculation of the possible periods of fertility, so that the couple could avoid having sexual relations during this time.

1. "Crude" method:

Labelled the 10-day method, it divides the menstrual cycle into three ten-day periods. The first is counted from the first day of menstruation (Day 1) and designated as "infertile." This is followed by the second ten days termed "fertile" and therefore abstention days. The third ten days precede the next menstruation and constitute the second "infertile" phase.

The simplicity of this way of advising has attracted a great many followers among busy medical and para-medical personnel and others who are not inclined to spend time nor effort in this regard. There have been many failures in this method.

A more rigid schedule had been adopted by some practitioners as a modification of the above rule of 10. This comes in the form of Fives, i.e., five days before and five days after menstruation in which the couple are advised to have marital relations, therefore entailing about three weeks of abstinence. This could be relatively effective following these two observations:

- a. The count of five days after menstruation should not be interpreted as starting from the last day of bleeding, but from day 1 (onset).
- b. The particular woman on whom this method is to be employed must never have had a menstrual cycle of less than 25 days in her menstrual history since her first menstruation.

2. "Formula" method:

This method has been well studied abroad with very effective results in a great number of couples who have used it.

- a. Obtain an accurate record of at least 6 successive menstrual cycles of the particular woman being advised. (12 would indeed increase the effectiveness)
- b. Count the number of days interval between each menstrual onset starting from the first day of bleeding, (Day 1) even if this occurs as mere spotting, up to the day preceding the next menstruation.
- c. Get the smallest and largest counts indicating the shortest and longest of the recorded menstrual cycles.
- d. Apply these numbers to the following formula:
shortest cycle minus 20
Longest cycle minus 10

The results obtained indicate the inclusive days of the cycle when a pregnancy can occur (fertile period) thus requiring complete abstinence from intercourse, even in the form of "withdrawal" or coitus interruptus.

It should be kept in mind that the counting should always be from Day 1.

Example: A record of 6 cycles gives the following data as menstrual interval days:

26 — 27 — 28 — 29 — 30 — 32

Shortest cycle — 26 minus 20 = 6

Longest cycle — 32 minus 10 = 22

Interpretation: Counting from Day 1: — There should be no sexual intercourse (again not even withdrawal) from Day 6 to Day 22 of each cycle. Therefore marital relations may be allowed from Day 1 to Day 5 and from Day 23 until the onset of the next menstruation.

It may be stated here, in addition, that there are no medical objections to sexual relations at the time when there is menstrual bleeding. Esthetic objections do exist.

II. The detection of ovulation in a particular woman and the use of the knowledge obtained for the adoption of rhythm as a means of avoiding conception.

1. Presumptive signs:

The items below are arranged from the more obvious and constant to those of the less obvious and not frequently observed phenomena. If they are correlated with more accurate methods to be described further on, they can constitute valuable and reliable signs in the practice of rhythm.

a) Mucus vaginal discharge.

This occurs in varying forms and on variable days preceding the release of the ovum from the ovary.

- a. 1 A thick, viscid, tenacious mucus discharge may precede ovulation by some three or four days. "Thick" as used above does not refer to amount.
- a. 2 A thin, watery, threadable discharge may precede ovulation by one or two days. Threadability is the property of the mucus to be drawn out or stretched between the fingers.

When constantly present and well-observed in every instance in the woman, then these varying mucus discharges may be applied in the practice of rhythm in the following manner, with "relative" effectiveness:

There must be no sexual relations from the time the thick discharge appears until after 10 days, counting from the day of its appearance.

Precautions: — A physical examination should eliminate any gynecological conditions that could obscure and confuse the otherwise normal processes.

— The occurrence of only a thin, watery discharge (i.e., without a previous thick discharge) necessitates abstinence throughout the whole period starting from the end of the mens-

trual bleeding up to and including six days from the time the watery discharge has been observed.

These calculations have been premised on the studies conducted by several investigators who verified the relationship between the discharges and the occurrence of ovulation.

Thus: — thick mucus discharge— 4 days before ovulation.
 thin mucus discharge— 2 days before ovulation
 "Life of the ovum — 1 day after ovulation
 prescribed safe margin— 3 days after ovulation

Total 10 days, after which it
 may be considered relatively safe to resume sexual
 relations.

This method remains to be verified with more studies and is therefore not conclusive.

b) Softness of the cervix

If the woman would consent to a procedure involving a self-examination, she, or her husband, could be taught and trained to feel, with the fingers, that part of the cervix projecting into the upper end of the vaginal canal softens at the time of ovulation in comparison to other times — somewhat similar to the soft tip of the lips and relatively hard tip of the nose, correspondingly.

It follows that there should be no intercourse from the period of menstruation until after three days of feeling the softness of cervix, unless the foregoing calculations are concomitantly used. Again, this method remains to be verified with more conclusive studies.

- c) Pain. Some keenly observant women feel a sharp sudden twitch or heaviness dragging sensations on either right or left lower abdominal (iliac hypogastric) more regions at the time of ovulation. If these are confirmed by more exact methods of determining, the occurrence of ovulation, and if constant, then this sign may be employed in the use of Rhythm —

again by abstaining from intercourse until the pain appears and resuming 2-3 days after its occurrence.

In the same manner, this has to be verified and applied as in the previous items.

- d) Slight bleeding or spotting of blood at about the middle of the mens trual cycle may also signify the occurance of ovulation, though this sign is the least constant.

These presumptive signs have been enumerated and described to complete the information on this subject. They are not usually recommended for practical use specially on a "do-it-yourself" basis, unless correlated with more exact methods or if the couple are not so particular whether conception occurs or not and are willing to subject or lend themselves to a scientific study to accumulate data and thus provide eventual reliability in their use. Further, before depending on these methods, it is important to seek the help of a trained physician, nurse or layman who has done previous study, training and experience in this matter.

2. Positive signs of ovulation and their application.

a) Body Temperature changes.

Extensive, thorough and fully verified world-wide studies have established the consistent finding that there are definite alterations of body temperature in each individual woman during her menstrual and ovulatory cycles.

A "basal" or low temperature is registered during the menstrual and pre-ovulatory stages of the cycle. A shift to a higher level of temperature occurs at the time of ovulation remaining at this level until the day of onset of the next menstrual period.

The rise constitutes at least 0.2° as much as 0.6° in the Centigrade scale and from 0.5° to 0.10° in the Fahrenheit scale.

In a great majority of women, this rise of temperature is therefore rather easily noted and quite conclusive. In others, the picture maybe obscured by a number of variations due to some

extraneous conditions. It is generally considered that the initial employment of the method necessitates the guidance of a trained person.

Nevertheless, the technique, correctly employed, constitutes a most reliable sign of actual ovulation and hence, the prudent regulation of sexual relations concomitant to the gathered and cumulative data provide a stable and effective means for the avoidance or regulation of conception.

Technique:

The woman's body temperature is taken *daily* in the first few months. Later, after she has acquired more experience and confidence in the method, this maybe reduced to the period in which ovulation is expected to occur.

- a) Although oral temperatures could suffice, preference is given to rectal temperatures because of less variability in the registration. In either case, the ordinary clinical thermometer is used corresponding to the preferred route, i.e., oral or rectal.
- b) Daily notations are made from the first or second day of menstruation through to the next period.
- c) The best time for taking the temperature is the usual awakening time in the morning (preferably at the same time each morning) when the body has had a sufficient period (at least three hours) of rested sleep, i.e., *before rising from bed*.
- d) Readings are best recorded in a graphing paper where the "ovulatory" rise can be easily observed.

Application and expected effectiveness.

- a. If sexual relations are limited to the *post-ovulatory period* (high level temperatures) a non-pregnancy rate 96 to 98% may be expected.
- b. The conjugal act may not be started until after having observed at least THREE "high" temperatures on THREE successive days. This high level marks the infertile period which continues up to the onset of the next menstruation. Hence, the couple can freely "use" these days without hesitation.

CAUTION — If the temperature drops to the previous basal level after 1 or 2 (false) rises, these are to be disregarded and counting only resumed and maintained on the succeeding high registers for three successive days.

- c. If the couple desires to make use of the pre-ovulatory phase, they should limit themselves to the menstrual and immediate few post-menstrual days, using the previously stated formula of calculating the first day of the infertile period by subtracting 20 from the shortest cycle.

The use of this pre-ovulatory phase increases slightly the risk of pregnancy, bringing down the effectiveness. This is due to the occurrence of early ovulation not previously taken into account in the menstrual history of the particular woman involved, as stated previously.

Problems:

There are indeed a number of variations in the overall picture which at the initial experience of the couple may be obscuring and confusing. It is advised therefore that they seek the services of a person, who has had previous good and reliable training and experience in the use of the method.

Such problems as grossly irregular temperatures, absence of a definite rise, or very slight difference in the temperature recordings or a very gradual or "step-ladder" rise, and others may be interpreted by these experienced persons.

Women who have just delivered should be advised to seek a knowledgeable person for instructions.

"CONTROLLED RHYTHM" is the name given to a method recently adopted by Family Planning Specialists following an extensive study of the technique in the past few years. This method is resorted to when the woman exhibits periods of non-ovulation as shown by her temperature readings, causing undue strain on the couple brought on by the prolonged abstinence from sexual relations.

In such case, the woman may be put on a 10-day regimen of progesterone pills to be started on Day 18 following absence of a tem-

perature rise indicating a delayed or anovulatory cycle. After completion of the 10 days of pill taking, the woman will experience the usual "withdrawal bleeding".

In such a procedure, sexual relations may be resumed only after three days of taking the pill, with the assurance that this has established its contraceptive effect of suppressing an otherwise delayed ovulation. This is therefore a means of trying to regularize or induce the regular pattern of ovulation. Thus, if the method is followed for three successive months, it is hoped that the ovulatory pattern will be restored and rhythm followed with the usual temperature method.

A similar procedure may be followed in women who had not been menstruating after delivery. Furthermore, in those women who have overlong menstrual cycles of 40 or more days interval.

Again, it would not be amiss to point out that this needs the guidance of experienced personnel.

b) Other methods of detecting ovulation.

It is only for the sake of completion and information that these are being enumerated, because the techniques involve laboratory procedures needing the services of trained personnel for satisfactory and reliable administration and interpretation.

1. "Ferning" — this is the appearance of a fern-leaf pattern when a small amount of cervical mucus is smeared on a glass slide and allowed to dry. This occurs on the time of ovulation. Otherwise, no definite pattern is formed during the non-ovulatory phases of the menstrual cycle.
2. Chloride Test — a pharmaceutical firm in the United States has marketed a product in a box called the ESTRINDEX KIT, containing a number of materials for the purposes of taking samples of cervical mucus and testing for the presence of chloride by rubbing the swabbed mucus on sensitive paper. Positive manifestations indicate the time of approaching ovulation. It is a simple procedure that can be done easily by any ordinary woman. To all

indications, following a long period of testing, the method is reliable and therefore quite effective. The only drawback is its unavailability in the local market, and even if found occasionally, the prices would be quite high.

3. Excretion of hormones — There are certain substances identifiable by laboratory procedures in the urine of the woman at the time of ovulation. The means of extracting them from the urine and analyzing them entails a long and complicated process.
4. Microscopic examination of cellular material from the vagina, cervix, and uterus giving information as to what is the stage of the menstrual or ovulatory cycle at the time of examination. Again this needs expert attention.
5. Finally, there are at present many studies being conducted not only for a more simple and practical way of detecting ovulation but hopefully for a way of pre-determining ovulation. Once these experiments are verified and perfected, the practice of rhythm would be greatly enhanced, simplified and made 100% effective.

Still, all things being considered, the main problem of the practice of rhythm is focused on the attitudes, motivations and spirit of the husband and wife in addition to mental capabilities. To some it could constitute a most difficult way of preventing or regulating birth because of the aspect of non-indulgence. To others it would be most easy, inspiring and rejuvenating it to the family and community where they belong.

BENEFICIAL EFFECTS:

1. Upliftment of man's dignity and restoration of man's place and role in creation. This may be achieved because the method entails moderation — control of self — which is a step forward in his evolution to the original state assigned to him by the Creator. Voluntary control of this strong urge could enable him to elicit the same with regards other degrading acts.

The claim that frustration of these impulses leads to neurosis is mainly unfounded. Regulation of the instinct by *conscious* control of *reason* is *suppression* which the mind of man distinguishes

as necessary, beneficial and is thus not harmful to him. If such control is subconscious and permanent, this is *repression* which is the cause of neurosis.

2. Enhancement of marital relationships.

- a) Since the moderation and self control implies consideration, respect and regard on one for the other, the appreciation manifested by each of the partners would be a reward shown in multifarious endearing ways.
- b) Non-indulgence in the sexual act for brief periods of time increases the value of the act, moving it from the level of the biological instinct to the quintessence of a voluntary human act. The fully mature man is one who has learned to fuse the sexual impulse with love. Pure physical gratification is the mark of a sexually subnormal or immature individual.
- c) The ever-increasing love between the partners in marriage creates a permanent bond. For love is a cognitive act which makes the lover grasp the innermost core of the personality of the loved one. In its expression in the sexual act, the lovers deeply probe into the mystery of each other's soul, enriching and invigorating one and the other.

Bienvenido Angeles, M.D.
Assistant Director
Institute for the Study of
Human Reproduction, UST.

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A LETTER TO A YOUNG PRIEST ON

PRIESTLY CELIBACY

Dear Juaning,

Your letter came to me as a surprise! It has been a long time since I heard from you. While this was my reaction to your writing, the content of the same was not really unexpected: the problem of priestly celibacy is really upon us. Being a young priest as you are, it is not really surprising that this problem would affect you more intimately, more profoundly.

The great bulk of articles, books, etc. being published nowadays against the centuries-old tradition of the Latin Church about priestly celibacy reminds me of an anecdote. It is said that many years ago, one of the statues which decorate the facade and the colonnade of Saint Peter's fell. The press spread the news with great excitement, but no one took notice of the other numerous statues which remained standing to decorate such a sublime work of art. On that occasion, Cardinal Maffi, speaking of the unfortunate fall of some priest, about whom the press created much scandal, invited all to admire the marvelous masterpieces which enriched the mystical edifice of the Church through the celibacy which had been lived by so many priests.

This, I believe, is the complete, down-to-earth picture of the current priestly celibacy question. The press always hungry for the sensational, pick on some, isolated rotten cases, completely neglecting to invite our attention to the consideration of the innumerable phalanx of dedicated, chaste priests and religious. But what can we really do about this? They have to think in terms of graphic rise of subscription.

Do not think that I intended to end up this letter with this remark. It will not be fair to write too short an answer to a long letter of yours. I have noticed that your letter was written with anguish, doubts, confusion and anxiety.

What I intend to do here is to answer the most current reasons against priestly celibacy. But before I proceed answering them, I believe it is expedient to lay down some basic principles regarding priestly celibacy. So brace yourself up; this will be a long letter.

Basic Principles

1. *Celibacy, while it is not required by the nature of the priesthood itself, has, for many reasons, an intimately fitting relation to it.*

It is true that priesthood and celibacy are not essentially linked, by their own inner nature. This is obvious enough in the law in force in the Oriental Church. But the great mysteries, forces, joys and values which take on significance and are fulfilled in it, and which were revealed by Christ, discovered by the apostles and all those who like them, attracted by the inspiring heroism of Christ, gave up everything to follow Him, brought it about that celibacy, offered by the Master as a charism of the Father for those who understand the mystery, was gradually recommended to priest, then practised by many priests, in the course of the centuries, as a tribute to Christ's virginal flesh, and finally imposed by law in the Latin Church upon all those promoted to the Sacred Orders.

Accordingly it is a wrong approach to view priestly celibacy as a purely juridical of the Church. Nor would it be a valid method to measure it in purely human dimension. Priestly celibacy is a mystery that participates in the mystery of Christ and of His Priesthood; it is in close harmony with priesthood.

2. *There are four fundamental reasons for the celibacy:*

a) *Celibacy is the symbol of the virgin Christ:* the Lord, a virgin, born of a Virgin, surrounded himself with chaste men, who although married one day, when the time came to commit themselves to the Kingdom, left everything to live as the Lord lived. He preferred virginal freedom and consecration in his ministers. The priest's picture is definitively one of an undivided heart, body and spirit, free to devote himself entirely to the mission conferred on him, fascinated and almost obsessed by the beauty of this mission.

b) Celibacy is an anticipated presence, a living and a personal sign of the future world, in which not only priest, but all the children of the Resurrection will not marry.

c) It is also a splendid testimony of a love that does not abolish or kill human love, but transfers it, making it divine to the adorable Person of Christ, and, in him, to all men, especially the most indigent, enriching the capacity and universality of our love.

d) Celibacy is again a testimony of the ineffable joy that the Lord offers those whom He has chosen as close friends and to whom He has entrusted the mystery of the transmission of His divine life and of the salvation of men. This creative joy is concentrated in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, when the priest enacts the Paschal Mystery of the Lord, making present His Body and His Blood, offered as a victim of thanksgiving and given as food and drink of eternity.

3. For these reasons the legislation of celibacy for those who are destined to the priesthood in the Latin Church is approved and confirmed once again.

4. The Church guards celibacy as priceless treasure and a charism or gift of the Lord conferred for the whole people and for the common good. It is accepted in the Church to be higher than the married state.

5. The way of celibacy is a difficult one. The Lord did not tell us that the path of celibacy would be an easy one. On the contrary, since we are caught up in the Paschal Mystery, our priestly spirituality conforms us to Christ crucified. There remains in our flesh, wounded by sin, the pernicious tendency recalled by St. Paul, the rebellion of the flesh. However, although granting this difficulty, it is certainly not impossible with grace. For this reason it calls for a propitious atmosphere on the part of the priest.

You will excuse me for being carried away; it is just that talking about celibacy in its profound theological context, one cannot help but be romantic.

But in spite of all these, there are people bent on tearing down the theology of celibacy. You yourself mentioned some of them in your letter.

For instance — this is their favorite reason — it is said that any renunciation of marriage implies some sort of *physical or psychical* abnormality in the person. The *Rev. Marc Oraison*, a psychoanalyst of the Freudian school and later a priest, gives lie to this assertion in his book *Le celibat*, Paris, 1966. He says that the renunciation of matrimony, just as entering into it, is a genuine possibility which nature rightly understood offers. Human sexuality is not something fixed; it is a task, which admits, at least for a Christian and a priest, a possible answer of renunciation for the sake of something more grandiose and sublime. The act of renouncing implies a decision, and this last is undoubtedly an exercise of human liberty, the rock-bottom of human personality.

Some have argued that marriage and family commitments would provide the priest with an *easier way of knowing the world*. Partly this might be true. Many of us have little or no knowledge of the concrete realities of family life. Most of our seminary days were spent in a closed environment, far from the realities of the everyday world.

Long experience however, has shown that consecrated celibates can understand the family very well and serve it effectively. To transcribe verbatim the words of *Folliet* — “to how many men have I, a poor celibate had to explain the psychology of women in general and of their wives in particular? How many parents have I had to help understand their children, because they felt they could do nothing with them?” I doubt very much whether married priests would better understand the family and families by the mere fact that they are married. Remember that their experience would have to be necessarily limited.

Most of these people who favor the abolition of celibacy tend to paint marriage life with rainbow colors, some sort of an unending heavenly bliss. If I were to meet this kind of people I would tell them to look at the reality of the family straight in the eye. That reality is more often grey than rosy.

There is the problem of bearing the yoke together in unity, of fidelity. What assurance do we have from a fully mature man who fails to keep his vow of celibacy to be constant in keeping his marriage vow?

Then there is the problem of poverty. We priests tend to overlook this angle, being cared for too well from the very day we entered the seminary up to this very moment. Now we have only to feed ourselves — and how hard it is to indulge in some of our little vices!

The grinding poverty of a married priest's family will tempt him to accept a "better" charge, even though, measured by the standard of service, his present parish could be the better one. And who can blame him? What would follow from this is the disastrous effect in the ministry of the Church.

Closely related to this problem will be the difficulty of staffing the outposts of the church. There is certainly a limit to the sacrifice that can reasonably be asked of a wife and children. A Protestant minister wrote how the Christian nobility of their ladies has often been pushed to the breaking point, and sometimes beyond it, by the conditions under which they and their young children have had to live. Does the Church have the right to ask this of a family man? But if almost all priests are family men, as they are in most Protestant denominations, whom else is the Church to send?

In relation to the priest's ministry, there is a great probability that his family would be an obstacle to the full exercise of his ministry. The burdens and anxieties of ministering to the people of God are, God knows, heavy enough, and a married priest who takes them seriously will frequently find that "his interests are divided": either he neglects his family for the sake of the ministry or vice versa, and both solutions are bad.

And supposing the priest has a *jealous wife*? What troubles await him after having a long spiritual direction with a pretty young thing! You can expect also that the parishioners, especially the fairer sex will be inhibited in their candor by the mere fact their parish priest has a jealous wife. And what will happen to the sacrosanct *seal of confession*? It is not impossible to keep it sacrosanct really, but it will be difficult to protect it against such a woman.

And the parish priest's children? You can't always be sure that inspite of what you are, your children might come out, for hundreds of reasons, juvenile delinquents. How can you preach from the pulpit,

castigating the parents for their negligence in the parental duties? You won't dare. But what about your sacred duties to call their attention? I wish they can tell me how.

Now, do not be in a hurry. I know that you mentioned of another theory, the so-called *two-tier clergy*, namely, a married clergy side by side with celibate. This is actually a more concrete proposition flowing from the so-called *optional celibacy*. The Oriental churches have institutionalized this duality by having a married secular clergy and a regular clergy which is celibate and from which bishops are chosen. This might not be a very bad idea. Now I'll have a chance to be a bishop! But joking aside, I believe that this will only serve to render the secular clergy's ministry ineffective. The diocesan clergy would very likely suffer by slowly losing its prestige among the faithful. They will be comparing you with us religious, and they will most naturally choose us. The mere fact that we do not have any family, they will see that we are more at their disposition than you are. We would appear purer, more austere. Would you want that?

Supposing you say that the optional celibacy is admitted, still I see analogous problems. In the first place, you must take into consideration that in this scheme, there will necessarily be division among the diocesan clergy. Then how will you avoid rivalries among yourselves and among the faithful? Among yourselves: the married priests will naturally have to be provided with better parishes because they have more mouths to feed. The celibates will naturally complain. Some faithful will prefer the celibates, others will go to the married priests. Comparisons will be inevitable. I do not have to tell you who will normally come out the winner.

Lots of things can still be included here, but let us close up here. Only one last thing more. The case for or against clerical celibacy should not be based ultimately on any *prudential consideration* but on the *ascetical* dimension. In a culture which seems to have made sex into a sacrament, a Church in which matrimony is a sacrament must at the same time give institutional expression to the biblical truth that "he who marries his bethrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do better" (I Cor. 7:38). This must remain part of our

Christian understanding of life, despite the painful defects which we see in those who one day vowed to follow this truth.

I do not know whether I had been of some help to you in this question. Let us pray to God that we who had accepted freely the tremendous dignity of priesthood would not fail to follow from the fact of dissociating from it what we freely agreed to unite with it, namely, the total offering of ourselves to Christ "for the sake of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:12).

Fraternally yours,

Fr. Leonardo Z. Legaspi O.P.

PAGING UST PRIEST ALUMNI

HOME COMING

November 24-25, 1969

Guest Lecturer: REV. FR. HERMAN GRAF, S.V.D.

"THE NEW ORDO MISSAE"

Place — UST Central Seminary

The New Prophetic Movement and The New Charismatic Church

(AGGIORNAMENTO IN OFF-BEAT STYLE)

Introduction, Translation and Epilogue

by

Fr. Manuel Piñon, O.P.

INTRODUCTORY RETROSPECTION

"THE SHOES OF THE FISHERMAN" —

It was the first traitor who first said: "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?", signalling the hour of betrayal. The recent movie production, "Shoes of the Fisherman" portrays the Red take-over of the Papacy and the dissolution of the Church by playing the same tune of helping the poor. This is significantly preceded by a display of stubborn opposition, in the person of a clergyman, to the supernatural Christian dogmas, through the defense of modern naturalism and rationalism in the form of Teilhardism. The portrayal of the machiavellic scheme in film is highly effective to ward away suspicion and to infuse groundless assurance that the whole matter is merely fictitious and is not actually carried out.

THE ENEMY'S LONG-RANGE PLAN. —

It is not for man to see the future. But we who have lived already some time in this planet can look back at the past and from the light of subsequent events can size up better the relevance of past events.

In the summer of 1953 tourists, as usual, poured into Spain and the writer was among them. As the summer progressed, stories circulated to the effect that the Spanish police had been successful in intercepting some foreign impostors who had passed around as priests and seminarians. It was easier for them to travel through Catholic Spain under that guise, but tell-tale slips had given them away.* Under police grilling several of them came out with the following startling revelation.

"At the end of World War II, during which Soviet Russia ran the risk of defeat, the Red Bosses had decided that it was not expedient to carry on the fight against the Catholic Church from the outside in an open manner. The past confrontation had not been very successful. Experience had shown that the main sources of resistance were the clergy and hierarchy, which were the accepted leaders of the Catholic Church, Christian dogmas, and the Christian ideology. From thence onwards, the destruction of the Church was to be done from the inside, on an infiltration basis.

At the end of the War, the Reds became masters of half of Europe and many Seminaries had been depopulated. The master plan was to people the Seminaries with their recruits. In fifteen years time, they will become parish priests and bishops, theologians and Seminary professors. Then the strongholds of Catholic opposition will unobtrusively, but effectively be taken over from the inside and by a natural process. We are from those recruits."

The master plan was frightful. It could easily be implemented and when carried through, the results would spell tragedy. Their men would be our Church leaders; their spokesmen, our theologians; their views our new insights; their doctrines, our re-thought theology; their ideology, our new progressive Christianity. There would be confusion and uncertainty in the Catholic ranks. And defections that should ensue would only work towards demoralization and shame in the Church.

Under the guise of progressiveness and scientificness, a new Theology could be proposed that should be anthropocentric and anthropological. A new Christianity, that should be "less mythical and less dogmatic" but more socially aware and involved, would be more appealing. And under the ideology of social commitment, Marxism could be wed with the "new" Christianity.

THE COUNCIL. —

Through Vatican Council II, Pope John XXIII had wanted to "open a window and let some fresh air into the Church." However, other elements saw in this opening an opportunity to penetrate into

(a) In one instance an impostor priest was asked how the hymn of *Tertia* started. He did not know; he had never recited the *breviary*. In another instance, an impostor bishop failed to give the episcopal blessing the way other bishops did at the end of the Mass. The writer himself was also booked by the police at Badajoz on suspicions of being an impostor. He was wearing the clerical suit which, at that time only foreigners wore. After proper verification, the police commissar said: "Excuse us. You are a foreigner in clerical attire; we thought you were a spy."

Conf. the deployment of Msgr. Kiril in "Shoes of the Fisherman."

the brain centres of the Church. The delegation from the Northern countries of Europe, living with Protestant Majorities, played the tune of Ecumenism, of friendly brotherliness, towards the separated brethren, in order therewith to earn their sympathy. "But why restrict it to our separated brethren?" asked some quarters. It should also be extended to all men. They should be taken as they are, with friendliness.

"Dialogue" was thereupon played up as the modern and necessary formula to erase misunderstandings, to open up friendliness and solve problems. But dialogue can do well on the professional and scientific levels, wherein the exchange of ideas are carried in an impassioned and objective manner, not on every level. To raise dialogue into a master formula for progress smacks of Hegelian dialectics which is the philosophical substratum of the Dialectical Materialism of Marxism. Nonetheless, the progressive elements insisted that the Church should dialogue with the modern world, with modern men. In order to do so, She must be ready to admit Her mistakes, and to ask pardon for Her mistakes in the past.

The Church did ask pardon in the Council for Her past mistakes through the organ of the Magisterium. The interested elements had their wish at last. The Church had asked pardon for Her past mistakes. That means that the Church can commit mistakes. In that manner, the sins and mistakes of some of the Church's misguided children in the past were imputed on the Church itself. But, if the Church could commit mistakes in the past, who can be sure that Her dogmatic and moral heritage from the past is altogether free from error? Infallibility, as such, is now something superated, unacceptable to modern man, a hindrance to progress and brotherly understanding.

AGGIORNAMENTO. —

Aggiornamento means updating. The term was officially circularized as expressing Pope John's idea for the celebration of the Council. The catch-word struck like wildfire. The Council itself, buzzed with aggiornamento undertone. We have to update the Church, ourselves, and our ideas. The Church Herself, recognized the need of updating Herself, to adjust Herself to the modern world, and to modern men. Updating means change. There must be changes. The word Aggiornamento, fired imaginations and expectations; it roused the lust for change; and the door was open for changes.

Of a sudden, everything old, traditional, lost its value. But the concept and limitations of the updating and adaptation processes were ill-defined. No necessary discrimination was laid down. What are we to change? Everything and anything that needs change! But, gold is gold, and diamond is diamond, even when they are old. So also are the time-tested truths and values. We are not to throw them away as useless just because they are old things of the past. That criterion is of uncertain value. And who are the "modern men" and the "modern world" we are to adjust the church too? Are they the modern Catholics? Apparently not.

There were elements who would push the ill-defined premises to their last conclusions. The Church should be adjusted to secular men and secular society. It should do away with the wall of distinction, with every distinction. What should be done, is not to "sacralize the world, but to desacralize religion and the Church." All of a sudden, the secular world was amused at seeing nuns turn to the streets with shorted skirts; but the secular world was not edified. The world was not converted; but many were converted to the world. All of a sudden, without much ado, secularism became an ideal, it became a value. It was forgotten that Christ did not compromise, but died in defense of the truth. It was forgotten that Christianity did not convert the world by adjusting Itself to the world, but by adjusting the pagan world to Itself.

Many "Theologians" worked fast in adjusting the dogmas of the Church to the modern mind. "Dogmas must be demythified, desupernaturalized." They must be made acceptable to the matured scientific mind; they must be given natural explanations. Those that do not fit into natural explanations should be left out in the realm of myths. Unobtrusively, in a "cloak and dagger" manner, supernaturalism, which is the essence of Christianity had been stabbed. The distinction between the supernatural from the natural was felled. The conclusion is not far to fetch: If Christianity has had its share of myths as pagan religions, it is as worthless as the others.

All of a sudden, the seculars were right and the Church was wrong. It was forgotten that the Apostle Paul christianized the men of his time by preaching the scandal and folly of the Cross (1 Cor 1, 23.) without trying to water down its irrelevance to the wise men of the world. The most recent call of the progressivistic movement is for an "irreligious religion and an atheistic Christianity", as one that suits best the secularized world. That was to be expected because true religion and true Christianity have never been relevant to the secularized atheistic world. Through the binoculars of secularism, atheists loomed with heroic proportions before the eyes of the "renewed and modern Christians". They are the men who can face the problems of life and work for the betterment of their fellowmen without relying on a God-support.

COMMITMENT. —

The fever of *aggiornamento* also suddenly disclosed to many the "irrelevance" of the Church in modern times, so they claim. In their view, the Church means nothing to modern men, and to the great masses of workers, students, and professionals. The reason is, they say, that the make-up of the Church is irrelevant: Her dogmas, Her structures, parochial and diocesan organizations, Her Theology, Her liturgy. In order to appeal to men and to mean something to them, the Church must leave behind her smug attitude, Her load of irrelevancies and really work with men and for men.

In order to be truly Christ-like, the Church, they say, must be for the poor and of the poor.* She must engage in the upliftment of the downtrodden and do away with all the ostentations of wealth and power. The renewed Church and postconciliar Christianity must really be concerned with the poor. Unfortunately, outspoken voices claim, the Institutional Church is so busy keeping up with Her institutional organization, that She does not show enough concern for the poor. In particular, the hierarchy, aligned with the administration of wealth, is sluggish in instituting the needed social reforms. It is completely irrelevant, a hindrance to social reforms, hence something superated. It should be confronted and denounced. It has become necessary to act independently and even to break away from the institutional Church and the hierarchy, in order to be truly Christian, nowadays.

The New Church, genuine Christianity cannot be an institution with its heavy burden of irrelevance. It must be concerned with men and with their problems, not with dogmas and moral principles, much less with the cult of institutionalism. In this light, the Magisterium is another hindrance, and therefore something superseded. The New Church is made up of dynamic groups of committed men, suffused with the Holy Spirit and acting from His charisms for the upliftment of their fellowmen. The New Church is essentially a charismatic Church. In it, laymen are to play a prominent role. They are the recipients of the charisms of the Holy Spirit and of the renewed post-conciliar Christian vitality. They know the problems of the world better and have attained their maturity. Hence, the Council itself, has assigned to them a greater role in the postconciliar Church.

This means that the postconciliar laymen have outgrown their infantilistic subservience to the hierarchy and are to lead in post-conciliar apostolate. They are to show the way in matters of social commitment and reforms. They have their own value and, therefore, their own initiative, their own role and action in the renewal of the Church.

CHRISTIAN ACTIVIST GROUPS. —

Such is the rationale that has given birth to the new phenomenon of Christian Activist and Social Action Groups. The youthful individual members may not be fully aware of it. They may have been drawn into the movement by the enthusiasm of their groups, or by

* Once they get you to admit that the Church is the Church of the poor, they immediately lash at the Church saying, "the Church has betrayed her mission or is not the true Church of Christ, because she has done 'little' for the poor."

To admit that the Church is the Church of the poor, without qualification, is to admit that it is a "class" Church and, therefore, not universal or catholic. The Church is of the poor, but of the poor "in spirit."

Christ did not serve only the poor, nor did He feed them everyday. He had as friends Nicodemus, Zacheus, Lazarus and Mary, who were not poor. To Judas, who feigned scandal at Mary's seemingly "wasteful act" saying, "Why was not this ointment sold for 300 pence and given to the poor?", Christ answered: "The poor you have always with you..."

the elation that public demonstrations and confrontations with Church dignitaries impart. But it is the rationale of their master leaders and of the activist movement itself and of its anti-hierarchical demonstrations.

Parting from the assumption that the Church should be of this world and for this world because She is for the men of this world, they see the cross-section of the Church and her essential structure and components loaded with irrelevance. They fail to grasp that if their criterion were valid, then the Church would have been irrelevant from the moment Christ founded it, because it was "not of this world". (Conf. John 18, 36; 15, 19.) Christ Himself would have been an irrelevant Master-leader because He had come to "save sinners", not precisely to uplift the poor (Matt. 9, 13; Mark 2, 17; Luke 5, 32.). They fail to sense that the norm they use in order to evaluate the relevance of the Church is taken from a purely secularistic basis.

On such unchristian basis, they want to foist on us the image of a "New" Church and Christianity; and their own image as the enlightened postconciliar christians. It is a kind of Christianity that is only so from their choice of the word, but it is devoid of the Christian substance.

THE ENEMY WITHIN. —

It is far from us to cast any aspersion on these new groups as enemies of the Church. It may be the honest persuasion and considered opinion of their individual members that they are the concerned and enlightened Christians, impatient at the delay of the hierarchy in instituting postconciliar reforms, as they understand matters. Nevertheless, there is a dark masterhand working behind the manipulation of the legitimate aspirations embodied in the Council, to the effect of sowing confusion, of orienting restive postconciliar thinking of Catholics towards secularism and the desupernaturalization of Christianity with the aim in view of selling out Marxism as an acceptable thing under the wraps of progressiveness and commitment.

In its plans "dialogue" should be used to force a confrontation with the hierarchy and the Magisterium. The concept of Lay participation in the Apostolate should be a means for dictating the "reform" of the Church it wants. The ideal of *aggiornamento* should be a premise to undervalue the structures and traditional elements of the Church; the principle of social commitment, a leverage for secularization. It has made use of the Council itself in order to clobber the Church and Her dogmas; it has denounced the Council itself as superseded and as having left the work half-done. It has cleverly manipulated the concepts of religious freedom, and freedom of conscience to promote defiance and disobedience to the Magisterium and Papal authority. In its plan, confrontation with the hierarchy is only the first stage for its public downgrading and final overthrow. Charges adduced are mere occasions for the attacks.

There is a revolution within the Church, agitated by the enemy. The enemy is within and operating within our quarters. It is elusive, but nonetheless, it is there. Its agents cannot be visually detected. They cannot be distinguished from our own men. Some of them may even be its couriers without their knowing it. They may even be its exponents from their persuasion that their role is a new Theology and a New Christianity to propose. But the enemy's work of undermining the Church goes on through shut-in lectures and clandestine seminars of postconciliar renewals, wherein under the excuse of "renewal", the Church dogmas and the Magisterium are attacked before an audience that is selected and invited for its docility and unpreparedness to put up a resistance but enjoying capacity to influence the youth.

In the following Chapters we provide the reader a brief report on the "Movement" which of late has wrought much devastation to the Church in many countries. The report has been culled and translated from a lengthier one compiled by the Catholic Action of Spain out of the reports turned in, in the manner and style of data or journalistic releases, without any attempt at evaluation, and given by professionals of diverse occupations and backgrounds.^b The report is sketchy, but sufficient to acquaint the reader with the main features, the ideology and methods of action of the movement and of its groups. Our fellow Catholics should not only be alerted of the danger, but also given the means to identify the activists and the organs of action of the Movement. Catholics must be made cognizant of the ideology and tactics of the Movement so that they may not be misled by the Movement, and so that harm to our Faith and to the Church may be minimized, if not forestalled.

This is not the place for making an apology of the hierarchy. Perhaps, many of its members have already minds that are as wilted as their bodies. Many of them may not know other methods other than the authoritarian or the paternalistic ones. But when certain activist groups exploit just and reasonable charges to carry out clandestine and devious purposes, then we, Catholics, have reason for concern, because they are using very effective and respectable means of leverage.

The enemy has already left the Church in shambles in many countries, even in Spain. It has already started to act here in the Philippines. Its master-leaders and couriers are within our ranks.

THE NEW PROPHETISM: FOREWORD

This work does not aim to present an exhaustive discussion of the "Prophetic Ideology", nor to offer a theological treatise or a doctrinal evaluation of the same. The aim is to present a reality by way of summary report of ideas and events that are well within

(b) NUEVO PROFETISMO? Corriente y grupos proféticos, 2nd. ed, Madrid, 1969. p. 5. Translation done with permission.

the reach of anyone, and to extend a little help to anyone who should wish to make a deeper analysis and a more thorough study. It is outside the scope of this work to single out particular groups or persons.

Bearing the aforesaid limitations in mind, this work has been the result of the collaboration of individuals having altogether different backgrounds. We believe that all their contributions can serve to reveal the milieu in which we are living and to which we are exposed at present.

A period like the present which affords to us wonderful opportunities for renewal demands from everyone a state of alertness, of searching and of probing. It demands effort at keeping up the true spirit. In this regard, the calm examination of the problems brought up within the Church can help us face a reality from which we often shirk or which eludes our grasp owing to its complexity. Acquaintance with these problems can also move us to a greater commitment of trust and love for the Church, which is the path of genuine prophetism.

This work covers the main features of the "prophetic movement" which carries a striking resemblance to the manner of thinking of the "Theologians of the Death of God." Then it incorporates a reference of recent declarations of the Pope which can help to better size up the problem and to adopt the proper posture towards it.

Our last word is an expression of gratitude to all those who have contributed to this work. It is our persuasion that they have rendered an excellent service to the Church. This alone would already deserve our sincerest appreciation.

I. THE NEW MOVEMENT

THE SMALL GROUPS —

As we scan our eyes on the panorama of the present day Lay Apostolate we come across the following phenomena: the emergence and proliferation of small independent groups detached from any particular apostolic organization¹.

This development may be the outcome, among other causes, of the natural yearning of modern man to form part of small associations wherein his personality may be acknowledged and reckoned in

¹ Francois Houtart: I.C.I., n. 303, p. 6.

"It is necessary to detect, as a recent and accelerating phenomenon, the emergence of small groups of laymen, which at times, acquire true importance. They establish themselves outside the official margin, maintain no organic relations with the hierarchy but stay within the Church."

—J. Grotaers: *Living Structures and Communities in the Post-Conciliar Church*, IDOC, 15 May, 1967, p. 14.

"For twenty years now, we are witnessing the spontaneous births of innumerable groups of laymen, which represent one of the forms of the Lay Apostolate for the future in a secularized society."

a climate of warmth and friendship; and wherein he may find a channel for expressing his individuality through the sharing of a responsible role. In the present day society of masses the individual oftentimes and in many ways, feels that his personality is lost in anonymous insignificance. Side by side with this natural yearning we have to single out a trend, which is rather pronounced in certain sectors, of rejecting anything that carries the semblance of a complex organization.

From these standpoints, these manifestations are proper to our times. They are legitimate forms and should be respected. They have their counterparts within the Church. Within the Church, and within the field of the Lay Apostolate, there are many kinds of callings, of choices and of ways that are perfectly legitimate. Small groups can, therefore, have *raison d'être* nowadays. Their dynamics can provide outlets for active participation in the task of evangelization to segments of the Church which until now have remained passive.

Nevertheless, we understand that their kind of constitutional pattern can carry some risks which, among other may be the following:

1. A horizontal cleavage from the community and a ghetto-like fencing in, with an "elite" complex;
2. Existence and activity on the margin of the ecclesial community and of its needs, constituting a factor of segmentation within the Church;
3. Breaking away in a more or less conscious manner from the hierarchy.

If all these dangers are overcome through a bond with the basic communities of the Church, (parish, diocese) and through an attentive docility to the directives of the Magisterium (Pope, Bishops), then the pattern is a valid acquisition. There is nothing to be disturbed about. It is a simple embodiment of natural tendencies that tread along new avenues opened to the Lay Apostolate by Vatican II.

Nevertheless, these new embodiments of the Lay Apostolate display within the Church, in increasing number of instances, disturbing characteristics which call for serious study and evaluation. As a matter of fact, among the category of small groups bearing a fluid constitutional pattern, there are groups that bear out constant special traits that serve to identify them in an unmistakable manner as moving along a "current" of a definite manner of thinking and of feeling. This current defines itself as "prophetic movement."²

Notwithstanding the apparent dispersion of these groups and their different nationalities, the individuals belonging to them partake of the same trend, to a greater or lesser extent, and in a more or less conscious way. This owes to the fact that the said groups are linked among themselves through persons, ideas and common techniques, even if in the majority of cases the members are not aware of such links.

² J. Grotaers; Conf. cit., p. 14 fol.

This does not mean, however, that the "prophetic movement" is limited to only these groups. These are its main propagators, but the movement transcends them and succeeds to infiltrate every time, wider sectors of the Universal Church. Thanks to the dynamism of these groups and the effective techniques that they employ, they succeed in infiltrating seminaries, apostolic organizations, religious orders, pastoral centres, catholic presses and congresses, where, either personally or through representatives of the Catholic clergy and laity, they sow ideas that find a wonderful response in a climate of post-conciliar "aggiornamento".

THEIR CHARACTERISTICS —

Among the more salient characteristics of these "prophetic groups" we find the following:

1. These groups do not so much emerge from the impulse of a specific apostolic calling as from a more or less open confrontation with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, that leads them to break away from the latter.
2. They designate themselves not just as another form of the apostolate, but as the *only valid form* to bear witness and represent the "true face of the Church".
3. They consider themselves specially assisted with the charisms of the Holy Spirit, to Whom they ascribe their marvellous and "spontaneous" proliferation in all continents, for the purpose of accomplishing a prophetic mission.

This mission consists in the denunciation of the corruption of the different levels of society and of the Church, and in the presentation of a New Church attuned to the demands of a secularized world and of a mature laity.³

4. On this account they consider the following as absolutely necessary:

a) A radical reform of the main components of the "Institutional Church", Magisterium, theology, morals, sacraments, liturgy, etc., to be effected by the "Charismatic Church" (Laical).

b) Acceptance of the view that the only valid Christian testimony is a "personalized temporal commitment", that is, the effective collaboration between Marxists and the members of the Christian denominations in order to achieve the "liberation of the oppressed and the exploited class", making use of every means for this purpose, including violence.

5. These groups are distinguishable by their vitriolic criticisms:

a) Against every apostolate that is associated with the hierarchy which they consider out of phase, superseded and incapable of syntonization with the modern world in order to give an adequate solution to the needs of our time, and

³ Gunnel Valquist: *Le reveil du prophetisme*, I.C.I., n. 303, p. 8.

"On every side I have found the same thing. On the one hand, the "Youthful or New Church", represented by a large number of young people: students, workers and priests. On the other hand, the "Established Church" with its hierarchy at the lead, with very few exceptions, including Holland, where the Episcopate has had the courage to assume the responsibility of the Youthful Church."

b) Against the Magisterium. The ground of these criticisms, which they aim against the Bishops, including the Pope and the Council, is the alleged resistance of the episcopate of the Universal Church to accept the new ideas concerning the role of the Church in the world and commitment in temporal affairs.

These characteristics shed light for the understanding of the roots that lie at the bottom of some happenings that are taking place nowadays within the Church.

For example, many think that the tensions and "crises" obtaining nowadays within the organizations of Catholic Action in different countries, (France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, etc.) are simply due to the differences in view between the hierarchy and the more "dynamic" leaders regarding the concrete ways of implementing the basic principles of the Lay Apostolate, as formulated by the Council, in the different circumstances and countries.

But the truth is quite another. The object involved in the polemics is the fundamental principles themselves, the very essence of the Lay Apostolate in all its extent. What is placed on the table of discussion is not the readjustment of the organization of Catholic Action, or the admission of other movements to the level of institutional dialogue, or the recognition of other more flexible forms of apostolate. What is laid on the table of discussion is the annexation to, or separation from, the ecclesiastical hierarchy, depending on whether the hierarchy is willing to accept particular temporal commitments or not. And this has a bearing on all sectors of the Lay Apostolate whether organized or not.

Separation is one of the characteristic traits of the "prophetic movement". Its aim is "the liberation from too burdensome structures" within a short period, that is, the renouncement of the hierarchical mandate and the creation of "prophetic groups" to engage in temporal commitments. At the bottom of this initial formula, which is taken as a necessary reform of the structure of organized Lay Apostolate in order to adjust it to the Conciliar directives and to a secularized society, lies a new concept of the Church. This concept opposes, as a matter of fact, the "Church community of men" with the "Church institution", and the "lay prophetism" with the Ecclesiastical Magisterium.

(to be continued)

You And Your Service Sheet

—Second of a Series—

● **Guillermo Tejon, O.P.**

I. — YOUR PIETY (continued)

3. — Your Mass

After having dedicated the day to God in the Morning Offering and thought about Him in his meditation, a cursillista goes to Mass.

Mass is sometimes a matter of routine. But it should not be so. Your Mass should always be a “unique” experience in your life, even if you hear Mass daily.

When on Good Friday you read the Passion of the Lord, your heart aches, you feel sorry for Christ, and you say: “If only I had been there! . . . I would have defended Him, I would have died with Him! . .

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the Sacrifice of Calvary. Mass is Calvary! When you are with Christ at Mass, you are with Christ on Mount Calvary!

What happened on Mount Calvary? — Christ offered Himself to the Father as a sacrifice for the redemption of the world, in expiation for the sins of man. He was the victim offered, and the priest who offered it.

What happens at Mass? — Christ offers Himself to the Father as a victim for the redemption of mankind. It is the same victim, the same sacrifice, offered by the same priest (Christ) and for the same purpose. The priest at the altar is not there as a man, but as a representative of Christ. He does not speak in his own name, but in the name of Christ. He does not say: this is the Body of Christ. He says: “This is My Body; this is the Cup of My Blood” . . .

Christ died once. Mass is a memorial to His death. That is why Mass used to be called "Dominica Passio" (the Passion of the Lord).

The only real difference between the Sacrifice of Calvary and the Sacrifice of the Mass is that the former was a bloody sacrifice (blood was shed) while the latter is a bloodless one.

The Church celebrates the Sacrifice of the Altar because Christ instructed His apostles to do so. "Do this in memory of Me", He told them (Lk., 22, 19).

Mass is celebrated in the Church and by the Church. Not only by the priest, but by all those who belong to the Church: by Christ, by the priest, by the Congregation, by you . . . Mass — even if said in private and without a congregation — is not a private prayer, but the public and official Sacrifice of the Church, offered by the whole Church and beneficial to the whole Church.

People say "I am going to hear Mass". Actually, they should say "I am going to celebrate Mass". When you go to Mass, you do not go there as a witness, to watch, to see, to hear . . . You go there to participate, to offer, to celebrate . . .

Christ could have saved the world alone. But He did not want to do so. Certainly He was the only one to die for the whole of mankind; and His death was enough to save all men of all centuries until the end of time. But He wanted men to help Him carry out the Mission entrusted to Him by His Father. That is why He chose His apostles. He invited them to be His collaborators. Participants of His mission, they also participated of His fate and titles. They became co-victims with Christ. They worked, suffered and died for Him and for His Gospel. They also became co-priests with Him in the offering of His—and their—sacrifice to the Father. The apostles carried out their mission faithfully. After their death, they were succeeded by other apostles, by other priests. Thus Christ's redemptive work has been continued throughout the ages, until the present day.

However, when I speak of apostles, I do not speak of priests alone. Laymen are also apostles. Baptism made you an apostle of Christ. The Cursillo reminded you of your apostolic vocation.

As an apostle, you are called upon to help Christ save the world; to spread God's kingdom on earth.

You work and suffer for Christ; in other words, you are a co-victim with Him. You were not ordained priest; but as a Christian you participate of the priesthood of Christ, you are a co-priest with Him in the offering of Christ's — and your — Sacrifice to the Father, in the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Your participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass has to be an active one. You have to become a part of the Mass you attend.

How are you going to do it? — Here is the best way.

You get a Missal and follow the Mass step by step. You will find the experience rewarding; and the Mass, — which otherwise may be meaningless and boring — will suddenly come to life.

You and the other members of the Congregation are in the Church. The priest comes to the altar. You greet each other; and, together, start the Mass.

First, **YOU PRAY**. — That is, you speak to the Lord. In a humble prayer the priest and the Congregation praise the goodness and mercy of the Lord and ask forgiveness for their sins. This prayer includes the Introit or entrance song, the Penitential Act, the Invocations or Kyrie, the Glory and the Collect.

Then **YOU HEAR**. — The Lord, pleased with the act of humility and worship of His people, answers their prayer. He speaks to His people through the Readings from the Bible. To help God's people understand God's Word, the Church, through the priest, often provides an explanation in the form of a homily. The Congregation listens to the Word of God with respect and interior assent to His teachings. On special occasions, this assent is made public and solemn by the recitation of the Creed.

Now **YOU OFFER**. — This part of the Mass is called the Offertory. Bread and Wine are brought to the altar and offered to God. These are the Bread and the Wine that later on will be converted into the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Offertory is a most important part of the Mass. The Bread and the Wine are fruits of the earth, of the work of man; and they are offered to God, the Creator of all things. The offering of material things — bread, wine, your monetary contribution — is a symbol of another offering: the personal, spiritual oblation of those who participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass. Place yourself on the altar and offer yourself (your life, your intellect, your will, your body, your soul, your problems, your ambitions, your successes, your failures..., everything...) to the Father in a complete act of surrender to His divine will. In this way you will identify yourself with Christ, and, as His co-victim, you will accompany Him to Mount Calvary...

And there YOU SACRIFICE. — The Consecration is the centre of the Mass, the sacrificial act itself. It is a reenactment of the sacrifice of Calvary. Christ is once more immolated for the redemption of the world.

Together with Christ, you are supposed to suffer, to be nailed to the Cross, to be immolated... On the altar there is no more bread, no more wine. There is Christ... Within you there should be no more selfishness, no more sin. There should be a new man, identified with Christ. There should be another Christ. And — being another Christ — your Sacrifice — like that of Christ — will be acceptable to the Father... And — participating of the infinite value of the death of Christ — your Sacrifice — also like Christ's — will bring about the salvation of many souls...

The Consecration is called *Transubstantiation*. Transubstantiation means change of substances: of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. In your case, it should be a change of the substance of sin into the substance of grace, of the substance of lukewarmness into the substance of spiritual fervor, of the substance of apathy in the Service of the Lord into the substance of apostolic zeal...

Finally, YOU RECEIVE. — Earlier you had made an Offering to God. He received it from you. Now He graciously returns it to you. But in a new form. What He offers you in His own Son, the Body and Blood of Christ.

Christ told us that if we want to have life everlasting we must eat His flesh and drink His blood. That is, we must receive Him in Holy Communion.

Christ died, and then rose from death. You also die and rise. At the Consecration you die to sin; in Communion you rise to the life of Grace, to eternal life! You surrender your humanity, and receive Christ's Divinity . . .

Communion is an essential part of the Mass. There must always be communion at Mass. Otherwise the Sacrifice remains incomplete. A Sacrificial Ritual means, not only the offering, but also the consumption of the thing offered. You have noticed that, even if no one from the congregation receives Communion, the priest always does. And should it happen that for some reason the priest be forced to leave the altar before Communion, another priest would have to finish the Mass. Since you have identified yourself with Christ and with His minister, you should partake of the Sacred Banquet that Communion is. Without Communion, your Mass, your sacrifice, your offering will remain incomplete.

The Post-Communion is a prayer in which the priest and the Congregation give thanks to God for having granted them the grace of receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

With this the Mass comes to an end. Before leaving the Church, God — through His minister — gives you His blessing, and tells you to "go in peace".

You certainly can go in peace; for you are at peace with God (to Whom you offered the Sacrifice); with yourself (whom you offered in sacrifice together with Christ) and with the world (for which you offered the Sacrifice) . . .

This is *your Mass*; this is your *best prayer*.

Novenas and other devotions are good. But they pale and lose importance in the presence of the Mass, which brings you into an intimate contact with the *real, living Christ*!

Say this prayer, celebrate your Mass as often as you can. Not only on Sundays; but — as your Service Sheet suggests — also on weekdays. Daily, if possible.

PASTORAL SECTION

HOMILETICS

● **D. Tither, C.SsR.**

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Dec. 7)

THE DAY OF THE LORD

“Already the axe is put to the foot of the tree.”—Gospel

There are many things we must be reminded of in our relations with God. In fact, there are so many aspects of Redemption to be considered that, to present as full a picture as possible, the Church has decided on a 3-year cycle of Bible readings at Mass, with 3 readings on Sundays and Holidays like tomorrow. But there will still be 4 weeks of every year taken up with recalling the Day of the Lord.

These four weeks of Advent turn our attention to Christ's first coming, His Incarnation and birth, a day of the Lord long awaited. Even more so, our notice is called to His final dramatic coming to judge mankind, the final breathtaking day of the Lord to which we eagerly look forward. 2 Tim. 4.8. But, most of all, we are to consider His present comings to us now—in the Mass, in His words, in opportunities for removing injustice and misery.

Jesus is with us all days, to comfort and strengthen us, yes, but also to call us to account. The Day of the Lord is always upon us—every day is a Judgment Day, a day of decision as to whether we accept or reject Christ, whether we lock ourselves up in selfish isolation or work for the spread of His love in the world. With Christ judgement came into the world Jo. 12.48, and it is going on now. We are judging ourselves right now. Our personal loyalty to Christ, and our active concern for His interests—it is on these that we will be judged at His Second Coming, it is on these that we judge ourselves here and now.

The Old Testament reading today, from the Prophet Isaias, looks forward to the first coming of Christ. It was written during a sad period in the history of God's first people. By their sins they had broken their covenant with God, and the armies of Babylon had devastated their land; the ravages recall the wanton smashings of destructive loggers in a forest. Is. 10.33-34.

But, one sapling will spring up from the stump of king David's family. Is. 11.1. The Spirit of God will be on Him. v.2. And He will come to execute justice, giving redress to the oppressed poor and destroying the wicked and selfish. vv 3-5. His coming will ultimately restore the harmony and tranquility of Paradise, giving unshakeable security vv. 6-11.

The second reading (Rom. 15.4-9) is leading up to a quotation from the first Rom. 15.12. Reminding us that the Scriptures were written precisely to give us the confidence and courage we need *now* to persevere. v.4. St. Paul prays that our encouragement may come from our unity with one another according to the manner of Christ, v.5 and that our having one heart and one mouth in glorifying God is to be the manifestation of this unity. v.6.

Need it be stressed again that wholehearted participation in Mass (one heart and one mouth) will result in that mutual charity v.7. on which alone we will be judged on the Day of the Lord, and judge ourselves everyday? Two things are called for, and they are equally necessary. Striving to help others without calling on God is futile: "Without Me you can do nothing." But Mass that does not result in real striving for unity is barren and empty, meaningless even. The words of Jesus are most appropriate here: "These things you ought have done, and not left undone." Make the most of every opportunity to worship God, and then live out what our worship implies.

The Gospel reading Mt. 3.1-12 puts before us the last of the Prophets, St. John Baptist, telling us of the importance of repentance, a complete change of heart while still there is time v.8. It is a continued repentance that is called for, and called for with great urgency: "Already the axe has been put to the foot of the trees;" v.10 Our life is to be a daily renewed decision to be open to Christ, and show the good fruit of concern for others.

St. John makes it clear that his baptism was only an expression of repentance. a stimulus to it. Christ's baptism, however, is a plunging into the Holy Spirit, a thoroughly purifying fire. v.11. We, thanks to the pure goodness of God, and from no merits of our own, have been baptized with this baptism. Let every action of our lives be a response to the continued coming of Our Lord, a decision to live up to our baptismal pledge to love God and our neighbour with all our mind, all our heart, all our strength.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (Dec. 8)

"HAIL, FULL OF GRACE." — Gospel

Today's celebration takes us right back to the dawn of human history. The first people were offered a share in the Divine Life — they were to be God's children, sharing His life and love. But, sad to say, they were not satisfied with being children of God. They wanted to be His equals. And, by that preference of themselves rather than God, they cut themselves off from His love and life, and from any right to even share it again.

But, did God abandon them, did He leave them in their helplessness? No! Right there, He promised a Redeemer Who would be born of a very special woman, the Immaculate Mother we honour today. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman," God told the devil, "between thy seed and her seed, she is to crush thy head, while thou dost wail in ambush for her heels." Gen. 3.15. Mary, through her Son, Christ, would undo the damage done by Eve.

Has it ever occurred to us that we were included in that prophecy? We were not mentioned by name, but we were each and all in the mind of God, we were included in Christ. When He said, just before His Passion: "We will go up to Jerusalem," He included us. God's amazing plan was that His own Son should become a man, the scapegoat for all mankind. "He chose us out," as St. Paul has just reminded us, "to be His adopted children through Jesus Christ." Eph. 1.4-5. His Son became a man so that men might become divine. In a lesser degree than Christ, but none the less truly, each of us is to manifest His glory v.12. Chief among us in this was Mary, His Immaculate Mother and ours also, whom He preserved immaculate and created brim-full of the Divine Life.

The Gospel account of the Incarnation is meant just as much for us as for those whom it was first revealed by God through St. Luke. With our ears, we listen to words of God, His message to the chosen Mother of His Son. "Hail, full of grace." We hear His praise of her: "Blessed art thou among women," and His plan that she become the Mother of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit. And we hear her response, as if it were being said now: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word."

What are we most to imitate here? Surely the faith of Mary, her acceptance of God's plan, her readiness that God's will be done in her. God also wants to be born in us, to live in us. to use our powers for His purposes, to have us fully conscious of the christian responsibilities of our lives. We have the assurance of Christ Himself that Mary was more blessed from this point of view accepting and furthering God's plan, than she was privileged in being His Mother. Luke 11. 28.

May her example and prayers help us to see clearly, and carry out fully, God's plan for each one of us.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Dec. 14)

CHRIST'S COMING, REASON FOR JOYFUL HOPE

The Council, enumerating the events recalled in the Church year, seems to put Advent last. "During the year the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ." The enumeration begins with the Incarnation and ends with "the

expectation of blessed hope and the final coming of the Lord." Advent places the Church in the attitude of expectation of the Lord who comes now in the events of our lives, and will finally come at the end of the world. The splendour of His return in glory must not distract us from His comings now.

The early Christians looked forward to Christ's ultimate victory with longing joy and courageous endurance. Many modern Christians never think of it, and as a result, know little of the hope, joy and patient strength it produces. Surely we should prepare for Him, *not when* the universe as we know it is crumbling and dissolving, but *now when* He comes, in Mass, in intensifying our decision to belong wholly to Him, in opportunities to see and serve Him in others.

Isaiah in prophecy foretells the Church, the long-promised Kingdom in which we have Christ, born 1969 years ago, living and acting now until His Second Coming. The opening words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" Is. 61.1 were used by Jesus to begin His first sermon in His home town. He declared that this prophecy was fulfilled in Himself. The intense joy expressed in the last lines: "Well may I rejoice in the Lord, my heart triumph in my God." v.11. is shared by all who see the Divine Presence in the events of their daily lives, and achieve happiness by furthering God's plan in the world.

Just what this plan is we've heard from St. Paul (1 Thess. 16-24). We are to be sanctified entirely to greet the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ without reproach." v.23. We are reminded of God's goodness in calling us, and of the fact that He keeps faith, that He will not fail us. v.24. The only question is: Will we fail Him? If we are rejecting all that has an appearance of evil about it v.22, if we are constant in praying v.16, then joy will be with us always, and His final triumph will be ours also.

Again the Gospel presents St. John the Baptist, telling us how to prepare for any and every coming of Christ. This message is timeless — first addressed to men of 2000 years ago, today they are addressed to us with no less urgency. It is a long time since John the Baptist preached, but his voice carries over the centuries urging us to remove the road blocks, destroy the obstacles in our hearts — selfishness, pride, complacency.

The improving of roads when important visitors are coming still goes on, but more than that is meant here. A radical change of heart is called for. In our days, the Church has turned the altar around. But the Council was not nearly so anxious to change the position of the celebrant as to effect a turning around or renewal of our attitude to God and one another.

How terrible it would be if the words of John the Baptist could be applied to us. "There has stood One in the midst of you whom you do not know." Let's see Him where He is — here at Mass now, and in our contacts and

dealings with others, especially in our less fortunate brothers and sisters. If we've never seen Him there, we've never really seen him at all. We'll never see Him in eternity if we don't learn to see Him in others, that's for sure. He Himself said so: "As often as you refused it (genuine heartfelt concern) to one of these my least brethren, you refused it to Me." Mt. 25.40.

The Aguinaldo Masses begin on Tuesday. God grant that all who attend really come to know Christ, offering Himself to us, offering Himself, along with us to the Father. And then, going from Mass, may we see Him in those around us. Then we will have joy, a foretaste of the joy which will be ours forever.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Dec. 21)

CHRIST, CENTRE OF HISTORY

God's preparation for the Incarnation — the first coming of Christ, was careful and detailed. Today we saw King David, secure in his rule, planning to build a temple. That project was reserved in God's plan for David's son, King Solomon, but God rewarded David's pious desire by sending the Prophet Nathan to assure him that his royal family would endure forever. 2 Sam. 7.16. We know that the culminating figure of David's dynasty, as indeed of all history is Christ.

You may ask: Did David realize all that was meant? As regards a descendant of his becoming the Messiah, yes; but that the Messiah would be God as well as man, surely not. In fact, St. Paul has just told us so. We've heard him call the Incarnation a mystery, hidden through countless ages and now made plain, only now clearly revealed. Rom. 16. 25-29.

The actual revelation is described in the Gospel. We've often listened to it, let's try and imagine we are hearing it for the first time. A messenger, Gabriel, has been sent by God to a little town called Nazareth, to a young girl, 15 or 16 years old. She and her betrothed husband are descendants of King David. You can almost detect the reverence he felt in the presence of this young girl, and the wonder in his voice as he said: "Hail, full of grace."

Words like these had never been truthfully addressed to any creature until this moment. The angels were not created full of grace. They had their trial. But Mary, from the instant of her conception was full to repletion with the Divine Life. We repeat these words so often, maybe sometimes without much reflection, it's possible we miss their full impact. There was never any pure creature as full of the Divine Life as Mary. "Blessed are you among women," said God's messenger.

And now God's secret plan is revealed. She is to conceive and bear a Son whom she will name Jesus or Saviour. He will be great, men will

come to honour Him as the Son of the Most High, the promise to His ancestor David will be fulfilled in Him — of His Kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word." Luke 1. 26-38.

At this moment, the Incarnation takes place. God becomes one of us, our Representative, our Substitute. At the moment Mary became the Mother of all of us too ("We were all in that man"). When her body became a tabernacle and for the nine months she carried Him under her heart, we were there, too.

More than this, when she consented to the Incarnation, she included in her "Yes" everyone who would consent to receive Christ. God proposed His plan on behalf of all of us, and all of us were involved in her response.

It was later, at the foot of the Cross, that she was officially declared our Mother. But it actually began when she agreed to give the flesh to God the Son, and make our Redemption possible. What a wide heart she had to include us all! Mary had a social sense, a love for all redeemed mankind so great that it can never be equalled. This is what we are to imitate in her.

We know that the time of Advent stresses rather the comings of Christ—our encounters with Him in others, rather than just recalling His birthday or looking forward to His last magnificent triumph. The moment we meet others in need is the very moment of our judgement, the moment when we seal our eternal judgement.

There is a lot of vague shallow goodwill at Christmas, much of it mere sentimentality without real roots, not likely to last long. Unless our concern is founded on the identity of the unfortunate with the God Who emptied Himself to become one of us, born in a cave, dying on a cross, it will not please God, and it will have a very brief existence. Our starting point must be a realization that it is Him we are serving, or rather that we can make it possible for Him living in us to serve Himself in others.

CHRISTMAS DAY

This year, we have at each Mass a reading from the Prophet Isaias. At midnight we hear foretold the wonderful events of which Galilee will be the scene. Is. 9.1. The people who have gone about in darkness see a great light v.2. They have lived in the shadow of death, but now light has dawned. v.3. The joy at Christ's coming is compared to that of farmers after a good harvest, or of soldiers after a victory. v.3. Slavery is over, v.4. and all its instruments thrown into a bonfire v.5. "For our sakes, a child is born, to us a son is given, and He will reign. What will be His name? "The mighty God." What will His role be? One of peace. He will be the "Prince of peace."

Even though we today no longer look forward to the joy of His coming, ours is a much greater joy, because He has come, and is still coming. "The grace of God has dawned on all men alike." Tit. 1.10. We have no reason to envy the shepherds or the Magi — what we celebrate today is His birth in the hearts of those ready to receive Him. We do indeed look forward with joy to His second coming: "We look forward, blessed in our hope, to the day when there will be a new dawn of glory." v.13. Meanwhile, we are to live lives of order, justice and holiness v.12, as God's own people, ambitious of noble deeds." v.14.

This revelation that we are God's own people is the theme of the prophecy read at the second Mass. "Look where your Deliverer comes, look how they come with Him, the reward of His labour, the achievement of His task. A holy people they will be called, of the Lord's ransoming." Is. 62. 11-12.

And at the last Mass a veritable tumult of excited joy is described. "All is well! Good news! God has claimed His throne ... They are crying out all at once ... Rejoice all at once, echo with rejoicing ... comfort from the Lord for the Lord's people." Is.52. 7-9.

For whom is this joy? Who are the Lord's people? Those who realize the true meaning of Christmas — that the joy of Christmas means to think of others, to give of ourselves, like the God Who left His heaven to become one of us. While its His birthday anniversary, we do not think of Him as being a baby now, otherwise we might think He only needs what a baby needs—affection and attention.

He became a baby 1969 years ago — that can't happen again. We can look at the baby-pictures of our adult friends, and think of all that happened to them. But, we don't want them to *become* babies again — to say the least, we would be quite upset if they did. So, tell your children today is Jesus' birthday, but don't say the Baby Jesus comes today. It's the grown-up Christ Whom they want for their "Kuya," don't confuse them!

And don't be confused ourselves. The important day in any man's life is the day of his death, the day when he is truly born to a new and eternal life. That is especially true of Our Lord. It is the risen and glorified Christ who is with us now, and He wants much more than baby attention. He wants us to share His life and happiness, and we do this by sharing in His plans and work — there is no other way.

Christmas is not a time of a vague sort of goodwill and sentimental feelings — it's a reminder of what we should be every day of the year — other Christs, men and women for others. Happy Christmas! See you all next Sunday at Mass.

HOLY FAMILY

The last Sunday of the year will, from now on, be the Feast of the Holy Family. God's word goes right to the point — straight talking, yes, but it is God Who talks. God demands that children honor their parents—in fact it is His strict ordinance. Sir. 3.3. Pardon for sin, a successful and life-long answer to prayer are promised to dutiful children, v.4. even temporal prosperity v.5, and the joy of corresponding respect from one's own children later on. v.6. The promise of God in Deuteronomy, a long life for those who love and honour their parents, as repeated here. v.7.

The fourth Commandment is the only one with such a promise of a reward even in this life attached to it. So, it is in our best self-interest not to be contaminated by wild ideas abroad about home virtues being out of date. Don't be misled by those who would contradict God—the way to happiness, in this world and the world to come is to be helpful, considerate, and Christ-like to our parents, to accept their arrangement as long as we live under their roof. This loving care extends especially to old age. v.14, and even feeble-mindedness v.15, and God assures us that He will not be outdone in generosity v.16 — what we show to our parents in their old age is shown to Himself. Mt. 25. Parents, after all, take the place of God. We in our turn will be rewarded in our affliction and old age with the treatment we give our parents v.17.

A terrible story comes to mind, of a son so forgetful of the respect he owed his father as to drag him round the floor of their home by the hair of his head. At a certain point the father cried out: "Stop." Stop! I never dragged *my* father further than this!"

St. Paul puts family life into its correct context. He has been speaking of charity, the virtue by which we love God and one another for God's sake.

He has described it as the hand that makes us perfect. Col. 3.14. And he goes on to say that it will assure the reign of the peace of Christ in our hearts, provided only we remember our oneness with Christ "the very condition of your calling as members of a single Body." v.15. If only brothers and sisters realized that they are even more closely related to one another in Christ than in their blood-relationship to one another, then we would have peace in our homes, in the world.

The union of husband and wife is a reflection, a reminder of the love of God for His people. "This sacrament reminds us of your constant love." Nuptial Preface II. "In this union of husband and wife, you give us a true symbol of your love." Nuptial Preface III. If only this mutual love and self-sacrifice were always there, if only marriage were always and everywhere "the enduring bond of love and peace" (Nuptial Preface I) that God intended, we would have no broken homes, no delinquent children, life on earth would be a foretaste of heaven.

All of this calls for constant self-sacrifice, but we have the example of the Holy Family. The Gospel, in a few deft sentences, Lk 2. 39-40, describes Joseph and Mary taking Jesus to Nazareth in Galilee and caring for him as He grew up. Whether we serve our family by earning for their daily needs, as Joseph did, later to be helped by Jesus, or by directly serving Christ in them, as Mary did, it is very much a religious act we do — a true service of Christ: "Whoever receives a little child in My name, receives Me." Let's not think of our administering to our family as separate from our religious life, as though we left our religion locked up somewhere while we went off to work or to manage our household. These Christian responsibilities are as much our religion as our prayers, our Mass, our encounters with Christ in His sacraments.

May to-day's feast help all of us, parents or children, realise that family life, if it is what it should be, sanctifies us as much as our prayer — that in fact the two go hand-in-hand.

AGUILNALDO MASSES

Dec. 16

BAPTISM

ENTRANCE INTO THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The recent Vatican Council called for a revision of the ceremonies of Mass. We have seen the changes that have taken place during the past few years and we are delighted because they have made the Mass so much more meaningful for us. There has been a similar updating in the ceremonies of Baptism. This new rite will officially begin next Lent. So, we will consider some aspects of it during this novena of Masses. And this is most appropriate because the Gospel reading, each day, is about John the Baptist who baptized Christ. That Baptism was the official beginning of Christ's life-work.

With equal truth, we can say the same of our baptism. It was the beginning of our Life-work. Thank God, more and more people are beginning to realize that the most important event in their lives is their Baptism when they became children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. Yet, I wonder, do we tend to think of Baptism as a great favour granted to us as individuals, independent of other people. It was not that way at all. We were received and welcomed into a community, the Christian Community. We received the Divine Life, not in isolation, but by becoming a branch of the Vine which is Christ, a living member of His Body, a sharer in the life and love of the whole Church. This Sacrament of Baptism is the only means of entry into the Church and initiation into the Christian Community.

It is sad that the Christian community is usually so poorly represented at that glorious moment, the occasion of a person's baptism. How different it is on the occasion of a marriage or a funeral; the church is filled. How different it is for the graduation of a Cursillista. Brother and sister Cursillistas will make a long journey to be there and to welcome the new member into their ranks. Surely a much greater event takes place at a baptism when a new member, a newly redeemed soul, a new child of God is added to our Christian family.

In the future, Baptism will be much more a public and community affair. Both the father and the mother of the child will have to be present. They will take a really active part in the ceremony. The ceremony begins by

their announcing the name they have chosen for their child. They accept publicly their new responsibility; the responsibility of raising the child in the Faith, of teaching it to love God and neighbour as Christ commanded. They will sign the child's forehead with the sign of redemption — the cross. They will renew their own baptismal promises, proclaiming again their faith in Christ and their rejection of sin.

When the saving water is poured on the child (or the child may be immersed in the water) it will be the parents, not the god-parents, who will hold the child. An acclamation of welcome, we are told, is most appropriate, here, at the climax of the ceremony.

To make sure that as many as possible are present at this ceremony, the baptism of adults will take place during a special Mass. Their first Communion, the climax of their Christian initiation, will be during that Mass.

This revised rite of baptism will have far-reaching results. The problem of children being baptized into families which have very little faith and no appreciation of what Baptism really is, has become most acute. Surely it is clear to us how important is the faith of the family. It is in the family that the child will get to know its faith and will see it lived. Please God, with the introduction of this new form of Baptism which demands the presence of the parents and brings out quite sharply both their role and their obligations we will see the beginning of the end of that sad situation in which Baptism was scarcely valued at all, or only for the most frivolous of reasons. The reason we are baptized is that we might become one with Christ through our incorporation into the Christian community where alone we can contact Him.

At our Baptism, our god-parents made certain promises in our name. For the rest of our life, we have to renew these baptismal promises and become increasingly aware that, as members of the Christian community, as members of God's family, we must grow in love for God and for one another. This is what our Baptism should mean for us. Thank God we have been baptized.

Dec. 17.

BAPTISM — GOD'S CALL

Yesterday, I told you about the new rite of Baptism. It will come into operation next Lent. We were born little pagans with only a natural life, and in no way pleasing to God. "Enemies of God, we were reconciled to Him through His Son's death." (Rm. 5, 10.) His saving death and life-giving resurrection were applied to us when we were baptised. In addition to the natural life we had, we were given a share in His own risen life.

But God did not call us to a kind of private friendship with Himself. He called us into His Church, His Family. Many times during our baptism we were reminded of this, and the formal call was dramatically acted out. God's representative placed his stole on us and called us by name: "Pedro, enter into the Church of God, so as to become a sharer with Christ in everlasting life."

It is in the Church that we live the divine life, because it is in the Church that we contact Christ. The new life we received in Baptism is lived in the unselfish carrying out of the full Christian life of love for God and our brothers. We get and we keep this precious life by being like Christ, dying to selfishness, and rising to whole-hearted, generous services of our brothers in the family of God.

John the Baptist, of whom we are hearing every day in the Gospel, summed it up. Speaking of Christ, He said: "He must increase, I must decrease." And the Saviour put it this way: "Unless the grain of wheat falling to the ground dies, itself remains alone. But, if it dies, it produces much fruit." Selfishness and forgetfulness of others is a refusal to answer the call of Baptism, a repudiation of our Baptism.

Perhaps, there is someone listening to me now who has never been baptized. Let us hope that, before Christmas, he or she arranges to become a child of God, to enter the Church, the community of God's children.

An adult who is being baptized understands God's call and answers it in his own heart and will. But most of us were baptized as babies and were not conscious of any call. We realize now that God called us to a new life in His Church. We realize now that our god-parents accepted that call for us. Now that we are able to do so, God wants us to answer that call ourselves.

The actual baptismal ceremony may have taken only half an hour. But don't think of Baptism as an isolated event in our lives, something that happened, once and for all, a long time ago. It is something that continues on. It calls for a continued response. Day by day, we have to try to live as Children of God, as Christ our Elder Brother did, as men-for-others.

Recall how you were baptized. When you asked for faith and the eternal life that comes from faith, you were told: "If it is life you would have, keep the Commandments. Love God and your neighbour." That call remains as real and as urgent now as then. God is awaiting our constant, ever-intensifying response. Don't disappoint Him.

Dec. 18.

BAPTISM — ITS PASCHAL SYMBOLISM

One of the first things you will notice about the new rite of Baptism will be the reminders of Easter. In the Easter Vigil, light is used as a symbol of the Risen Christ. He called Himself the light of the world. He also said that we were to be the light of the world. We can be the light of the world, only if we are united with Christ. Any light we have must come from Christ, just as, at the Easter Vigil, all the candles are lit from the one Paschal candle. We received our light from Christ on the day of our Baptism which is called in the Bible an 'illumination.'

In future, the Paschal candle is to be kept in the place of Baptism. At the end of the ceremony, the lighted candle which is handed to the newly baptized will take its flame from the Paschal candle, the symbol of the Risen Christ.

St. John tells us about a blind man who approached Jesus. He was sent to the pool of Siloe to bathe his eyes. He went, he walked and he returned seeing. We also, until our baptism, were blind. But, after we were bathed with the waters of baptism, we see, or we ought to see, by the light of faith, God and the things of God in the world around us.

A further resemblance between Easter and Baptism is evident in the sign of death and resurrection. By Baptism, we become one with Christ in His death and resurrection. In His death, because in Baptism we die to sinfulness. "We have died, once for all, to sin." (Rom. 6, 2.) In His resurrection, because He rose to a new and glorious life which He shares with us, the baptized. Our risen life, therefore, has actually begun already.

As St. Paul put it: "We were crucified with Christ at Baptism, buried with Him, and rose again to a new life with Him." (Rom. 6, I-II.) Wherever the old style of baptismal font is restored, this sign of death and resurrection is clearly symbolised. Those to be baptized go down into the place of baptism and they are plunged, (buried) under the water and then come out to a new life. We are buried with Christ and then come up to a completely new life with Him at our Baptism. "Risen, then, with Christ... you must be heavenly minded, not earthly minded... Christ is your life." (Col. 3, 1-6). The new baptismal rite expresses it this way: "Lord, send the power of your Holy Spirit into this water so that Baptism will be a kind of death and burial with Christ, and a resurrection with Him to a new life."

What happened when John the Baptist baptized Jesus is a sign of what Christian Baptism did to us. Jesus was baptized for His death. His baptism

set Him aside for sacrifice, submission and obedience unto death. Twice, He referred to His death as a baptism. (Mk. 10,38) (Lk. 12,50). His death was the climax of a life-time of pleasing God. It was His real baptism.

We Christians, baptized into Christ, accept a life of service and patience, and finally death. Our death is the climax of our baptism, our truest baptism. Jesus has indeed redeemed us. But that does not mean that life is to be free from trials and testing. We must join Him in redeeming ourselves and others, in His way. He asked His first disciples: "Are you ready to be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?" (Mt. 10, 38.) He asks the same of us.

This is not a gloomy thought. On the contrary, it takes the real sting out of death. A Christian's death is not meaningless or absurd. Like that of Jesus, it is to be a fruitful passage to resurrection, to the full flowering of the everlasting life that began at our baptism. That is why the perfect time for baptism has always been the happy night of Easter.

For the Christian, the moment of death is a going home to God, a passing from this life into eternal life, a stepping through a doorway to our true home. Our real death is the daily dying to our selfishness. This is what we were baptized for.

Dec. 19.

BAPTISM — LIFE THROUGH WATER

Perhaps, if we were asked, "What is the first thing that comes to your mind about Baptism?", we would answer: "It takes away original sin, it cleanses us, washes away even the actual personal sins of an adult being baptized." Of course, that is true, but maybe it is too negative a view of this great Sacrament. Our Christian life is not just the absence of sin. It is the presence of Life, the presence of the adorable Trinity, the Three Divine Persons living their life of love right inside us; "If anyone love me, My Father will love him and We will come to him and make Our abode in him."

The Jews, God's first people, did not look on water simply as an element that could kill or destroy as in a flood or typhoon, as in a shipwreck or drowning. Nor did they just think of it as something that washes and cleanses. Because the Promised Land was also a parched land, the first thing a Hebrew thought of when he saw water was *life*. He looked on water as an element that refreshes and nourishes the soil, an element that preserves the life of the thirsty traveller.

The Bible often mentions water. It tells us how the first people as a sign of their friendship with God, were put into Eden which had a fountain

and four rivers. In their pride, they decided to do without God. As a result, they were expelled from Eden and its plentiful supply of life-giving water.

Even before man was created, 'the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters'. All life began in the water. All living things are largely composed of water. Where water fails, natural life ceases.

God's people knew that God brings life out of water. They were vividly aware that He also saves by water. The waters of the flood saved Noe, allowing him to begin the human race again. This saving nature of water is portrayed clearly in the Exodus, the central event in the history of God's first people. They escaped from slavery through the waters of the Red Sea. A similar miracle took them over the Jordan into the Promised Land.

When Moses' rod sweetened the bitter waters of Mirom, this was a figure of Baptism. When the people thirsted in the desert, Moses struck the rock and life-giving water flowed out. This was also a figure of Baptism. The new rite tells us all of this, and more, about water.

At every baptism, except during Easter-time, the water will be blessed there and then. Listen to these words from the blessing: "Father, when the world was first created, Your Spirit hovered over the waters so that even then water might have power to produce life. You made the Flood an image of rebirth so that it might stand for an end of sin and a beginning of holiness. You led the children of Abraham through the Red Sea on dry land to free Your people from the slavery of sin and make them a figure of the power of Baptism. In the waters of the Jordan, Your Only Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit."

The amazing fact is that, since Jesus descended into the waters of the Jordan to be baptized, the waters flowing over the earth are no longer an ordinary part of creation. They are capable, when joined to the invocation of the Holy Trinity, of giving eternal life, that life which Christ came to give: "I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly."

God be praised because He has given us the water of Baptism and, with it, the beginning of eternal life. All of us know what happens if we allow water to lie, it stagnates. The very same could happen to that new life we received through the waters of Baptism. We must give it an outlet and keep it fresh. We must keep it flowing and alive. We must live that new life. Our baptism took half an hour, at the most. But, to live it out is a life-long task.

Dec. 20

BAPTISM — A NEW BIRTH

In the nearly 2000 years since Pentecost, it is only now that the Church has drawn up a specific rite for the baptism of babies. Babies have always been baptized. The faith of the Christian community supplied for their inability to make an act of faith of their own. But, until now, the ceremony has been simply a shortened form of the rite used for baptism of adults. Vatican II called for a new rite which would be adapted to the situation that those being baptized are, in fact, infants, and which would stress, rather, the need of faith in the parents — the home is the unit of the Christian community which chiefly will supply the needed faith. This is a sobering thought.

Nicodemus asked Jesus how a person already naturally born could be born again. Jesus told him (and us) that we *must* be born again. Unless one be born of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

We were born the natural children of our human parents, with a right to share their life and happiness. And then the greatest thing that ever could happen to us took place. We were born again. We were baptized.

How many of us regard our baptism as the red-letter day in our life? How many of us even know the date of our Baptism? Please raise your hands, those of you who know your baptismal day . . . That makes two (3 or 4) of us.

We keep all sorts of diplomas and certificates on the walls of our homes; reminders of the milestone in our journey through life. How many of us treasure what is surely the most important document that will ever have our name inscribed on it — the certificate of our baptism? Have you ever seen a business man with his baptismal certificate under his glass table cloth? Maybe, he has some family pictures there; some religious ones too; but the most vital, the most significant document ever made out in his name is missing, the document that certifies to his rebirth as a son of God, a brother of Christ and, along with Christ, a joint-heir to Heaven.

It is a pity if we think of our baptismal certificate, if we think of it at all, as a legal document needed for entering school or getting a passport. Our baptismal certificate which registered us as a citizen of our country. Our baptismal certificate is our guarantee that we have been born again, that we are no longer merely members of the human race and citizens of a particular country, but children of God and, therefore, enrolled in a new register.

The baptismal register is truly the Book of Life. Our being enlisted there means that we have right to approach Christ in the other Sacraments (no other sacrament can be validly received unless we are baptized). Because of it, we have the right to take our part in the worship of the Church. We can

join Christ, our Elder Brother, and our other brothers and sisters in offering the Mass.

Never, never take your Baptism for granted. A constant sense of wonder, of amazement, of heartfelt thanksgiving is the attitude we should have towards God, our Father, Who called us out of darkness to the wonderful life of His Son.

Dec. 22.

BAPTISM — IT GAVE US FAITH

In the formula of Baptism in use up to the present, the opening question is: "What do you seek of the Church of God? The answer which our god-parents made for us was: "Faith". It will be the same in the new rite, except that, more realistically, the parents and the god-parents will be the ones addressed. They will be told that, by asking for Baptism for this child, they are accepting the responsibility of raising the child in the faith so that he will love God and neighbour.

At first sight, this seems an unusual meaning of faith. We are more used to considering faith as consenting to certain truths. It is presented here as something much wider. It means giving ourselves completely to God in utter trust and entire readiness for whatever the future may hold.

We see this aspect of faith very clearly in Christian marriage. A man and a woman love one another so much that they give themselves to one another in a complete self-donation, accepting whatever the future (which they cannot know) may bring: "For better or worse, for richer or poorer, (in sickness and in health,) till death." It is a commitment for life, absolute and unchangeable.

Whenever Christ spoke to people, He demanded faith like that. He demanded an absolute acceptance of Himself as God's Son and the visible image of the kind of Father God is. He attributed the miracles He worked to the people's faith. He did not work miracles, nor did he forgive their sins, unless they accepted Him as He was, for what He was.

Baptism is the Sacrament of Faith, in this wider sense. Unbaptized adults, who already believe all the truths taught by Christ, still come asking precisely for faith. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." (Mk. 8, 24). Faith, in this sense, is something given. It is not something a person produces himself.

We do not believe God's message in the same way that we believe facts told to us by a reliable human person. When God speaks through His Son,

His Church or His Scripture, it is far more personal and real than our own father speaking to us face-to-face. God entrusts Himself to us but He expects that we, His children, entrust, dedicate and commit ourselves entirely and without reserve to Him.

This is the most important result of Baptism. "Without faith it is impossible to please God". (Heb. II, 6). "The just man lives by faith." Over and over, we are reminded of this truth in the rite of Baptism. Parents and god-parents are asked to "proclaim again the faith in Christ, for this is the faith of the Church in which these children are to be baptized." "Do you want N... to be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have professed?" Only then will the actual Baptism take place.

When we were baptized in infancy, we hadn't a clue of what was going on. Now, we understand the meaning of God's call. And God is still calling us to give ourselves to Him, to live united with His Son in His Church. Answer His call. Give ourselves to Him by living thoroughly Christian lives. A living faith is followed by action. "Faith without works is dead." It is no faith at all.

He won't force us. He respects our liberty too much for that. The next move is over to us. Nothing is so important as our unquestioning, unhesitating response. Say, "Yes" to Him.

Dec. 23.

BAPTISM — IT GIVES US HOPE

Someone has said: "If all the depressed folks will look up, and all the discouraged folks will cheer up, then we will have the world's greatest revival". (Card. Cushing). Perhaps, our greatest need in these days of uncertainty and insecurity is courage and confidence in God. When we reflect on the possibility of another world war that could destroy every living thing on earth. we could be paralyzed with fear. We need hope.

Even in ordinary life, one needs hope. How heartbreaking to meet a person who has. literary, nothing left to live for. It is everyone's experience that such a person will not live long. We all need hope as a spur to action. I ask you, "What steps have any of you taken for a journey to the moon?" The answer is, surely, that you have done nothing. Why? Because you have no hope of ever getting there. Yes, even in this life, we need hope.

Pope Paul VI has declared this year a "Year of Hope". It is a year when we should stir up our trust in the God Who called us to Baptism. Along with Baptism, He gave us the assurance that we are not alone in living the Christian life. We have from Holy Scripture that, at Baptism. we were sealed with the Holy Spirit as a safe-conduct until we get there.

God, says St. Paul, is the Author of our hope. (Rom. 15. 13). He is utterly reliable. He is ready to help us at all times in our struggles, our trials, our temptations; yes, even in our failures. He will not play us false. He called us to Baptism: "You are in Christ Jesus by God's act, and God keeps faith".

He is all-powerful. He can do what He says He will. We can always look to His power with complete confidence. We are assured of that power of the Victorious Christ, the power of His death and resurrection.

God is all-loving. Has He not sent His Son to save us? "God having given us His own Son. what good thing can He refuse us? Has He not, with Him, given us all good things?"

No wonder St. Paul calls Jesus Christ our hope (Tim. I, I.) Any doubts that could have existed about the extent of God's loving-kindness are removed by the fact that He sent His own Son. Who could deny that God, our Father, has done everything to let us know how much He loves us, how much He cares about us, what He thinks of us?

The early Christians were aware of this. The New Testament describes how they joyfully realized that they were "surer of salvation than ever". Not even their sins dismayed them. For them, "all things co-operated unto good", even occasional lapses that were, in actual fact, opportunities for a renewed trust in the God Who did so much to save us.

If we, like them, remembered all God has done and is doing for our salvation, we would not stifle the trust in God's merciful love that Baptism makes available to us.

Dec. 24.

BAPTISM — IT GIVES US LOVE

At our Baptism, only one thing was asked of us by God in return for the Divine Life He called us to—to obey the Great Commandment; it actually includes all the rest. "In these two commandments is contained the whole of the Law and the Prophets."

Baptism made us other Christs. That means we are to love our Father like Christ did. It also means that we are to love all our brothers and sisters like He did. This does not mean just feeling emotional affection for God and others. By wanting to love them, we do love them. It is a matter of willing it. We should try to overcome feelings of dislike for those who naturally repel us, and treat all, even our enemies, with kindness.

Needless to say, this is beyond our natural strength. The ability to want to love God and all our brothers, without exception, was given to us as a gift at our Baptism. We have to let it develop. That is the sign that we are Christians. It is precisely in this, and in nothing else, that we will be judged when Christ returns.

The New Testament repudiates any love of neighbour that disregards God. "If you only love those who love you, what more do you do, then, than the heathen?" Love of others without love of God is directly contrary to the Gospel message. In fact, it is impossible, in practice, to love others as our brothers unless we realize that God is our Father.

After all, "God is love". The Scripture tells us so. We can say with equal truth, "Love is God". Only if we believe this can we really love people for God's sake and for no selfish consideration at all. Only if we wholeheartedly believe that God is love will we know that love of others is the only thing that really matters. "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him". "Love is the fulfillment of the law. He who truly loves his brother has done all that the law commands,"

Don't think of God's law as a series of "Do's" and "Don'ts". God is not an Almighty Book-keeper totting up all our sins and faults. God loves us, and we show our appreciation of that by doing everything in our power to make this world a happier place for our passing through it.

We are left with one commandment, the commandment of love. Love of God and love of mankind cannot be separated. There can be no pure love of others without openness towards the living and true God.

But the reverse is also true. There can be no love of God without love of His children — all of His children. "He who does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God Whom he does not see? He who says: 'I love God', but hates his brother, is a liar". (Jn. 4, 20). If we wish to check our attitude to God, check our attitude to others.

Tomorrow is Christmas Day. We will see how much God loves us if only we will think of the true meaning of Christmas — the first Christmas. Surely, that will force us, in return, to love God in Himself and in His favourite possession — our brothers and sisters.

CASES AND QUERIES

METANOIA, COMMITMENT, INVOLVEMENT

● Quintin M. Garcia, O.P.

It has long been a tradition in our Communities and Schools to promote the devotion towards indulgences, both among the Sisters and our pupils. Actually, apart from the rosary and the way of the Cross and the Angelus, we recite daily the prayers *Anima Christi*, *Adoro Te devote* and *En ego, O bone...* after Mass and Communion. We have been exhorted also to gain all possible indulgences and to offer them to alleviate the lot of the poor souls in purgatory. Now, in our last community dialogue, the two Sisters who attend courses in theology objected very strongly against this tradition. They said that all this business of indulgences is outdated and inconsistent with the spirit of the Council. What we Sisters should do and what we should inculcate in our pupils, they contend, is not indulgences but metanoia, personal commitment, and real involvement. A discussion followed and you should have seen the confusion that arose. Some of the old Sisters even objected to the Sisters attending courses in theology.

We would appreciate it if the Reverend Father may help us to disentangle this situation. Kindly explain the meaning of metanoia and commitment and involvement that no Sister had heard of before in our old days. Is it true that indulgences have been done away with after the Council? Do we still gain indulgences when we recite in common the above-mentioned prayers?

There are two different problems involved here. The problem concerning Sisters studying theology, and the problem of whether or not indulgences are still relevant as real means of sanctification in our post-conciliar Church.

1. *The Crisis*

The concern of the Reverend Mother and the older Sisters on account of the confusion during their community dialogue is, indeed, justified. Such confusion has already spread far and wide and with much scandal throughout the Church. Many Sisters have lost their vocation, while new vocations for their Congregation have been badly stifled, all to the detriment of the work they are *committed* to in God's Church. And all this, ironically, comes about in the name of what is called *commitment* and *involvement*, terms stolen from modern Protestantism. And, to add insult to injury, this scandal may be traced to what has been called the *spirit of the Council*. The young sisters are not entirely to be blamed for their ultra-neomodernistic inoculation. There is a number of priests, both secular and religious, who have actually precipitated this crisis. Left to themselves and to their *charismatic* phantasies, these "theologians" have allowed no dogma of the Church to stand. The situation has become so grave that the word *crisis* is justified to describe this sort of doctrinal disarray in the Church.

Fortunately, salutary reaction against these deviations may already be felt among men of responsibility, prompted, no doubt, by the genuine Spirit of truth. In his Address to a General Audience, September 10, 1969, Pope Paul VI denounces these false "prophets" while he deplors the danger they cause to souls:

We hear much today of the troubles that are shaking the Church's life *from the inside* and have been doing so since the Council, in an unforeseen way that certainly does not derive from the Council itself through a logic of fidelity, but is even contrary to the Council's spirit, hopes and norms...

We might therefore, call the present trouble a *crisis* of confidence... when considered as something in the minds of those in whom it is fermenting and from whom it is coming. Or rather as a crisis of lack of confidence, ... when its negative side is considered and that is the side We have to deal with now. A temptation to lack of confidence is attacking the souls of not a few circles in the Church. It is lack of confidence in doctrine and tradition — and it becomes a crisis of faith. Lack of confidence in structures and methods: and it becomes corrosive criticism and a mania for pseudo-liberation. Lack of confidence in men — and it becomes tension and polemic and disobedience. Lack of confidence in the very acts of renewal of the Church

— and it becomes resistance in some and indifference in others. Lack of confidence in the Church as it is — and that becomes a crisis of charity and recourse, often mean and servile, to substitutes from the opposing and profane life. The suspicion is spread here and there that the Church is unable to maintain itself and renew itself; the hope of a new Christian spring is given up; recourse is had to arbitrary ideologies, or to gratuitous charismatic suppositions, in order to fill up the inner void remaining after loss of confidences: in God, in the Church's leadership, in the goodness of men and also in oneself...

That is how it is. How could the Pope and those to bear the responsibility of giving the Church pastoral guidance together with him not suffer as they see that the *major difficulties are today arising out of the Church herself, that the most poignant pain comes to her from the indocility and infidelity of certain of her ministers and some of of her consecrated souls*, that the most disappointed surprises come to her from circles that have been the most assisted, the most favoured and the most beloved? How can they not feel sorrow at the waste of so many energies, used, not to give increase, but to engage in superfluous and sophistic efforts to raise problems and make them complicated and irritating? (*L' Osservatore Romano. English Ed. Sept. 18, 1969*).

With these denunciations of the Holy Father in mind, the Reverend Mother and the old Sisters will do well to look for suitable means towards protecting their community in matters of orthodox doctrine.

Yet, dangerous as it may be, we do not think that the Sisters should stop attending courses in theology. If convenient at all times in the past, a serious preparation in the Bible and theology is nowadays a definite must. Sisters who, by profession — should we say *by the commitment* to which their profession is for life *involved* — are consecrated to teach in schools and colleges and thus cannot lack a solid preparation in these vital matters. On the other hand, not all priests and professors of theology have become afflicted by the heretical contagion. Such a view would be too pessimistic and even incompatible with the Spirit of truth which enlivens the Church. Rather, the religious superiors should exercise prudence in securing for their Sisters, especially for the young Sisters, the ministry — inservice, as they say — of competent and reliable scribes who may bring, in harmonious blend, out of the stores of Church's faith "*both new and old*" (Mt. 13:52).

2. *Is the practice of indulgences still relevant?*

On this point — the core of the questions in the community dialogue of our interrogator — the Sisters may be reassured and they may go on undisturbed with their tradition of exhorting their pupils towards sanctification through the sacred indulgences. True to the ideal of renewal expressed by the Council Fathers on this matter, Pope Paul VI first published his Apostolic Constitution *The Doctrine of Indulgences*, dated January 1, 1967. Then, June 29th, 1968, through the Sacred Penitentiary, he issued the new *Enchiridion of Indulgences. Norms and Grants* (English Ed. by the Catholic Book Publishing Co. (1969 New York)). In his Constitution, the Pope summarized the traditional doctrine of the Church on the need for atonement and satisfaction of God for Men's sins as a means towards a perfect restoration of order between the sinner and the offended Lover. Herein comes the comforting dogma, *the Communion of saints*, by which, as members of the mystical Body, we are united with Christ our Head and, after having been absolved of serious offenses in the sacrament of penance, we offer to God to surpassing satisfactions of Our Lord, his Mother and the Saints as from a treasure which is common property of all who are in the state of God's grace and love. The Apostolic Constitution follows step by step the Church's pronouncements on indulgences from the Apostles, though the Fathers and the Councils, up to Vatican II and to the very Acts of Paul VI in his Epistle *Sancrosancta Protiunculae*. Here the doctrine, just as that of all defined dogmas, remains untouched. Note the Pope's words:

As for those of the faithful who are repentant and *strive to attain this 'metanoia'*, the Church comes to their help, for the reason that, having sinned, they now aspire to that holiness, with which they were clothed in Baptism. By grants of indulgences, she enfolds these her children in a maternal embrace, helping and sustaining them in their weakness and frailty. An indulgence, therefore, is not an easy way, by which we can escape the necessity of doing penance for sin. It is rather a support, which each of the faithful, humbly conscious of his weakness, finds in the Mystical Body of Christ, 'collaborating in its entirety by charity, example and prayers to effect his conversion' (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, n. 11): A.A.S., 58 (1966), p. 632. (*Enchiridion of Indulgences*, p. 101).

That much on the relevance of the indulgences after the Council. Now, in regard to the practice of distributing the Church's treasure, more suitable *Norms* have from now on been established. In accordance to these norms plenary indulgences, even those granted *toties quoties*, may be obtained only once a day. In this manner, the reduced number of plenary indulgences may promote a greater appreciation of the gift. Yet, *at the moment of death*, a new plenary indulgence may be obtained by the faithful even if the dying person has already obtained a plenary indulgence that same day. Also, a new measure, if the word be allowed in such spiritual matters, has been established for *partial indulgence*. The old measure on terms of *days* and *years* is no longer used. Instead we read:

The faithful who at least with a contrite heart perform an action to which a partial indulgence is attached obtain, in addition to the remission of temporal punishment acquired by the action itself, an equal remission of punishment through the intervention of the Church. (Norms. 5).

From the foregoing, we can see the theological vacuity of these modern expressions so appealing to beginners. But expressions of this kind have always appealed to all freshmen, and even to less quick sophomores.

3. *Three prayers.*

Yes, the prayers recited daily in common by the Sisters after Mass and Communion are still enriched with precious indulgences. These three prayers with a number of others are listed in the new *Enchiridion* and are as follows:

a. *Anima Christi.*

Partial indulgence. Grant 10.

b. *Adoro te devote.*

Partial indulgence. Grant 4.

c. *En ego, o bone et dulcissime Iesu.*

A *plenary* indulgence is granted on each Friday of Lent and Passion-tide to all faithful, who after Communion, recite the above prayer before an image of Christ Crucified; on other days of the year the indulgence is *partial*. Grant 22.

THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

SURVEY SHOWS HIGH RATIO OF SUNDAY MASS ATTENDANCE

More than 45 per cent of the "obliged" (*obligati*) faithful in the Archdiocese of Manila attend the Sunday Masses.

This was revealed in a survey conducted by a special committee headed by Bishop Bienvenido Lopez and composed of priests and lay leaders with the help of able statisticians.

The projections and figures are a Summary-Report and an Evaluative-Comparative Study on Mass attendance and communicants contained in a pamphlet issued by the Arzobispado. The term *OBLIGATI* used here refers to Catholics of seven years of age and above who are obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and Holydays and are bound by the Easter precept.

1. *The Archdiocese of Manila has:*

- a. 106 parishes, a total population of 3,324,004 and a total Catholic population of 2,843,747 (86.24%) of the total population with 2,266,632 as *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary Sunday Mass-Attendance of 1,037,198 that is 45.76% of the total number of *obligati*, 36.47% of the total Catholic population and 31.21% of the total population.
- c. A total number of 196,355 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 18.95% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance; 8.66% of the total number of *obligati*; 6.90% of the total Catholic population and 5.91% of the total population.

2. *The City of Manila has:*

- a. 33 parishes, a total population of 1,287,176 with a total Catholic population of 1,095,280 (85.09% of the total population) with 873,098 as *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance of 515,538; that is 59.05% of the total number of *obligati*; 47.07% of the total Catholic population.
- c. A total number of 87,272 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 16.94% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass attendance, 10.00% of the number of *obligati*; 7.97% of the total population.

3. *Quezon City has:*

- a. 16 parishes, a total population of 505,844 with a total Catholic population of 431,390 (85.28% of the total population) with 358,150 as *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance of 188,989, that is 52.77% of the total number of *obligati*; 43.81% of the total Catholic population and 37.36% of the total population.
- c. A total number of 39,200 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 20.74% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance; 10.95% of total number of *obligati*; 9.09% of the Catholic population and 7.75% of the total population.

4. *Pasay City has:*

- a. 6 parishes, with a total population of 141,442 and a total Catholic population of 122,617 (86.69% of the total population with 96,139 as *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance of 40,033; that is 41.64% of the total number of *obligati*; 32.65% of the total Catholic population and 28.30% of the total population.
- c. A total number of 6,757 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 16.88% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance; 7.03% of the total number of *obligati*; 5.51% of the total Catholic population; and 4.78% of the total population.

5. *Caloocan City has:*

- a. 5 parishes with a total population of 220,631 and a total Catholic population of 194,168 (88.01% of the total population). 154,754 are *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance of 31,821; that is 20.56% of the total number of *obligati*; 16.39% of the total Catholic population and 14.42% of the total population.
- c. A total number of 7,915 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 24.87% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance, 5.11% of the total number of *obligati*; 4.08% of the total Catholic population and 3.59% of the total population.

6. *The Province of Rizal has:*

- a. 46 parishes with a total population of 1,148,911 and a total Catholic population of 984,292 (85.67% of the total population), 784,484 are *obligati*.
- b. A total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance of 260,817; that is 33.25% of the total number of *obligati*; 26.50% of the total Catholic population and 22.70% of the total population.

- c. A total number of 55,211 ordinary-Sunday Communicants; that is 21.01% the total number of *obligati*; 5.61% of the total catholic population and 4.81% of the total ordinary-Sunday Mass Attendance; 7.04% of the total population.

LARGEST — EVER NUMBER OF VOCATIONS

Fifty-eight have entered St. Mary's seminary in Santa Barbara, California (USA) this year. The event, rather unique in a period like the present when religious vocations are scarce, has been celebrated by the Vincentian Fathers (Congregation of the Missions), who in their 150 years of existence in the United States, have never had such a large group of novices. Fifteen of the group came from St. Vincent High School in Montebello, near Los Angeles; the others studied in schools conducted by the Vincentians: Lemont, Illinois; Cape Girardeau in Missouri; and Beaumont in Texas.

COMMUNICATIONS FOUNDATION RELEASES DOCUMENTARY FILM

"How does the Catholic Church with its institutions come to the aid of American society?" In response to this question the U.S. Catholic Conference has produced, in collaboration with the Catholic Foundation of Communications a documentary film in colour, entitled "You are my people."

The short film, which lasts about 26 minutes, has been produced in New Orleans and shows the activities of 5,300 priests, sisters and laity working in schools, hospital, social centers, and other places.

"Although produced in New Orleans," said Bishop Joseph Bernardin, Secretary General of the Catholic Conference, "the film has a significance of much wider scope and gives an idea of the action of the Church in community service in general." The title, "You are my people," derives from a musical theme of the documentary which is a liturgical folk song, composed and sung by the Damiens, a group of five seminarians from New Orleans.

NEW MEMBERS OF COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

The Pope has added 11 new Bishop-members to the Pontifical Commission for Communications Media. They are Archbishop Hannan of New Orleans, U.S.A.; Maronite-rite Archbishop Elie Farah of Cyprus; Archbishop Motolese of Taranto. Italy; Archbishop Hyacinth Thiandoum of Dakar, Senegal; Archbishop Cantero Cuaderno of Zaragoza, Spain; Archbishop Fortier of Sherbrooke. Que.; Archbishop Picachy of Calcutta, India; Bishop Wilhelm Kempf of Limburg, Germany; Auxiliary Bishop Muldoon of Sydney, Australia; Bishop Jobidon of Mzuzu, Malawi; and Bishop Lucien Metzinger, S.S.C.C., of the independent prelature of Ayaviri, Peru.

POPE PRAISES Y. C. W.

Pope Paul VI sent a message of good will to Rienze Rupasinghe, president of the Young Christian Workers (YCW), during the international Convention in Beirut, Lebanon.

Nothing that this meeting follows similar ones in Rome, Rio de Janeiro and Bangkok, Pope Paul praised the organization for launching the future apostolate for young workers. "These," he said, "form one massive bloc, know the same difficulties, live the same trials and the same hopes, and are anxious and impatient to make their mark on the world."

"To these youths, the YCW movement offers a free and uncomplicated gift of fraternal friendship. In the small communities a ferment of the Church that fortifies the best aspirations of one for the other and leads those young to the light of the Gospel... the best work of the YCW movement, today as yesterday."

Praising the international scope of the organization and the love of neighbor it inculcates, the Pope went on to express his thanks to "this movement which finds in every one of its groups a cell of the Church... vivified by divine life."

The Pope encouraged the delegates to "go forward, ardently and generously, calling all young workers around the world to constitute with you the people of God in a community of love."

SURVEY OF FRENCH CATHOLICS

Two-thirds of French Catholics responding to an informal survey by the bishops favoured keeping the obligation of priestly celibacy.

Of the 50,000 lay persons responding to the survey on the life and ministry of priests and bishops, 40% were opposed to priests holding non-priestly jobs. Most of the respondents were very cautious about political involvement on the part of priests.

The survey was not scientifically conducted. It was merely a consultation initiated without a precise questionnaire by the bishops and carried on by various newspapers, organizations and Catholic movements.

Almost all those responding were practising Catholics, but the social classes in France were very unequally represented. Of the respondents, 27.4% were professional persons — although they make up only 4.3% of the population — and 4.1% of the responses came from the working class — which is 29% of the population.

The survey or consultation, was initiated last spring by the bishops to prepare for the national assemblies of bishops and priests in May and October.

The results have only now been published by the bishops' commission for the lay apostolate.

Individual responses often stressed that the priest is "the witness of eternal realities," a consecrated man, separated from the world. Many said they regret that the priest does not pray enough, or is involved in "activism."

Responses also asked that priest be submissive to the Pope and the bishops.

Despite the conservatism of most response, a sizable minority expressed the view that the structures of the Church must be entirely rethought, that priests should be able to work at non-priestly jobs and that married men should be ordained. Many respondents said that priests are too clerical and should be more concerned with cooperating with lay persons.

CATHOLIC STATISTICS FOR INDIA

The Catholic population of India increased from 6,515,592 in 1964 to 7,607,694 in 1968; the number of priests rose from 7,751 to 8,680; the number of foreign priests serving in India declined.

In the period 1964-1968; the number of Brothers rose from 1,503 to 2,136 and the number of Sisters from 23,673 to 30,305. The number of foreign nuns working in India fell from 2,115 to 2,007.

All of the 17 archdioceses in India are headed by Indian-born prelates. Of the 56 residential bishops only 14 are foreign-born.

The Indian government has been encouraging the "Indianization" of Christian missions, and has repeatedly reaffirmed that foreign missionaries will be permitted into the country only in exceptional circumstances when no suitable Indian is available.

CATHOLIC STATISTICS FOR JAPAN

The Catholic population of Japan increased by 4.079 last year, the lowest annual increase since 1947, according to figures released by the National Catholic Committee.

As of June 30, 1969, there were 348,422 Catholics in a total population of 102 million.

There was a decline of 4.516 in the number of catechumens from 13,716 in 1968 to 9,200 in 1969.

For the first time since 1947, infant Baptisms — 6,792 — exceeded those of adults — 6,445.

The number of Japanese priests, Religious and diocesan, stayed about the same: 716 in 1969, compared to 713 in 1968. There was a decrease of 26 in the number of missionary priest, from 1,191 in 1968 to 1,165 in 1969.

There was a decrease of 80 in the number of major seminarians to a total of 1,595.

Japanese Sisters number 5,125, an increase of 141; missionary Sisters decreased by 46 to 1,002.

The statistics indicate that Catholic educational institutions continue to grow, despite the extreme difficulty of maintaining private schools, and that Catholic activity in the field of social welfare also continues to expand.

In 1967, for example, seven Catholic institutions cared for 602 handicapped children; in 1969, 13 Catholic institutions cared for 1,124.

DE COLORES

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