

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
Religion Department

**WANTED: JOYFUL LEADERS**

**Editorial**

**TRUE AND FALSE PLURALISM**

**Paul VI**

**RECONCILIATION — THE WAY TO PEACE**

**RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL  
IN THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS**

**Luigi Ciappi, O.P.**

**THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS**

**Cardinal John Wright**

**SOURCES FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS**

**Basilio P. Balajadia**

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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## EDITORIAL

### Wanted: Joyful Leaders

The evangelization of the young is a pressing problem of the Church everywhere in the world, according to the recently concluded World Synod of Bishops.

Cardinal Julio Rosales of Cebu, speaking at the fifth general session of the Synod, recommended that new forms and methods must be found to work out a catechesis adapted to the youth's terms of references.

Another speaker, however, felt that the present-day Church's trouble in preaching the Gospel to the young does not lie principally in structures or in approaches or methodologies. It is chiefly the problem of the ministers of the Church who very often fail to give witness that they are heralds of good news — joyful news.

"Very often men today no longer perceive the message of joy contained in the Gospel. The young feel attracted to the figure of Christ, to the Gospel and to some men who clearly live it fully and who are therefore credible; but they are not attracted to the Church."

Still another speaker pointed out that young people frequently see a bishop or priest only during Mass or some religious function. "If they do not perceive in him on those occasions . . . joy and a spirit of faith, they do not believe in the faith. They frequently find that the liturgy is celebrated in an impersonal manner, without joy and without any real obvious faith on the part of the celebrant. This does not seem to them to reflect the Gospel as they understand it. They recognize the paradox of the joyless herald of the Good News and are repelled by it."

As the joyful season of Christmas approaches, it is most timely for Bishops, priests, Sisters and all those involved in youth work, to ask themselves if indeed they attract young people with the joy they

have found in Christ, or whether their personal gloom or stern bearing warn young people seeking the joyful Christ to go knocking elsewhere.

## In This Issue

The theme of World Peace Day, "Reconciliation — the Way to Peace" is also the theme of this month's issue of the **Boletín**. In this way we hope our readers will have sufficient time to reflect on this matter and let their thoughts mature in time for January 1, the red-letter day for peace.

The Pope touched on so many significant topics in his general audience addresses this year. We cannot cope with the task of informing our readers on all of them. But we would not like this year to end without bringing to your attention what the Pope said on **True and False Pluralism** in the Church. The Pope, in a bid for the reconciliation of those who regard Catholic dogma "as if it were a prison of theological and scientific thought," invites them to recollect "what security and breadth of truth, what variety of expression Catholic dogma offers to the human spirit, what an invitation to reflection and what joy to the mind (it brings)." To prevent confusion and disintegration in doctrine, the Pope warns against the formula, "Scripture alone," inasmuch as it implies independence from the magisterium. He urges us to preserve the "unifying and festive pluri-symphony of Pentecost" and not go back to the "confusion of languages" narrated in Genesis.

In proposing the theme of the World Day of Peace, 1975, the Pope was motivated by the aims of the Holy Year — renewal and reconciliation — and by the need to emphasize "vertical peace" or the return to God, and "horizontal peace" or the return to dialogue, good understanding and cooperation among men.

Fr. Luigi Ciappi's article on **Reconciliation and Renewal in the Mind of St. Thomas** reminds us that reconciliation is not just a question of goodwill; it involves measuring up to the demands of God's justice. The key to reconciliation is Christ, who alone could "measure up" to God's strict justice. This he did through his Passion and Death on the Cross. He reconciled us to God by expiating for our sins, and not just by revealing God's mercy to us.

For this month's reflection we invite our readers to set aside a few quiet moments for Cardinal Wright's article on the **Sacred Heart of Jesus**. The Sacred Heart is a most "persuasive symbol" for God's invitation to Peace through Reconciliation. As a Heart, it speaks of Love and Peace; as a symbol encircled with thorns, it speaks of the price of Love.

Our Bible Study series is continued by a professor of De La Salle College who finished his studies in the University of Santo Tomas. His concise review of the **Sources for the Historical Jesus** indicates what reconciliation could be achieved between historical science and Christian faith.

Fr. Pablo Fernandez concludes his series on the **History of the Church in the Philippines** with the 50th Chapter. Our readers who have been following his articles will miss them for a while but some might still appear in our Boletin next year.

The Secretary of the **Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship** explains the use of vestments at Mass. His explanation might prove unpopular to some, but we invite our readers to give it serious thought.

Fr. Herman Graf takes a conciliatory approach in answering a question on the **Perpetual Help Novena** as related to the celebration of the Mass.

We hope our readers will not fail to notice that this issue of the Boletin carries Biblical Notes and Homilies for **January**.

We are indeed looking forward to the Holy Year as the year of renewal and reconciliation.

PAUL VI

## TRUE AND FALSE PLURALISM

Brothers and Children!

Once again we shall keep to the simple, familiar language we use at General Audiences, even if we must propose for your reflection a rather obscure term which has lately found favour in doctrinal analysis. Catholic, as well, because it is often spoken of as a liberating and modern formula; and this term is "pluralism". We do not intend now to speak of the pluralism of philosophical or political systems, nor the religious one apart from the Christian sphere.

Pluralism is an ambiguous word, that is, it has two meanings: the first one is very fine. This refers to the fruitfulness of our Catholic doctrine which, preserving a sincere, profound identity of content, that is, remaining very close to its own univocal reality, to the "una fides" of which the Apostle Paul spoke with such clarity and authority (Eph 4, 3-6; 13; Phil 2, 2; Rom 15, 5; 12, 16; cf. Jn 10, 16; etc.), possesses an enormous richness of expression for every language (we recall, for example, the miracle of tongues on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, 4-8); for every era in history (cf. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 1845); for every age and degree of human life (cf. the kerygma, or primitive preaching, the didaché, or apostolic doctrine, the first symbols, or doctrinal syntheses, as rules of doctrine, which took the name of credo, and then catechisms and doctrinal works of every form, such as the medieval theological *summae*, and the more recent works with a wider and more systematic explanation of Catholic dogma). We cannot omit the many vibrant words of the liturgy which vie with those of the doctrine, so as to offer the well-known equation between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi*. How then can we forget the inexhaustible literary production which in itself documents how the strict observance of doctrinal norms, far from extinguishing the blossoming of the spiritual genius of fantasy and poetry, rather, induces and stimulates it to a wonderful and ever new plurality of form and word?

**MAGISTERIUM IS NOT A PRISON OF THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT**

This is the pluralism of the Catholic Church to which we can ascribe that which springs from the probings of personal quests and remarkable expressions, to which Catholic doctrine calls the mystic and theologian as well as the artist, as long as these contemplatives, scholars and semantic prophets have Truth as an ingrained law in their hearts; that Truth of which the Holy Spirit is surely the teacher (Jn 14, 26; 16, 23), but always in accordance with the interpretive guarantee of that Magisterium of the Church to which Christ entrusted the ministry of the Light (Mt 5, 14); of the Word (Lk 10, 16); of authenticity of faith and communion (cf. Denz. Sch. 3050, ff.; *Lumen Gentium*, No. 18; *Dei Verbum*, 12, 23; *Unit. Red.*, 21).

We could compare the doctrinal pluralism of the Catholic Church to that of an orchestra, in which the plurality of the instruments and the diversity of their respective parts combine to produce a single and admirable harmony.

We would like to remind those who regard Catholic dogma, that is, a religious doctrine revealed by God and as such declared by the Church's magisterium, almost as if it were a prison of theological and scientific thought, to recollect, we say, what security and breadth of truth, what variety of expression Catholic dogma offers to the human spirit, what an invitation to reflection and what joy to the mind that is brought onto the path of the supernatural science of God and man. Theologians, humble and wise, know well the pricelessness of this superlative experience (cf. Denz. Sch. 3016, 3020, 3044; etc.) To them we give our respectful greetings and encouragement.

**DOCTRINAL DISINTEGRATION**

This respect for the magisterium is all the more necessary, for in professing didactic pluralism in the dogmatic unity of Christian doctrine, Catholics always have before them the formula of the ancient and modern Reformers: "Scripture alone," as if they were the true faithful of religious unity, and as if Sacred Scripture were not itself derived from Apostolic Tradition (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 7-10), and torn away from apostolic teaching, were not exposed to the danger, terribly real, of being abandoned to individual interpretation, indefinite centrifugal and pluralistic, that is, to that "private judgment" which has pulverized unity of faith into innumerable multiplicities of personal opinions, vainly or arbitrarily restrained by a "regulating norm," that is, by a binding interpretation emanating from the community; and then this, too, exceeded by the sub-



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jective inspiration that the Holy Spirit would suggest directly to the soul. Thus, "the Protestant doctrine of private judgment, or of the sole authority of the Holy Spirit, as the authentic interpreter of Scriptures, opens the door to the most radical philosophico-religious subjectivism" (Prof. Siro Offelli). Must we leave the unifying and festive pluri-symphony of Pentecost, and go back to the "confusion of languages," of which mysterious event the Bible tells us (Gen. 11, 1-9)? What ecumenism can we build in that way? What unity of the Church can we regain without the unity of faith? Where would Christianity end up, where, even more, Catholicism, if once again today, under a specious but inadmissible pluralism, the doctrinal disintegration it can bring with it were accepted as legitimate and hence ecclesial as well?

The true religion, which we believe ours to be, cannot be called legitimate nor efficacious if it is not orthodox, that is, deriving from an authentic and univocal relationship with God. Nor can our thirst for truth and life be quenched by a vague, even if moving and sincere, religious feeling, or by a free spiritual ideology built up with autonomous personal preparation, or an effort to elevate to a religious level the yet noble, impassioned expressions of lyrical and moral sociology of entire peoples, or the hermeneutic vivisection which attributes a natural or mythical origin to Christianity; or any other theory or observance, that leaves out of consideration the infinitely mysterious, extremely clear voice which resounded on the mountain of the transfiguration and referred to Jesus, radiant as the sun and white as the snow: "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Mt. 15, 5).

Blessed are we, if we count ourselves among the little children, who know how to listen to such a voice and look forward to the happiness of immortal certainty. With our Apostolic Blessing.

*General Audience Address  
August 28, 1974*

# INFORMATION

## THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE 1975

### "RECONCILIATION — THE WAY TO PEACE"

Two main reasons have inspired the Holy Father in the choice of this theme for the World Day of Peace 1975.

The first reason is its connection with the Holy Year. The latter puts forward two inseparable aims: Christian renewal and reconciliation.

The second reason is its connection with peace. In the first place, "vertical peace": the return to God, or conversion, that each individual, the "subject of peace", is called upon to accomplish within himself on the occasion of this great Jubilee. This element carries further the statement which characterized the 1974 Day of Peace: "Peace depends on you too"; it is like a new link in the chain of the World Days of Peace. In the second place there is "horizontal peace": peace among men. This peace between individuals, social groups and nations cannot be reduced to mere coexistence. It goes beyond conciliation. It presupposes reconciliation. In other words, after one or more breaks (wars, or social civil or ideological confrontations), it means a voluntary return to dialogue, to good understanding and to cooperation.

Such a result cannot be obtained through the mere interplay of common interest, or through the widespread conviction of the anachronistic and senseless character of modern war. Peace demands mutual forgiveness, if it is to be real, lasting and human. Such forgiveness, for sinful man, is a difficult act, even an impossible one without the grace of enlightenment, humility and love—a grace that God alone can give or give again. The very object of the Holy Year is to inspire this form of repentance and this interiorization of peace with a view to a fraternal commitment at the service of all.

The answers given today to these questions can be put into three categories.

For some people, peace is defined as a conflict-free interval between wars, conflicts being regarded as evils in themselves, or,

at the very least, as abnormal accidents to be regarded as coming into the sphere of error or sin.

On the other hand, many of our contemporaries, including a certain number of Christians, give an absolute value to conflicts and violence, seeing them as the only cause of historical progress and therefore as good things in themselves; and they consider reconciliation as a utopian form of disarmament or as an immoral and injurious drug.

Finally, there are many others who have adopted the positions taken by the Council and by the episcopal and papal Magisterium in recent years, and have a wider and more realistic view of the problem. The following are some indications of this view.

# I

## A WAY WHICH IS CHALLENGED

### *Peace is made up of reconciliations*

Becoming reconciled on the individual level is certainly a difficult thing and an act of high virtue, one that a person may or may not succeed in carrying out and one that represents a specific value of the Christian religion. At this personal level the problem involves difficulty, but the principle is clear: the forgiveness of offences is asked for and lived every day in the Our Father.

Without any doubt, many quarrels and disputes come to an end through a simple effort of good will. These reconciliations have a great educative and spiritual value — for those who bring them about, for those who benefit from them and for those who witness them. And so, far from neglecting these little daily reconciliations, we ought to increase their number: they form as it were the thread of the fabric of society. Is it not true to say that life in common — married life, family life, life in the community, business life, city life, the nation's life — is a continuous succession of quarrels overcome and even forgiven as many as "seventy times seven" times (cf. Mt 18, 22)? Though less spectacular than large-scale ruptures and traumas, they have little interest for the press or for literature. But they count far more in value and numbers.

### *Do people have a right to be reconciled?*

But when one comes to other types of conflict, collective ones, the problem of reconciliation seems to change character. It poses a problem of conscience. Do people have the right to be reconciled?

At first sight, this question might appear scandalous. Does it not go counter to the Gospel: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go: first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Mt 5, 23-24)?

But if we examine the matter more closely, do not social, civil or international conflicts mostly appear to be conflicts of loyalty, and therefore conflicts of duty? In order that I may remain loyal to the various groups to which I belong (my family, milieu, work, social class, religion, party, race, country, colour), am I not perhaps often obliged, unwittingly and unwillingly, to fight other groups—groups to which I feel loyalty for other reasons and in which I sometimes count just as many friends, but which constitute a hindrance, through their action or their very existence, sometimes to the most fundamental rights of my own community?

## II

### TRUE AND FALSE RECONCILIATION

1. Conflict exists. It must not be removed from the problem of peace.

For one thing, society is closely bound up with conflict. Within society we find a mass of struggles and oppositions, everywhere and at all levels. Like the cockle and the wheat, war and peace cannot be separated in this world. It is only through surmounting ever recurring confrontations that peace can exist and be perpetually created. Such confrontations are easily explained: the number of human freedoms in actions on the same planet inevitably poses to every individual and group the question of "the other", in its twofold aspect: defence and aggression. Whatever one may say, conflict is a fact; if it were otherwise, neither would reconciliation be any longer a permanent fact and duty.

It is for Christian discernment to recognize, in each case, what springs from adjustments of social life and what on the contrary springs from sin: hate, pride and selfishness.

2. Recognition of conflict as a fact does not entail the necessary transition from the fact to the right — and still less to the duty — to uphold and radicalize struggles already taking place or systematically to create fresh ones. For conflict is not an end but a means. It has limits and criteria of lawfulness.

3. The first task of reconciliation is to try to solve the problems posed by these confrontations, by dealing less with their effects

than their causes, whether immediate and well defined or remote and general.

4. For this very reason, reconciliation finds its own limits in its counterfeits, which we can only briefly touch upon here and which explain the fact that a certain number of conflicts escape it, partially or for a time.

### *Two counterfeits*

The first counterfeit: injustice. Here is how Paul VI, among many other interventions, denounces injustice: "Peace can lead to serious sacrifices . . . It will ever lead to the generosity of forgiveness and reconciliation: but never by way of abject betrayal of human dignity . . . never by way of baseness. Peace will never be without a hunger and thirst for justice. Peace will never betray the higher values of life in order to survive" (Message for the World Day of Peace 1974, p. 9).

The second counterfeit: reconciliation without truth or against truth. In order to be reconciled, one does not have the right to lose one's consistency, if reconciliation prevents one from remaining oneself, if it causes one to diminish one's personality in the social group, to be lost in that group, and at the same time to lose one's freedom, fidelity and faith. In this regard Paul VI reminds us of Saint Paul's admonition: "Do not be conformed to this world" (Rom 12:2). Reconciliation is not the same as indifferentism, either moral or religious. John XXIII insists strongly on this point in *Pacem in Terris* (157).

Ecumenical reconciliation, such as it has developed and been lived since the Council, has succeeded in avoiding this risk, and has taken as its rule the pursuit in common of the greatest possible conformity to Christ the Truth.

The same goes for the fraternal dialogue with other religions.

5. In all cases, even when respect for "the demands of the faith" obliges us to "await with confidence" the hour of total collective reconciliation in this sphere (cf. Paul VI, General Audience of 10 April 1974), this fact must neither suppress nor delay dialogue, friendship and collaboration with people here and now (cf. *Pacem in Terris*, 157-160).

This distinction, at the same time as the duty of Christian consistency, is applicable with still greater pertinence to collaboration with men of good will who profess "false philosophical theories"; and it is therefore also applicable to reconciliation with them on the personal level.

## III

**RECONCILIATION: A DUTY AND A SOLUTION**

Reconciliation, distinguished from its caricatures, is not only a right. It is also a duty. A duty confirmed by history verified and lived by the wisdom of the peoples. From time immemorial, for the settling of differences, the internal and external policy of States has been using negotiation, conciliation and compromise. This prepares the way for the final result (an alliance, a peace treaty) through a series of progressive stages: talks, truces, armistices. Civil and international life would be unliveable without these agreements, which subsequently, more or less quickly, become part of the history of civilizations.

Two contemporary facts, in any case, bear witness to the above: the reconciliation of the belligerent peoples straight after the horror of the Second World War; and ecumenical reconciliation. Who could have predicted, only thirty years ago, these two undoubted results? And how many other similar examples should be quoted?

*A solution offered by God*

One understands better when one goes beyond the level of reason and experience and returns to the sources of Faith.

Here one sees that reconciliation is a solution before being a duty. It is the fundamental solution, the way to peace. Reconciliation of men with one another derives directly from the reconciliation that he has given us through his Son. It is given free, but is not for this reason also automatic. The gift is neither imposed, not ready-made. It is not a magical amnesty. Every man, every community, is called upon to recognize, in itself and concretely, this peace thus acquired and promised. The Risen Christ, through his Holy Spirit, continues to make it real through the course of the centuries.

For Saint Paul, the word "reconciliation" is synonymous with redemption, liberation and sanctification. It therefore evokes (and its etymology confirms it) an idea of change, progress and strengthening.

Far from being a step backwards or a conservative and paralyzing immobility, a justification of the status quo, Christian reconciliation is, in its very essence, an improvement with regard to what existed before the dispute. It is an option and a caution for the future. It brings new ideas and paths of which the friends of yesterday, subsequently become enemies, had not thought. This

is how it puts an end to their dispute: it opens up for them a new path which alters the data of the problem. Thus reconciliation mobilizes not only the heart and humility but also the imagination and living powers of the old enemies for a common and new action and construction — in short, for a fresh and original peace.

*For Peace, for the future*

When Paul VI insists so strongly on the combined concept "Renewal-Reconciliation", he is stating not only the aims of the Holy Year but the very axis on which peace turns.

Both in fact bring into play a fundamental reality, a reality that one runs the risk of forgetting in the very ardour of the struggle for justice: society is not only bound up with conflict; it is also and primarily a communion. That which unites man, by nature and grace, is stronger than that which divides them. The community instinct is universal. It is the builder of peace and civilization. Mutual aid, solidarity, friendship and love make up society, the "human family". Such are the facts that emerge from a scientific examination of sociology and history.

Revelation brings to this experience the explanation and the new dimension of the Word, the example and the Resurrection of Christ. The Spirit of God is active down the ages. The love born of him is stronger than hate and death. To be reconciled, in the name of this love which cannot come to terms with injustice or falsehood, is neither to betray nor to dream: it is to make human love the cause of history and of history's progress.

*Steps towards a pastoral activity of Peace based on Reconciliation*

Here a whole pastoral programme, a whole education, a whole spirituality of reconciliation, could find a place. For the Church has received from God, and entrusts to each of her members, "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5, 16-20).

Do the Church's members at the present time witness to this? In civil life? Within the Church? What is the meaning of these contestations, vertical or horizontal, in the midst of the People of God? The Holy Father has on several occasions dealt with and clarified this problem and has also given it for a criterion that of renewal: "It is only from this interior operation that there can also flow the reconciliation of men...: the Pentecost of grace could also become the Pentecost of the new brotherhood" (Letter of Paul VI to Cardinal de Furstenberg, President of the Central Committee for the Holy Year, 31 May 1973).



The solution therefore is not to shut oneself up in intolerance and isolationism but, in the very heart of the conflicts, to rise above them and to seek solutions along new paths. Reconciliation is neither a standstill nor a retreat: it is a march towards the future, the way to peace.

### ADDITIONAL NOTE

Some References concerning the theme of the World Day of Peace 1975.

This year, the announcement of the theme of the World Day of Peace comes after months of intense spiritual, doctrinal and pastoral preparation on the double theme of the Holy Year: through the word and documents of Paul VI in the first place, constituting as they do the pedagogical "advent"; then through very numerous oral or written interventions of bishops, priests and lay people of the whole world; and through a great number of religious, theological, catechetical and apostolic recommendations. All those who will take part in the organization and running of the next World Day of Peace have already found, and will find even more abundantly, in this valuable, diversified and yet homogeneous patrimony ample material for reflection for the detailed study of the theme and for its diffusion at all levels, both within the Church and among the public. The present text of presentation therefore has the prime purpose of referring its readers to these elements.

#### I. Biblical Texts (New Testament)

Gospel: St. Matthew 5, 24: "leave your gift there"; 5, 9: "blessed are the peacemakers".

Acts: 7, 26.

St. Paul: 1 Cor 7, 11; 2 Cor 5, 20: "be reconciled to God".

Rom 5, 10: "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son".

Col 1, 20-22: "and through him to reconcile to himself all things... by the blood of his cross".

Rom 12, 9-21; 13, 8-10: where there is hate, Christ has come to put his love.

Eph 2, 15-16: "...through the Cross... bringing the hostility to an end".

Rom 12, 14, 17: repay no one evil for evil.

#### II. Text of Paul VI

9 May 1975: general audience—announcement of the Holy Year.



- 31 May 1973: letter to Cardinal de Furstenberg, President of the Central Committee for the Holy Year—Renewal and Reconciliation.
- 28 November 1973: general audience—Reconciliation in the Church.
- 8 December 1973: Message for the World Day of Peace.
- 21 December 1973: address to the Sacred College—contestation and renewal.
- 1 January 1974: homily at the Mass for the World Day of Peace—peace through conscience and the detente of minds, and not through the obstinacy of one against the others.
- 10 January 1974: address to the Diplomatic Corps—Oppose the reasons of force with the force of reason.
- 14 April 1974: general audience—the duty of reconciliation.
- 23 May 1974: Bull of Indiction of the Holy Year (*Apostolorum Limina*)—Reconciliation among Christians.
- 8 June 1974: Closing of the General Assembly of the Italian Bishops —“The Church is communion”.

### THEME OF WORLD PEACE DAY PRESENTED TO THE PRESS

*The subject chosen by Paul VI for the 1975 World Peace Day was presented in the Press Office of the Holy See on 11 July. The contents of the documents, “Reconciliation, the way to Peace”, were illustrated by Most Rev. Ramon Torrella Cascante, Vice President of the Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax”, and Mons. Bernard Lalande.*

*Mons. Torrella Cascante read the following presentation of the subject.*

World Peace Day, instituted by Pope Paul VI in the year 1968, continues to represent an opportunity for reflection and action for the whole People of God and all men of goodwill.

It is a clear testimony of Paul VI's constant effort to make peace possible, with such tenacity and persevering love of humanity.

This year too, with the subject of reconciliation, emphasis is laid on the pastoral dimension of the Day and its universality.

Two essential reasons prompted the Holy Father to choose this subject: its connection with the Holy Year and its connection with peace. Peace in the “vertical” sense, that is, return to God, and peace in the “horizontal” sense, that is, among men. Peace cannot be reduced to mere coexistence. It goes beyond conciliation and presupposes reconciliation; to be real and lasting, it calls for

mutual forgiveness, an act that is difficult and even impossible without divine grace.

No one denies the value of "private" reconciliation between individuals. Many people, however, contest the possibility of reconciliation in social or international conflicts, which raise "conflicts of solidarity" such as to present a problem of conscience: **do we have the right to seek reconciliation?**

To answer this question, the following considerations might be useful:

— Conflict is an actual fact and must not be separated from the problems of peace. Peace is created continuously by overcoming the clashes that continue to spring up. It is for Christian discernment to evaluate, in every circumstance, what has its origin in a just settlement of social life or, viceversa, what is derived from sin: selfishness, pride, hatred.

— Recognition of the conflict does not make it possible to pass automatically from the fact to the right. Conflict, in fact, is not an end, but a means, and there are precise limits and principles governing its legitimacy.

— An action of reconciliation should tackle first the problem of the causes of the conflicts rather than the effects.

— Reconciliation meets with two limits that make its efficacy particularly difficult: injustice and the lack of truth.

— In any case, dialogue, friendship and collaboration at the personal level should always be pursued, even when the conditions for a complete reconciliation do not yet exist.

**Reconciliation is not just a right, but it is also a duty.** A duty that finds its confirmation in history.

Furthermore, if the level of reason and experience is transcended to go back to the sources of faith, it is seen that reconciliation, more than a duty, is a solution offered by God. The reconciliation of men among themselves is directly derived from God's reconciliation with man, the reconciliation that he presented to us in his Son.

Christian reconciliation does not consist in ultra-conservatism, but implies a real improvement of the situation preceding the controversy: it is an option and a guarantee for the future.

The aims of the Holy Year, expressed in the two terms **Renewal** and **Reconciliation**, are the supporting structures of peace.

Both terms stress the fact that society is not only conflict, but also, and in the first place, fellowship. The "community" urge, solidarity, friendship and love construct peace, civilization, the "human family".

Reconciliation in the name of God's Love does not mean either betraying or dreaming, but making human love an active coefficient in history.

It is necessary to develop a whole apostolate of peace by means of reconciliation. The Church has received from Christ and entrusts to each of her members the "ministry of reconciliation" Is there sufficient testimony to this ministry at present? Does this testimony exist in civil life and within the Church? Existing conflicts must be overcome in the sign of renewal and opening.

Reconciliation is neither a halt nor a falling back: it is a march forward towards the future, it is the way towards peace.

## FEATURE

# RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL IN THE MIND OF ST. THOMAS

by

Luigi Ciappi, O.P.

The fact that mankind has been reconciled to God through the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Son made man, is a truth which was foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, proclaimed in the Gospels and preached by the Apostle Paul to the Gentiles. In his letter to the Corinthians the Apostle writes: "God has reconciled us to himself in Christ. He has conferred on us the ministry of reconciliation. For God was truly in Christ, reconciling the world to himself by not reckoning against men their sins and by entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (II Cor 5, 18-19; Cf. Rom 5, 10).

But is it, perhaps, Paul's intention to state that reconciliation with God is the fruit exclusively of the Father's initiative? Does he say that the Father **does not hold man guilty** of his sin through an act of his mercy which is divorced of any need for justice? Certainly not! The Apostle repeatedly asserts that reconciliation is the fruit of the propitiation and satisfaction which the crucified Christ rendered to the justice of God for the sins of mankind. Therefore the grace of Christ reflects both the mercy and the justice of God the Father. This is the message of salvation which the Apostle proclaims to the Romans: "All have sinned and have need of the glory of God. They are justified freely by grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth as a propitiation by his blood, through faith, to manifest his justice at the present time, so that he himself is just and makes just him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom 3, 23-26; Cf. I Jn 4; Eph 2, 4; Jn 3, 24).

## INTERPRETER OF PAUL

St. Thomas was a faithful interpreter of the Apostle Paul. In his writings also, the reconciliation of the world with God is presented as the masterpiece both of the justice and of the mercy of God himself who, in the Crucified and Risen Christ seems to have

bestowed upon us the kiss of peace and perfect friendship. The Angelic Doctor does not consider that there is any contradiction between the fullness of grace and the fullness of justice, the initiative of the Father and the forgiveness merited by the Son who sacrificed himself for our ransom. He praises the **justification** earned for us by the Redeemer on the cross as being the greatest glory of the **mercy** of the Most Holy Trinity who inspired Jesus with the will to sacrifice himself for humanity.

St. Thomas writes: "The redemption of man through the Passion of Christ is perfectly in keeping with the mercy and justice of God; with justice, because Christ through his Passion made reparation for the sins of mankind and therefore man was set free by the justice of Christ: with mercy, because since man of himself is unable to make reparation for all the sins of humanity, God gave his own Son as the one who could make reparation: according to the teaching of St. Paul, "(All) are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth as a propitiation by his blood" (Rom 3, 24-25). This was a greater act of mercy than the forgiveness of sins without any reparation".<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless Aquinas does not forget to mention the apparent, though not real, contradiction in divine revelation with regard to salvation: that is, that salvation is lauded as the gift of infinite mercy and, simultaneously, as the fruit or effect of the reparation made to God by Christ. Perhaps it is this contradiction which seems so real to some modern Catholic theologians and which causes them to object to or at least to belittle (demythologize, as it is customary to put it nowadays), the **juridical** aspect of the reconciliation brought about by Christ to the extent that the redemptive, propitiatory, reparatory, expiatory aspect of the mystery of salvation has merely a metaphorical rather than a real value. They certainly seem to consider its role as secondary and negligible.

These theologians have certainly not inherited their ideas from St. Thomas. Their theories are much more in keeping with those of certain Protestant exegetes. Nor is it true to say that the doctrine of St. Thomas is outdated, since it is accepted by outstanding exegetes of today (Cf. e.g. Prat, Cordovani, Parente, Solano). I quote here a few of the more eloquent thomistic texts on this matter:

"The Passion of Christ is the cause of our reconciliation with God for two reasons. Firstly, because it wipes away sin... Secondly, because it is a sacrifice which is most pleasing to God. The

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 46, a. 1, ad 2.

effect proper to the sacrifice is, in fact, that it pays a debt to God just as man forgives an offence received because of an act of homage done to him... The fact that Christ suffered willingly was an act of such great value that for this act performed in human nature God was satisfied for all the offences received from the human race with regard to those who are united with the suffering Christ."<sup>2</sup>

### GOD IS PURE ACT

In the mind of St. Thomas there is no question of any change being brought about in a God who is pure Act and a most perfect being. In God, from all eternity, there coexist an infinite love for humanity even if that humanity is sinful, and a supreme hatred or aversion by which his most holy will rejects any form of moral evil. St. Thomas says: "Christ is said to have reconciled us to God, not in the sense that God has begun to love us again; for it is written: "With an everlasting love have I loved you" (Jer 31, 3). It is because the Passion of Christ has taken away the cause of God's hatred; both by wiping out sin and by making compensation through a good which is more acceptable."<sup>3</sup>

It may be objected: If the nailing of Christ to the cross was the greatest crime perpetrated by mankind against God, how could it bring about the reconciliation of the world with the majesty of God? Even this apparent paradox finds a brilliant solution in the words of St. Thomas, "Just as they were men who crucified Christ so also the crucified Christ himself was a man. But the love of the suffering Christ was greater than the iniquity of those who crucified him. Therefore the Passion of Christ had greater efficacy in reconciling God, with the whole human race than in arousing his disdain."<sup>4</sup>

A present-day commentator on St. Thomas writes: "Certainly the value of the Saviour's sufferings come from the love with which they were inspired and this love has the added value of divinity: this is traditional Catholic teaching. But when we see the tragedy of Calvary in all its depth and greatness can we not say that the concept of merit, of satisfaction, of sacrifice, of liberation, show us how profound is the work of human salvation and how morally rich and divine is this great event? These concepts must be raised to an even higher plane if they are to correspond to such a great event, to a meaning which transcends the concepts themselves; not

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. III, q. 49, a. 4, c.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. III, q. 49, a. 4, ad 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. III, q. 49, a. 4, ad 3.

depriving them of their original meaning but requiring deeper understanding of them."<sup>5</sup>

Aquinas, as witness and interpreter of divine revelation in perfect keeping with the mind of the Fathers and the Magisterium of the Church<sup>6</sup>, also teaches that the reconciliation of God with the world was not the effect of Christ working as an individual but of Christ as Substitute and at the same time, Head of humanity, together with whom he constitutes one mystical person, the same Mystical Body. Therefore the plan of salvation was evolved according to two principles which are also apparently opposite to each other. In reality, however, they coexist and are integrated with one another in such perfect harmony that they, as it were, take us by surprise and transcend our understanding but are not contradictory. They are the principles of substitution and solidarity. This is what is understood by the Angelic Doctor when he writes: "The head and the members form, as it were, a single mystical person. Therefore the satisfaction of Christ belongs to all his faithful who are his members. To the extent that two men are united in charity one can make satisfaction for the other."<sup>7</sup>

Presupposing this as the basis and central point of the whole plan of human salvation, it is logical to conclude that the more living members of Christ's Mystical Body share more intensely in the grace of the Head (*gratia capitis*), and consequently in his substitutive and solidary power with regard to satisfaction, redemption and reconciliation with God on behalf of the whole of mankind.

In the light of this Thomistic theology the words of Pope Paul VI in the general audience of 23rd August 1973, are even more convincing: "The Holy Year... aims to be a time of general reconciliation and sincere renewal of the Christian life."

Is it intended that the Holy Year should make up for what is believed to have been the failure of the Council? Certainly not!

The Second Vatican Council was the largest and most efficient gathering of the Church's hierarchy in the two thousand years of her history. The Council issued most important doctrinal and pastoral documents adapted to the present spiritual needs of the Church and of the modern world, but of itself it could not bring

<sup>5</sup> M. Cordovani, O.P.; *Il Salvatore*, II ed. 1946, p. 276.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. P. Parente, *Redenzione*, in "Enciclopedia Cattolica", X, coll. 615-624.

<sup>7</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 48, a. 2, ad. 1; Cfr. F. Prat, S.J., *The Theology of St. Paul*, II; J. Solano, S.J., *Santa Teresa di Lisieux e la devozione al Sacro Cuore*, in "L'Osservatore Romano", 29th August 1973, p. 5, (Italian edition).

about the updating and renewal of the new Pentecost desired by its author, Pope John XXIII. Its realization of this work was virtual and dynamic. It aroused the Church and sowed within the community the seeds of a new Christian Spring. The members of the Mystical Body must put into action the ideas of substitution and solidarity, which have been revealed to us by St. Paul, and the directives of collegiality, of corresponsibility and of subsidiarity pointed out by the Council. Thus they will collaborate generously in the realization of the Council's plan which is the purification and healthy reform of the Church in keeping with Christian ideals. "The reestablishment of spiritual and real unity within the Church is, at the present time, one of the Church's problems most urgently in need of solution." These words of the Holy Father sum up the task assigned by him to the Holy Year.

In what special way, then, can the Church's members cooperate during the Jubilee in solving the grave problem of reconciliation among the whole of humanity? How can they use the grace of God for this purpose and work for the glory of the most Holy Trinity?

There are three ways.

- 1) *Personal reconciliation with God and renewal of their own Christian life.*

Let us remember that each member of the Church is primarily responsible before God for his own salvation: "Each one of us must render an account of himself to God" (Rom 14, 12). Every Christian, therefore, is asked to become closely united with Christ, Head of the Mystical Body, during the Holy Year. This he will do by his acts of faith, of hope and of charity and the practice of the other virtues; he will participate in the Sacrifice of the Mass and devote himself to personal prayer; he will receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist; he will practice mortification. Thus he will benefit more fully from the mystery of reconciliation, that is, from the mystery of the love and friendship of the Three Divine Persons who condescend to dwell in every soul in the state of grace. This is the only way in which he can worthily respond to his calling to live united with God in Christ; that unity which was the object of Jesus' prayer to his Father at the Last Supper: "I pray not for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that all may be one; as you Father in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you have sent me" (In 17, 20-21).

Obviously, therefore, the closer are the bonds of love, unity and friendship between Christ and each of his members, the more



perfect will be the reconciliation and friendship of each believer with the Three Divine Persons and the more far-reaching the renewal of his Christian life. Also, his integration in ecclesial and world society will be more fruitful for salvation since Our Divine Saviour himself said: "I am the vine, you are the branches. Remain in me and I shall remain in you.... He who remains in me and I in him bears much fruit because without me you can do nothing" (Jn 15, 1, 4-5).

## 2) *Reconciliation with our Neighbour in the Communion of Saints*

This reconciliation will take place when these words of the **Our Father**: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", are said not only with the lips but are proclaimed from the heart and find their echo in works of generosity. This presupposes that divisions of minds and ideas will have been overcome (cf. **Letter of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to Cardinal de Furstenberg, President of the Central Committee for the Holy Year, 31 June 1973**).

The degree of reconciliation and new life in Christ will be all the more intense in proportion to the degree in which his mystical members pass on the treasures of his merits and reparation to one another. Therefore, not alone must they remove by pardon any voluntary obstacle to the movement of ecclesial charity but they must communicate the treasures of Christ knowing that such communication does not in any way deprive the original receiver. Perhaps we seem to be getting lost in the realm of mystical signs and myths! Not in the least! We rise to the higher, real consoling plane of that mystery which is the Mystical Body of Christ. In this realm the riches are communicated in an incomparably richer way than they are in our natural body: "For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, many as they are, form one body, so also is it with Christ... Thus if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it". (I Cor 12, 12-26).

As the exchange of merits and reparation increases; as good example and witness to the faith, acts of faith, hope and charity and the other virtues are multiplied; the fruits of reconciliation and renewal in Christian life will become more abundant day by day. In this way the plan of universal reconciliation which was worked out by our Heavenly Father from all eternity, is realised in Christ and through Christ in the course of the Church's history, that is, in "the fullness of time" as taught by St. Paul in his theology of salvation: "He (God) has made known to us the mystery

of his will according to his good pleasure. And this his good pleasure he purposed in him to be dispensed in the fullness of time: to re-establish all things in Christ, both those in the heavens and those on the earth" (Eph 1, 9-10).

3) *Reconciliation and Renewal as the fruit of the Jubilee Indulgence.*

Of its very nature the Holy Year is the Year of the Plenary Indulgence or the complete remission of all temporal suffering due to sin, either mortal or venial. If we consider the matter closely the acquiring of the Indulgence is inseparably connected with the complete purification of the soul from every guilt of serious sin and eternal suffering, and from every inordinate affection for the goods of this world. In fact "It has always been evident to the conscience of every Christian that sin is not only a transgression of the law of God but also the despisal of and an obstacle to personal friendship between God and man, although not always directly and openly so. As sin is a real and incalculable offence to God so it is an ungrateful refusal of the love offered by God to men in Christ who called his disciples friends and not slaves".<sup>8</sup>

The acquiring of the Jubilee Indulgence will be all the more assured if a greater effort is made by the Christian to purify himself through the Sacrament of Penance from every stain of sin whether serious or venial, to free himself from every debt of punishment, to renew his thoughts, affections, and resolutions in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, to keep away from voluntary proximate occasions of sin through the practice of mortification.

This is the traditional teaching of the Church. Therefore it is clear that the granting of the Jubilee Indulgence by the Pope, far from being a waste of the "treasures of the Church" which are the accumulation of merits earned by Christ, by the Blessed Virgin Mary and by the Saints, is a great stimulant to the perfect reconciliation of the faithful with God and with their neighbour and an integral renewal of Christian life. This, however, can only be accomplished within the Mystical Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints.

The Constitution of Paul VI on indulgences reminds us that: "Following in Christ's footsteps, the faithful have always endeavoured to help one another on their pilgrimage towards the eternal Father, by prayer, the performance of good works and by penance. The greater their charity the more closely they followed the suffering Christ, carrying each his own cross in expiation for their own sins

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<sup>8</sup> Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, 1st of January 1967, Part. I, No.2.

and the sins of others, convinced that they could help their brothers to obtain salvation from God, the Father of mercy. This is the ancient dogma of the communion of saints, according to which the life of each of the sons of God is joined, in Christ and through Christ, to the lives of all his brother Christians by a wonderful link, in the supernatural unity of the Mystical Body of Christ, in one mystical person, as it were. It is thus that one should understand the phrase: "the Church's treasury."<sup>9</sup>

Whether the plenary indulgence is applied to the souls in Purgatory in suffrage<sup>10</sup> or the person wishes to gain the indulgence for himself it always remains a spiritual good of reconciliation with God and with one's neighbour. It is a renewal of the Christian life of each one. Each member of the Mystical Body communicates these spiritual goods to all his brothers in Christ but especially to those who, like him, live in the state of grace. St. Thomas reminds us of this fact when he writes: "Every soul living in the grace of God shares in the supernatural good which is accomplished throughout the world."

Therefore, in the context of the Holy Year, we must keep in mind what the Pope, in keeping with the whole tradition of the Church, states in the above-mentioned Constitution: "In granting the indulgences, the object of ecclesiastical authority is not only to assist the faithful to free themselves from liability to punishment. It is also to urge them to do works of piety, penance and charity, especially those which are conducive to the spread of the faith and to the common good."<sup>11</sup>

## COMMUNION OF SAINTS

All the faithful should be fully aware that the Church is a communion<sup>12</sup> (because it is the Communion of Saints which is the fruit of grace and charity). Because they are aware of this fact they should be anxious to gain the Jubilee Indulgence either in Rome or in their own diocese and to perform acts of love towards God and their neighbour so that there will be a greater flow of merits and reparation within the Mystical Body of Christ. In other words, the degree to which the 1975 Holy Year will be a year of reconciliation and renewal for the Church, for the whole of Christendom and for the world, will be proportionate to the degree in which it will be a year of divine sonship and human brotherhood,

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. No. 4

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, Norms. No. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. No. 8.

<sup>12</sup> J. Hamer, *L'Eglise est une communion*, 1962.

of charity in the Church and in the world. "Extend the confines of charity!" (St. Augustine). Divine charity must triumph. Its kingdom is not triumphalism but complete adherence to God who is the fullness of all truth and genuine liberty. "The Lord is the Spirit", and where the Spirit is there is liberty (II Cor 3, 17). Without perfect charity there can be no question of acquiring fully the Plenary Indulgence which is the liberation from all bonds of sin and punishment, from the chains of hatred, from selfishness and all the moral evils which hinder friendship with God and with men, and hinder, therefore, unity and peace "which the world scoffs at, but cannot take away."<sup>13</sup>

And there we come back to the teaching of Pope Paul VI's Constitution on Indulgences which says: "The primacy of charity in the Christian life is confirmed by the very doctrine of indulgences. Indulgences cannot be acquired without sincere conversion (metanoia) and union with God, nor indeed without the accomplishment of the prescribed works. The order of charity, therefore, is maintained, and it is within that order that the remission of punishment, out of the Church's treasury, takes place."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> A. Manzoni, *La Pentecoste*.

<sup>14</sup> Apostolic Constitution *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, No. 11.

## REFLECTION

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS: PERSUASIVE SYMBOL FOR OUR TIMES

by Cardinal John Wright

*Cardinal Wright delivered the following address on 14 September 1974 at the International Priests' Congress at Paray-le-Monial.*

Men live by symbols. They live by bread and the labor, together with all else of which bread has become the symbol. They live by love in every form that ennobles and sustains the human person; their love has many symbols according to its nature: rings, crosses, emblems and multiple kinds to express feelings and values for which they cannot find adequate words.

Above all, men as mystical and immortal beings live by every word that proceeds from God and tells us those things about Him that most we crave to know because we were created by Him with a purpose, are sustained by His Providence and must one day face Him. Hence our search for symbols of God.

No man has ever seen God as He is in His infinite and ineffable divinity; if we did, the Scriptures warn us, we would be consumed as by fire. Therefore, God caused His Son to become incarnate that He might dwell among us and we might see His glory and something of Himself. Thus through the Eternal Word made flesh God became visible to us and a symbol of His merciful and loving nature.

#### PRESENT AMONG US

But the Eternal Word, the Lord Jesus, having accomplished through loving obedience unto death the demonstration of the merciful compassion of God and through His resurrection and ascension the power of God over evil and death, walks no more among us physically. Nonetheless He is present among us not only in His Spirit in designated vicars (the poor, the sick, the outcast, the least of the brethren) and in the Church presided over by His Chief Vicar, the Successor to Peter, and His local Churches, even when two or three are gathered in His name but also in two special effective symbols which not merely call for our service but speak

to us constantly of what kind of God is our God and what is the relation to us of our Christ. They are symbols of the divine realities which most we need to know and to remember in times of crisis. They are the **Eucharist** (Emmanuel, God in Christ and Christ really among us) and the **Sacred Heart**, the symbol of all love and in Christ the effective symbol of a human love permeated by the presence of Divine Love in the very Person of whom that heart is the organ of life and the symbol of love.

Our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, linked these two symbols, the Eucharist, with its Real Presence of Jesus among us, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, sign and source of God's merciful love, in his letter to Cardinal Baggio on the Eucharistic Congress in Ecuador. In this letter, explicitly appealing to the tradition of Pope Pius XII's Encyclical **Hauriatis Aquas**, the Holy Father linked devotion to the Blessed Sacrament to the cult of the Sacred Heart, which he described as "a living proof and symbol" of the love with which the Divine Redeemer pursues us, even as that "Hound of Heaven" of which the English poet speaks so poetically.

So, also the Pastoral Directory of the Congregation of Bishops, published this year, associates these two great devotions as central to Catholic faith and order: devotion to Jesus in the Sacrament of the Tabernacle and devotion to the Sacred Heart as the clear symbol of the love of God, present in Jesus, for all mankind, a love which expresses itself in so many and such different forms, but in the Sacred Heart as an effective, persuasive symbol.

### THE SACRED HEART

If we priests are to be convincing "other Christs", in the sense special to His ordained ministers, then the warmth and dedication of our hearts must be as persuasive a symbol of our flaming self-giving as the heart of Jesus is the symbol of His love and service. "Cor Pauli, Cor Jesu", this was the tribute of a Father of the Church to the Apostle to the Nations. It has been the ideal of priestly spirituality preached from the beginning by saints and theologians. It did not begin with the apparitions of Paray-le-Monial; it is merely refreshed by these for more modern applications.

His Holiness' choice could not have corresponded more with the anxieties, and spiritual anguish of the times, nor could the symbols he chose be more persuasive. I shall, under the circumstances of this symposium, confine myself to the consideration of the cult of the Sacred Heart as corresponding with special doctrinal, pastoral and psychological needs of our times.

Last year it was my privilege to preach the Spiritual Exercises in the Diocese of London, Ontario. I asked the most recently ordained priests, therefore the youngest, to prepare the program of the Holy Hour. I limited my own suggestions to the inclusion of the Litany of the Sacred Heart, a prayer which, like litanies generally, has tended temporarily to be out of fashion in some circles. It was impressive to hear the comments of these truly admirable young priests after the Holy Hour, especially with reference to the litany. "It is marvelous," one said, "how this prayer brings together and identifies with the heart of Jesus all the preoccupations presently most urgent in our own hearts. It is all there: 'Heart of Jesus, furnace ablaze with charity... full of loving kindness... patient and full of pity... overwhelmed with reproaches... source of all consolation... Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation... victim of sin... salvation of those who trust in thee.' What one of contemporary concerns is not echoed there in the litany?"

It has always been so. There is nothing of sentimentalism or mere pietism in the history of either the preaching or the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In every age those who preached this devotion did so because they found it so persuasive a symbol of the needs of the times and what should be our active, pastoral response to them. In an age of fear or at any rate refusal of new life and negative attitudes toward children the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a symbol of the human and Christian openness to little ones: His special love for them and accessibility to them; His embrace for them and establishment of deference to them as the norm for perfection according to His mind and heart (Mark 10, 13-16).

In a period of wayward loves, divided hearts and centrifugal social hatreds, may our prayer be: Heart of Jesus, King and Center of all hearts, have mercy on us—for his heart is the symbol of the centripetal forces of nature and grace, the source of the compassion we must develop in ourselves and somehow evoke in others.

In a day of great technological but often cold science of knowledge-explosion not always accompanied by proportionate wisdom—even of priestly erudition which sometimes threatens pastoral zeal—we priests must make our hearts the living libraries of Christ and our prayer, however great our works or gifts: Jesus meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine!

The special timeliness of the renewal of emphasis on the Sacred Heart is linked also to the invocation of the concept heart in the great humanitarian aspirations of the day. An example is the Holy Father's program for relief and development under the name *Cor Unum*, an appeal to the single heart of humanity which must be

inspired by and include the human heart of Christ now somehow, as a result of the resurrection, immersed in the depths of divinity. The Sacred Heart is a persuasive symbol for our times for another reason. People constantly ask whether there can even be a God, above all a God of love, in a world so filled with injustice, sin and hatred. They say that a God of love would be moved to heart-break at the contemplation of so much evil, personal and social, individual and institutional. It therefore becomes suddenly "relevant" to remember the doctrine of the Church that all this evil was **precisely** why God sent His only-begotten Son into the world—and His Son's heart did break, lanced by the sword of Caesar!

### MARITAIN'S THOUGHT

No layman of our times has brought more sensitivity and sophistication, more knowledge and wisdom, than Jacques Maritain to the exploration and expression of the mysteries of the Faith concerning God and Man, the hope and the temptations of our times. Neither has any one stated so succinctly the theme of my meditation. Let me conclude, then, by quoting Maritain:

"To choose the heart for emblem is to dedicate oneself to the only heart which does not lie—and it is encircled with thorns!"

This last phrase says what every man knows, but our times profess to understand best of all, namely that **not knowledge**, the brains, but **love**, the heart, conquers all—and **there is pain in all love**. Celibacy is a form of love, the love of an undivided heart. But there is **suffering** in all love. Marriage is the sacrament of nuptial love, but surely it has its anxieties and its pains. The love of all things created is touched with melancholy — *Sunt lachrymae rerum* . . . But all this pain, anxiety, heart-break is proof of the presence of true love and the source of its salvific power!



# **BIBLE STUDY**

**Eighth of a Series**

## **SOURCES FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS**

**By**

**BASILIO P. BALAJADIA**

### **I. THE PROBLEM**

The Founder of Christianity has been as much a problem as the religion he founded. For centuries, people have been disturbed not only by the sublimity of his teachings but by the mystery of his person as well. Lately, the curiosity concerning his person has found expression in the Rock Opera: "Jesus Christ, Superstar". Modern man is as anxious to know the man behind the Superstar.

"Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ

Who are you? What have you sacrificed?

Jesus Christ Superstar

Do you think you're what they say you are"?

Who is the real Jesus Christ? Who is the Jesus of history that hides behind the Christ of Faith? If you strip the myth from the man, what really remains of him?

The journey back to the Jesus of history involves the making of a bridgehead over the time gap that exists between our times and times of the man. At our disposal are various sources which can be consulted to give the data concerning Jesus. These sources, however were written contemporary to the time of the rise and development of the early Christian community and not during the lifetime of Jesus. There are no available sources concerning him that were written before his death. Jesus himself did not write any autobiography nor did he leave us any writing that can somehow lead us to some direct knowledge of him. The only writing that we know that Jesus did is the one he was reported to have scribbled with his fingers on the ground: "he who does not have any sin, let him cast the first stone."

These sources can be grouped into two: Non-Christian sources and Christians Sources. The non-Christian sources can be divided into the Roman and Jewish sources while the Christian sources can be divided into non-biblical sources and biblical sources. This article will cover all these sources except the last one mentioned which will need another article.

## II. NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES

### The Roman Sources

Suetonius and Tacitus, the two Roman writers of the first and early second century made some indirect references to Jesus. These references, however, do not give us any data of the person of Jesus. They refer instead to the early Christians.

Suetonius, (c. 75-160 A.D.) writing about the expulsion of the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. reported:

**"Since the Jews were continually making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."<sup>1</sup>**

The Jews to which Suetonius was referring to must have been the early Christians, and the word "Chrestus" must have been a misunderstanding of Christos, the Greek word for the Hebrew Messiah used by the Christians to refer to Jesus.

And in another writing wherein he narrated the persecution by the emperor Nero which occurred about 64 A.D., he recounted:

**"punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a sect of men adhering to a novel and mischievous superstition."<sup>2</sup>**

These references however, are more of an evidence and assessment of the movement rather than a description of the person of Jesus.

Tacitus (c. 60-120 A.D.) similarly described the persecution of the Christians by Nero:

**"And so to get rid of this rumor, Nero set up as the culprits and punished with the utmost refinement of cruelty a class hated for their abominations, who are commonly called Christians. Christus, from whom their name is derived, was executed at the hands of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. Checked for the moment, this per-**

<sup>1</sup> John Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> Loc. cit.

icious superstition again broke out, not only in Judea, the source of the evil, but even in Rome, that receptacle for everything that is sordid and degrading from every quarter of the globe, which there finds a following."<sup>3</sup>

## Jewish Sources

1. Josephus, who wrote a rather detailed account of the Jewish affairs during the first seven decades of the first century, made mention of Jesus. However, his references to Jesus do not give much information concerning Jesus personality. In addition to this, his account concerning Jesus has been put to doubt by scholars because of the insertion of certain statements made most possibly by some overzealous copyist of the text. In some of the Greek manuscripts, none of which is earlier than the eleventh century, even these references cannot be found. In the following passages of the text from Josephus' *Antiquities* words in fold type are the suspected insertions to the original:

"At this time appeared Jesus, a wise man, **if one may call him a man at all**. For he was a deer of wonderful works, a teacher of men, who received the truth with gladness. And he attracted Jews as also people of the Greek sort in great number. **This was the Christ**. And when on the denunciation of our leading men Pilate had punished him with crucifixion, those who had loved him formerly did not cease therefrom. He appeared to them alive again **on the third day, for the godly prophets had foretold this and innumerable other wonderful things concerning him**. And even the race of men called after him Christians has not died out".<sup>4</sup>

2. Aside from the testimony of Josephus, the Talmud, the Jewish commentary to the Bible, likewise made allusions to Jesus which are mostly polemical. Those allusions must have been written shortly after the open break between Judaism and Christianity. The following summary constitute those allusions to Jesus which somehow are considered reliable by historians:

"There are reliable statements to the effect that his name was Yeshu'a (Yeshu) of Nazareth; that he practiced sorcery and beguiled and led Israel astray; that he mocked at the words of the Wise; that he expounded Scripture in the same manner as the Pharisees; that he had five disciples; that he said that he was not come to take aught away from the Law

<sup>3</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 320-321.

**or to add to it; that he was hanged as a false teacher and beguiler on the eve of the Passover which happened on a Sabbath; and that his disciples healed the sick in his name."**<sup>5</sup>

From what can be seen from the testimony of the various historians and writings cited above, the following conclusions can be given concerning their value in the quest for the historical Jesus:

1. Very little information can be gathered from them concerning the person of Jesus. They talked more of Jesus' followers rather than of the person of the man.
2. Jesus did not seem to create a stir in the Roman and Jewish world during his lifetime and even during the early period after his death, that people did not bother to write anything about him. The world became aware of him only after his followers made an impact in the current scene, and this must have taken a couple or so of decades.

### III. THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND CHRISTIANITY

Aside from the testimony of Josephus and the Talmud, another possible Jewish source can be mentioned in relation to the discussion: the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 1947, the discovery of various scrolls near Dead Sea where the Wadi Qumran descends, created quite a stir in the circle of New Testament scholars. For the scrolls, all written in Hebrew except one, manifest the characteristics of the 1st Century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. which make them very significant for the understanding of the New Testament writings, and consequently, for our knowledge of the historical Jesus and his followers. The Scrolls, aside from some Old Testament writings and commentaries, also contain hymns, regulations and manuals of discipline of the community which shed much light on their way of life and their beliefs. For one thing, they confirm and add much to what Josephus, Philo, and Pliny and Elder said concerning a certain group of people (aside from the Pharisees and Sadducees mentioned in the gospels), called Essenes, who lived on the Western shore of the Dead Sea in the place identical to Qumran or near it.

The problem of the relations between this community and that of early Christianity necessarily arises. John the Baptist and even Jesus Himself preached and baptized in the neighborhood of the community. The place where Jesus withdrew to be tempted by the devil likewise point to the region where these Essenes lived.<sup>6</sup> Like

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 321.

<sup>6</sup> F. Amiot, A. Brunot, et al. *The Sources for the Life of Christ*. London: Burns and Oates, 1962, pp. 22-23.

wise literary parallels between some of John's and Paul's writings and those of the Scrolls can be detected.

What is also surprising is the strong resemblance of the Qumran Community's doctrines, practices and organizational structure with that of Jesus and his Community, as will be seen in the succeeding discussion.

### **The Doctrine of the Qumran Community**

The group's orientation was apocalyptic. The vision of the last days haunted them where the spirit of light, God, and the spirit of darkness, the devil were engaged in a cosmic showdown. This conflict is paralleled by the conflict between the sons of light, the good men, and the sons of darkness, the wicked men, on earth. In the end, which is within this generation, God will destroy all the wicked and reinstate those who had been good. But before this final day, God will send two Messiahs: the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of Israel, the former being more significant than the latter. It is not clear, however, if the founder of the sect, a certain man referred to as Teacher of Righteousness would be the said messiah or not. This Sect of the Essenes who saw themselves as the true Israel, should prepare for the coming Messiah and the final day of reckoning by the strict observance of the Law. This must have been the reason why they withdrew from the rest of Judaism.

### **Practices and Organizational Structure of the Qumran Community**

The community's founder was a Teacher of Righteousness who was persecuted by the High Priest. The group was ruled by a priestly class. The authority was vested on a 12-member council representing the 12 tribes of Israel and three priests. Membership to the group could be gained only after a two-year probation. One of the privileges of full-members was the admission to a common meal where bread and wine are partaken after the priest has blessed them.

The group was given to strict discipline and the observance of the Mosaic Law. Examples are; the prohibition against divorce, making any kind of oath, work and even speaking about work, contact with things impure and other minutiae during the observance of Sabbath.

### **Points of Convergence and Divergence**

As can be noticed in the foregoing exposition of the beliefs, practices and communal organization of the Qumran Community, points of convergence and divergence with the early Christians beliefs, practices and social structure definitely exist. Thus, speaking at the doctrinal level, both groups expect the imminent coming of the last days or the establishment of the kingdom of God, to be ushered in by the Messiah. However, it must be noted that while the Qumran scrolls expected the imminent coming of the last days as well as the Messiah of Aaron and Israel, Christianity's proclamation centers on the present-future aspect of the last days or the kingdom of God. In Acts 2, the apostle Peter emphasized that the last days is already a reality because of the coming of Jesus who is the Messiah. Yet, the final day or deliverance still lays in the future when Jesus as the Son of Man who has been exalted to God's right hand will return.

Similarly, although there exist parallels in the religious customs and observances of the Qumran and early Christian Communities, it can not be denied that great differences in attitude towards these can also be found. Thus, the fanatical adherence to the Mosaic Law by the Qumran group which reminds of the Pharisees, in a direct contrast to the more liberated attitude of the Christians which can best be expressed in what Jesus himself said of the Sabbath being made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Likewise, while the Essenes placed too much weight on maintaining legal purity by avoiding contact with unclean people and things Jesus scandalized his contemporaries by eating with publican and sinners.

### **Conclusion**

The value of the Dead Sea Scrolls for our study of the historical Jesus seem to lay in the fact they shed much light on the condition of the times when Jesus and his first followers lived: among others, the growing desperation of the Jews under the Roman rule, the heightening expectation for the imminent coming of the last days and the Messiah as evidenced by the apocalyptic coloring in the language of the scrolls, the social structures and customs at that time. To jump to the conclusion that Jesus and Christianity come from the said community because of certain similarities and parallels between them seem to be a rather preposterous deduction. Belonging to same cultural current obtaining in Palestine during those days, the Qumran community could not but be affected by the

same contemporary ideas, language, and structures that affected the early Christian communities as well as their brothers Pharisees and Sadducees. However, no direct knowledge of the person of Jesus can be gained from the said Scrolls.

#### IV. CHRISTIAN SOURCES

##### Non-Biblical Sources: Apocrypha

Aside from the testimonies of the various writers and writings given earlier, there are also other writings which tell us something about Jesus. These writings are called apocrypha. They give us plenty of details concerning Jesus' person not mentioned in the gospels. They could have been very helpful in the re-construction of the historical Jesus had it not been for the dubious and spurious authorship, which make them generally historically unacceptable. They are, therefore, writings that pretend to be authored by witnesses to Jesus' life, shortly after his death, whereas in fact they could have been written much later by a zealous believer who wanted to supply whatever is wanting in the account of the life of Christ as well as of people close to him given by the canonical books.

##### Various New Testament Apocrypha

**The Protoevangelium of James:** This book written c. 150-180 A.D. gives us a more detailed presentation of the life of Mary. It tells of her parents, Anna and Joachim; of her miraculous birth, of her presentation in the temple when she was three years old; the miraculous singling out of Joseph to be her spouse; and countless legendary and puerile details concerning the birth of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

**The Gospel of Thomas:** This belonged to the second century. It consists of some stories concerning the childhood of Jesus when He was between the ages of five and twelve. Parts of this gospel tells of how Jesus, on a Sabbath, fashioned twelve sparrows out of soft clay and upon being rebuked by Joseph clapped his hands and caused the sparrows to fly away; of how Jesus stretched a piece of wood so that it would not be too short for Joseph who was then making a bed for a certain rich man; how Jesus caused death to another child who collided with him and struck with blindness the bystanders when they blamed him for it.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> John Mckenzie. *Dictionary of the Bible*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966, p. 44.

<sup>8</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Another group of writings also called **The Gospel of Thomas** was discovered in 1945 but it has no relation to the first nor to the childhood of Jesus.

**The Letters of Abgar:** It probably belongs to the third century but became popular during the Middle Ages. It narrates of the story of Abgar, King of Edessa, who wrote to Jesus asking him to come over and cure him of a terrible disease. Jesus wrote back telling him that he could not come in person but would certainly send after his ascension one of his apostles to heal him.<sup>9</sup>

**Arabic Gospel of Infancy:** This depends on James and Thomas but adds stories of infancy: miracle upon a contact with men or bath-water of Jesus. Jesus meets two robbers who were crucified with him.<sup>10</sup>

Other apocryphas are not about Jesus but about the apostles and the Mother of Jesus such as the **Letters of St. Paul and Seneca**, **The Acts of Peter**, **the Apocalypse of Paul**, **The Assumption of Mary** and many others.

### **The Value of Apocryphas**

Theologically, apocryphas do not give anything new for a deeper appreciation of revelation. However, they are helpful in throwing light on the times they were written, such as the interests of the early Christian liturgy, like the feast of the Presentation of Mary, the Assumption, and of St. Joachim. Not to be forgotten is the inspiration they give to many artist who took up the themes they gave. Finally, with their legends, marvels and aberrations, they deepen our appreciation for the canonical books.

For our study of the historical Jesus, they do not give us any direct knowledge of the man. What they reflect are rather the beliefs and zeal of the early Christians.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.



# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

## CHAPTER 50

### CIVIL AND CANON LAW

One final field of learning that needs to be mentioned, even only in passing, is the science of law, civil and canon law. In the Spanish world, both branches have always been intimately linked and studied together because of the Patronato, and it is not always easy to set them apart or determine where one ends and the other begins.

Perhaps one of the most outstanding treatises on this subject was the *Cursus iuris canonici hispani et indici*, etc. It was written by the Jesuit Pedro Murillo Velarde, an eminent polymath and an outstanding Jesuit priest. The title of the book indicates that it discusses not only the laws common to the Universal Church as they were contained in the Decretals, but also the particular corpus of Spanish peninsular law and the Indian code peculiar to the Spanish American world and the Philippines. The *Cursus* was used as the textbook in the Faculty of Law of the University of Santo Tomás during the Spanish regime. Written in the Philippines, it was first printed in Madrid in 1763 and subsequently reedited in 1791.<sup>1</sup>

There were other Jesuits in the Philippines before Father Murillo who had already written extensively on canonical and legal matters. Most of these writings were answers and solutions to the cases of conscience frequently presented to them by both the government officials and private residents of the colony. These writings however, disappeared almost in their entirety with the expulsion of the Jesuits

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<sup>1</sup> Retana, *Aparato*, 107-108.

from the Philippines in 1768. What we know of these lost writings we owe to Fr. Murillo who acknowledged his indebtedness to those Jesuit canonists and lawyers.

The Dominicans dedicated themselves on a greater scale to legal studies. Not having suffered the fate of the Jesuits, their legal writings have been preserved both in printed form and in manuscript. Some of these Dominican experts in the law had already finished their studies before coming to the Philippines, while others were formed on Philippine soil, specifically in the University of Santo Tomás. All of them were professors of the University, and their opinions on legal problems were sought far and wide.

We have already mentioned Fr. Fray Juan de Paz when we discussed the moral theologians in an earlier chapter. Let us just recall here, in his regard, the words of his disciple, Fr. Fray Francisco de Acuña: "The depth of judgment and the solidity of teaching of this author, joined to a vast knowledge of Moral theology, Canon Law and the Civil Laws of Spain is not unworthy of consideration. If we look to him as to a theologian, we will find him at each step grasping the shield of the Angelic Doctor's teachings; if we see him as a canonist, no one with greater dispatch unravels the texts of Canon Law and the Papal Bulls; if we take him as a jurist, he gives the impression of one who has dedicated himself to no other study, that he has at his fingertips the civil laws of Spain, with a clear understanding of them, such that with just reason rather complicated cases were presented to him by that supreme Senate (the Royal Audiencia of Manila) for his resolution — with such solid foundation that there seemed no one could wish for anything more."<sup>2</sup>

There were others of the same Order in the course of the centuries, men like Fr. Francisco de Acuña, just mentioned, and who died in 1705; Fr. Raimundo Verart (d. 1713), famous in Philippine history as Bishop Pardo's adviser during the so-called "Pardo Affair"; Fr. José Fuixá, author of *Cursus iuris canonici*, still unedited in manuscript form and preserved in the archives of the University of Santo Tomás. Then we have Bishop Francisco Gaínza of Cáceres, perhaps the most prolific Dominican author in the Philippines, an eminent canonist, and a man sought by all kinds of people for his advice.

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<sup>2</sup> This quotation is found in the prologue to *Consultas y resoluciones varias, teológicas, jurídicas, regulares y morales*, by Father Juan de Paz, a thick volume in folio, printed in Seville in the year 1687.

A fellow Dominican wrote of him in 1851: "He is a man of deep piety, great virtue, extraordinary talent, and wonderful insight, prudence, eloquence, self-control, firmness of character, etc. He is tireless and has the gift of discharging well and satisfactorily three or more heavy responsibilities at the same time, without omitting the ordinary cares, and he is of such seriousness and maturity that he never is rushed or seems to change his pace. He is, in sum, a faultless religious, excellent, well-rounded, praiseworthy, still young and with a great future."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Bishop Gaínza was perhaps the ideal Dominican missionary who ever has been in the Philippines, the person who left the deepest impact on the men and the society of the late nineteenth century, a canonist, historian, botanist, diplomat, administrator, missionary and university professor all rolled into one.

People high in both government and church offices consulted him in their perplexities and doubts, as is proven by the 22 volumes still in manuscript preserved in the UST archives. Some of them carry his signature, others were written under his supervision. We might mention some of their titles: *Facultades de los obispos de ultramar*, published in Manila in 1860 and reprinted in Madrid in 1871; *Disertación canónico-legal sobre todo lo relativo a esponsales y matrimonios de las diferentes castas que viven en estas islas*; *Disertación canónico-práctica sobre dispensas matrimoniales y sus ejecución*. And, finally, his *Instituciones iuris canonici* a work of two volumes in manuscript, quarto size, of 500 pages each, should give an idea of the scope of this scholar's writings!

Other names we might include: Fr. Benito Corominas, who came to the Philippines in 1855, and wrote annotations to the book of Devoti entitled *Joannis Devoti . . . Institutionum canonicarum libri IV* (Four Books on the canonical Institutions by Juan Devoti). This was a manual for the young, and it included notes and a concordance of the Spanish and Indian Laws. It was published in 1871.

Fr. José Cueto, the founder in 1876 of the *Boletín del Arzobispado de Manila*, a magazine which was the forerunner of the present *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*.

Finally, we have Fr. Matias Gómez y Zamora, one time Rector and Chancellor of the University of Santo Tomas. He wrote *Annotaciones* to the work of Juan Devoti, mentioned above, and it was published in 1893. But his most famous work is the *Regio patronato*

<sup>3</sup> Velasco, IV, 194.

español e indiano, which a Madrid press issued in 1897. In it, Fr. Gómez discusses in great detail the origin of the Real Patronato of Spain and of the Indies. He studies at length the multiple rights and obligations of the bishops, the convocation of councils and synods, the clergy, the property of the Church, titles, the *Sanctorum*, *mesadas* and *annatas*, spoils, vacant Sees, benefices, confraternities and brotherhoods, feasts, charitable houses, etc. Someone rightly remarked that this work is a fitting complement to Joaquín Rodríguez San Pedro's *Legislación Ultramarina* in legal matters regarding the Philippines.<sup>4</sup>

## EPILOGUE

Since January, 1970, the *Boletín Eclesiástico* has been serializing the chapters of our essay on a *Handbook of Church History of the Philippines*; and with its Chapter 50 appearing in the present issue of November, 1974, we bring our task to a happy completion. During the above span of time the said *Boletín Eclesiástico*, while always under the management of Father Florencio Testera, has come successively under the editorship of Fathers Leonardo Legaspi, José Tinoko, Jaime Boquiren, Pompeyo de Mesa and — presently — Efrén Rivera. To them all we acknowledge our debt of gratitude for their valuable assistance and encouragement throughout. Likewise we express our appreciation to many secular and regular priests, and religious women, for having assured us of their keen interest in our serials. Also the knowledge that not a few institutions of learning were eagerly awaiting ensuing chapters of our work as classroom texts constantly boosted up our determination to pursue with fresh vigor the arduous labor of historical research. Likewise we have often been comforted by the fact that our work has been chosen as refectory reading fare by some religious communities. Also the many clerics and even laymen who have been using our humble work for delving into the state of the Catholic faith in the Philippines of yesterday have put a glow in our heart.

In a very special degree we are grateful to Fr. José S. Arcilla, S.J., who so patiently and promptly had rendered into faultless English our Spanish original text.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 42-44.

# LITURGY

## CELEBRATION OF MASS WITH PROPER DECORUM

*The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship responds to the query: "Is it lawful to celebrate Mass without the sacred vestments?"*

Queries have come from parts asking whether it is lawful to celebrate Mass without the sacred vestments or with only the stole worn over the soutane or one's civilian dress.

These queries have been prompted for the most part by practical reasons, especially in cases of travelling, pilgrimages, excursions and camping. But there have also been reasons of another kind, such as to fit in better with given surroundings—when, for example, chaplains of a factory celebrate in overalls, or when Mass is celebrated in Scout uniform for young mountain climbers.

So the question has been submitted: what is the mind of the congregation for Divine Worship on this point?

The answer, neither difficult nor far to seek, cannot but be in conformity with what is laid down in the norms issued during these years of liturgical renewal.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

First of all, there are the General Principles of the Roman Missal. In number 297 it is stated: "The diversity of ministries in the carrying out of sacred worship is manifested externally by the diversity of sacred vestments, which should therefore be a sign of the proper office of each minister." In the following number 298 we read: "The vestment common to all ministers of whatever rank is the alb"; and in number 299: "The vestment proper to the celebrating priest, at Mass and in other sacred functions directly connected with it, is the chasuble."

These regulations, which echo tradition and renew it in particular matters, are, in practice, the basis of the norms laid down in the other documents which touch upon the subject.

For example, the Instruction of Masses for particular groups (n. 11 b) simply refers to the text from the Roman Missal cited

above. The same is quoted by the Third Instruction (n. 8 c), which then adds:

"The abuse of wearing the stole over the monastic habit, the soutane or civilian dress when concelebrating or celebrating Mass is condemned. Nor is it lawful to carry out other sacred functions, such as the imposition of hands during Ordinations, or the administration of the sacraments, or the giving of blessings, while wearing only the stole over one's civilian dress."

### NORM UNCHANGED

From this norm the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship has **never** derogated, nor does it intend to do so, either in regulations of a general character, or in particular indults.

And the reason for this is quite simple, as already indicated in the General principles—the distinction of Orders, the decorum of the sacred action, and the clear-cut separation of the sacred from the profane. The community wishes to be respected, and it wishes to perceive also by means of the senses the meaning of the rites, and to be included in the mystery.

Only one extenuation has been introduced to facilitate the use of sacred vestments when travelling and changing from place to place, and that is the use of the chasuble without the alb. This presupposes that it is a full circular chasuble, reaching to the ankles, and with the stole worn over it. In this case it is possible to do without the alb. The chasuble may always be of the same colour, while the colour of the stole will change according to the liturgical colour of the day. This sacred vestment, when folded, can easily fit into a small travelling-bag. But its use is limited to cases of necessity and it should be authorized upon the request of the Episcopal Conference of the respective country. Its use is regulated by precise norms (cf. *Notitiae*, 81, 1973, p. 96 ff.).

St. Pius once wrote: "Let beauty attend your prayer!" On that occasion he was referring more particularly to the chant, but it is applicable to the entire setting of the celebration. The sacred vestment is on the more important elements, and at the same time it emphasizes the sacredness of the celebration.

All the ritual elements established by the competent Authority should be observed and respected so that every communication of the community with God should take place, through its duly qualified ministers, in a halo of dignity and solemnity that transcends the too worldly practices of everyday life.

ANNIBALE BUGNINI

# QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

## ON THE PERPETUAL HELP NOVENA

By

Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.

### QUESTION

*In many parishes of our diocese we have the practice of saying the Novena of Our Mother of Perpetual Help within the Mass. We are using a version approved by one of our local ordinaries. Only recently, our bishop (auxiliary) told us to stop this practice as it is against the Apostolic Exhortation "Marialis Cultus" of February 2, 1974. He read the following words from the Exhortation: "It sometimes happens that novenas or similar practices of piety are inserted into the very celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice. This creates the danger that the Lord's Memorial Rite, instead of being the culmination of the meeting of the Christian community, becomes the occasion, as it were, for devotional practices."<sup>1</sup> — May I now ask: Can we continue saying the novena within the Mass? Or is this practice prohibited by the said exhortation?\**

When Vatican II demanded that "popular devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them,"<sup>2</sup> the response given in various countries was rather different.

Christ is the center. Everything in our life as Christians ought to proceed from him and lead again to him so that he may lead

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\* This question was sent by Fr. Ramon P. Neri, Parish Priest, Lourdes Chinese Parish, City of Tagbilaran. — In Bacalaran, the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, the novena is never integrated into the Mass. Usually it is followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament (exposition song, silent prayer, thanksgiving prayer to Christ, silent prayer, prayer for the sick to Christ, and eucharistic blessing) and at 5 p.m. by holy Mass.

<sup>1</sup> *Boletín Eclesiástico*, May-June 1974, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 13.

us to the Father: "Through Him, with Him, in Him" all honor and glory is given to the Father. But there seemed to be so many hindrances which prevented people from coming to Christ. During my first stay in Rome in 1956 I observed once an elderly woman coming into the church, not making the sign of the cross, nor genuflecting before the tabernacle, but rushing right away to the statue of St. Anthony, called in Italy "Il Santo", i.e. the Saint, and embracing the feet of the statue, she prayed fervently. Similar occurrences seemed to some priests the final proof that devotions of piety were as many obstacles on the people's way to Christ. Consequently, they cut them out, abolished them in their parishes. They cut down the sometimes rather wild, but living and healthy forest of devotions around the huge and beautiful tree of the liturgy. This was to give this tree greater prominence and the people easier access to it. Now this tree could further grow and develop. These pastors saw in Article 13 of the Constitution on the Liturgy only the last part which says that "the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any" of the popular devotions.

To their dismay, however, they found out soon enough what we also observe on the watersheds of our mountains after unscrupulous loggers denuded them of their primeval, protective forest: when the rains come, the waters flow down as violent floods, erode the soil and endanger even the growth and development of a lonely, big tree that remains standing.

The "undergrowth" of popular devotions had formerly protected the surroundings of the people's faith they had given it a certain environment in which it could live, in which it felt at home. At the moment this protective brushwork was gone, and only that single tree of the liturgy remained, they felt alone, isolated, and in an unfamiliar environment. So they went less frequently to Church and to holy Mass and their pastors wondered why their well-intentioned "reform" of devotion had not made everything clearer and more perspicacious. In reality, however, it had made the people's religion colder and less attractive. Cold rationalism alone is not religion. So the danger for the faith of "the little ones" even increased.

In view of this development the Apostolic Exhortation "Marialis Cultus" says that there are "certain persons concerned with the care of souls who scorn, a priori, devotions of piety which, in their correct forms, have been recommended by the Magisterium, who leave them aside and in this way create a vacuum which they do not fill. They forget that the Council has said that devotions of piety should harmonize with the liturgy, not be suppressed." This situation, seemingly, developed after Vatican II in parts of North



America and Europe. In the Philippines we observe it, so far, only occasionally.

This was not the general reaction of the clergy in the Philippines. Devotions of piety and religious customs remained. In patient work many of our priests —and in regard to the Perpetual Help Novena particularly the Redemptorist Fathers — tried to transplant the smaller trees and the underbrush of the forest of popular devotions and bring these plants closer, even into the very shadow, of that big tree of the liturgy. They were largely motivated by the words of the Constitution on the Liturgy that these popular devotions "are in some way derived from" the liturgy. So they concluded: bring the plants of devotions of piety as close as possible to the roots of the huge tree of the liturgy.

In such a situation the life of both the main tree and that of the underbrush is likely to suffer. This danger moved Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation to state: "There are those who, without wholesome liturgical and pastoral criteria mix practices of piety and liturgical acts in hybrid celebrations. It sometimes happens that novenas or similar practices of piety are inserted into the very celebration of the eucharistic sacrifice..."

What is to be done? The answer is not easy. The Holy Father also acknowledges this: "These devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by very nature far surpasses any of them.' Although this is a wise and clear rule, its application is not an easy matter, especially in regard to Marian devotions which are so varied in the formal expression."<sup>3</sup>

How to bring these devotions into "accord with the sacred liturgy?" Let the bushes and smaller trees normally stand in their proper places. Only occasionally the one or the other need to be cut down. More often they need only some trimming. We need the complete forest: the liturgy and popular devotions. To preserve both, the priests in the active care of souls have to show "pastoral sensitivity" and "perseverance" while the people have to be willing "to accept guidelines and ideas drawn from the true nature of Christian worship" (Ibid.). One may be forced, sometimes, "to change long standing customs where the real nature of Christian worship has become somewhat obscured." These words of the Pope imply that the "hybrid celebration" of the Perpetual Help Novena, inserted into the Mass, should not be continued.

<sup>3</sup> *Boletín Eclesiástico*, May-June, 1974, p. 318 f.

Here we have to ask ourselves how it could happen that for many parishes the celebration of the eucharist became the only form of public worship. We could adduce several reasons, to mention only the evening Mass which often led to the abolition of evening devotions and Sunday Vespers. One-sidedness is seldom good. And so a liturgist muses, "one could have eucharistic celebrations too often and other celebrations too rarely. One could get too steamed up over the Mass. Give someone nothing to eat for weeks on end but honey and orange juice. It is wonderfully nutritious food but could one stand it, with no variation in the diet, day after day? One can have too much of a good thing. If we have a one-track mind approach to celebrations,, we may use a Mass for any and every occasion and suffer from over-use of it, without realizing it."<sup>4</sup> Later the same article pleads for "well prepared celebrations of the Word of God." Actually, the booklet you sent along with your letter foresees that the novena could also be held outside the Mass, as a kind of Bible Service with subsequent Benediction. This was a wise consideration of the Vice-Provincial of the Redemptorist Fathers, the editor of this booklet.

But are there enough readings from Sacred Scripture referring to Our Lady so that these celebrations of the Word of God "harmonize with the liturgical seasons?"<sup>5</sup> I think there are.

While I write this we are at the end of the Church's year. Soon Advent begins. During these weeks Mary plays an extraordinary role in the liturgy, both in the Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours. There we are told how the prophet had assured Israel: "Do not fear, O Zion, the Lord your God, is in your midst."<sup>6</sup> He came and pitched his tent in Israel in a way undreamt of. When God sent his angel with the message: "Holy Spirit will come upon you and power from on high will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35), Mary willingly gave her consent. The Son of God Himself declared his readiness for the task the Father had assigned for him, and declared: "Here I am! I am coming to obey your will."<sup>7</sup> These two readings could be used in a novena celebration during Advent, to show similar was the mentality in Jesus and in Mary of fulfilling the Father's will.

In her litany we call Mary the "Ark of the Covenant" and the gospel of the Annunciation alludes to the overshadowing of the holy cloud on the sacred Tent in the desert (Ex 40:34) and on the temple in Jerusalem when it was dedicated by king Solomon (1 Kg 8:10).

<sup>4</sup> Th. O'Neill, *Eucharistic Monomania*, Amen, Jan-Febr. 1971, 16-19; 28.

<sup>5</sup> Const. on the Lit., art. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Zeph 3:14-18 Third Sunday of Advent, Year C, Mass.

<sup>7</sup> Hb. 10:5-10 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Year C, Mass.

As God's presence had been made visible in the cloud in the Old Testament, so in her consent to the message of the angel, Mary became the true Temple of God, in whom God took his dwelling place in the midst of his people: Jesus had become the Immanuel — God with us (Jes 7:14). Here Mary appears as the archetype of the Church and the model of every true Christian: "Christ abode for nine months in the tent of Mary's womb; he abides until the consumption of the ages in the tent of the Church's faith; he will abide for ever and ever in the knowledge and love of the faithful soul", writes Bl. Isaac of Stella in the Reading Office of the second Saturday in Advent. In answer to this text the liturgy sings in the responsory: "I will set up my dwelling among you . . . I will live in your midst . . . you are the temple of the living God" (Ibid.).

With loving interest the liturgy of Advent contemplates Mary: we celebrate in Advent both the Annunciation<sup>8</sup> and the Visitation<sup>9</sup>, and pay special attention to the origin of the Magnificat (Dec. 22). We contemplate the anxiety of Joseph — and certainly no less that of Mary — when Joseph realized that Mary was with child.<sup>10</sup> Both the Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass texts refer so often to Mary that "this season, as liturgy experts have noted, should be considered as a time particularly suited to devotion to the Mother of the Lord."<sup>11</sup>

In similar manner the other seasons of the liturgy could be studied and meditated on and thus be made fruitful for the Perpetual Help Novena, so that it can nourish even more the faith of our people, and deepen their devotion to Mary, Virgin and Mother.

<sup>8</sup> December 20, and the fourth Sunday, Year B, Mass.

<sup>9</sup> December 21, and the fourth Sunday, Year C, Mass.

<sup>10</sup> December 18, and the fourth Sunday, Year A, Mass.

<sup>11</sup> Apostolic Exhortation "Marialis Cultus" n. 4: *Boletín Ecclesiástico*, May-June 1974, p. 298.

# COMMUNICATION

*Originally, the word "communicate" meant "to make (something) common, to participate, to share." This Section serves as a forum for exchange of views and for appeals. It also attends to questions that do not require scholarly study but call for practical advice.*

## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM FARMERS

*(See Boletín Eclesiástico, May-June 1974, p. 397)*

### **Question No. 30: Why do priests not marry?**

**Answer:** Priests do not marry because they have already a commitment to serve God by serving the entire people of God. Their commitment is not limited to any particular person or family. Besides a priest's attention and love will be divided if he marries and the efficacy of his priestly ministry will be hindered.

### **Question No. 31: Priests are for the rich. Priests are 'rich people.**

**Answer:** The priesthood is the continuation of Christ's redemptive work. Christ came to save all men and not only the rich. Priests are for all people just as Christ is for all men. Some priests are rich. Some are poor, maybe very poor. Some priests are rich because they belong to a rich and well-to-do family or maybe have other means of income. But the priesthood does not offer material riches. Whatever wealth is connected with it is more spiritual than material.

### **Question No. 32: Is it true that priests and nuns do not love?**

**Answer:** Priests and nuns are human beings just like others with human nature. Therefore, it is not true that they do not love. In fact they love more than married people because the scope of their love extends to a wider area. It is not limited to a family. They surely love because their religious life does not take away human nature.

### **Question No. 33: Is it true that priests and nuns are "in despair" people?**

**Answer:** If you mean "in despair" like Judas Iscariot, I would say **NO**. May be there are a few cases of despair involving priests but we should not generalize. It would be unfair to say that the Filipinos are bad because there are a few Filipinos in jail. I would say that priests and nuns are in despair of worldly vanities which cannot save them. So they offer themselves to religious life in the service of God through serving mankind which is the image of God.

**Question No. 37: Why does the priest charge very high fees for the sacraments?**

**Answer:** The fee is not the price for the sacraments. Things sacred are not sold nor bought. This would be simony. What people give is for the support for the ministers and maintenance of divine cult. A simple comparison would simplify the matter. Supposing we do not pay our taxes, where will the government get money for the salary of government officials and employees? Where will the government get money for improvement of roads, bridges, school buildings, hospitals, etc.? Now, if we do not give stipend for services of the ministers, where will the priest get money for services of the ministers, where will the priest get money for church improvement, to buy hosts, mass wine, candles, gasoline for transportation, salary for his boys, sacristans and cantores? Where will he get money for the maintenance of divine cult?

**From a reader in Villaba, Leyte**

**Question No. 39: Can we not confess directly to God? Why should I confess to a priest who is a sinner himself?**

**Answer:** Surely, God has the power to forgive sin directly or immediately. God is all-merciful Father and He has the unlimited power. However, God wills the manner in which He must pardon us. It seems evident then, that we ought to seek forgiveness through the means which He revealed to us.

God exercised His Supreme and unlimited right through the revelation made by His Divine Son as to the ordinary channel by which His forgiveness is extended to mankind. Thus, the sacrament of Penance in which sins are confessed to an authorized ministers of Christ is the sacrament instituted by Christ Himself for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus Himself performed a physical miracle to demonstrate that He possessed this power. Thus, He said to the paralytic, "Son thy sins are forgiven thee" (Mt. 2:5).

There are unusual circumstances of course wherein a person is dying and there is no priest available. By making a perfect act of contrition (sorrow) his sins are directly forgiven by God, though there remains the obligation to confess his sins to a priest whenever he lives. God does not ask for the impossible.

Some contend that the confession of sins to a sinful priest is useless.

Why should we worry about sinful or sinless priest. What matters is that when because of our perfect contrition and purpose of amendment we have received through the ambassador of God the pardon of the Most High.

St. Paul publicly proclaimed his unworthiness and weakness. He had persecuted the Church of God. Yet he recognized that Christ chose not angels, but men with all their frailties to be His ministers.

A priest as an ambassador of God exercises the tremendous power of forgiving sins. We see Christ in him when he is acting or performing his duty as priest. Therefore, with the eyes of faith we see the hand of Christ when the hand of His divinely appointed ambassador in the tribunal of confession is raised in absolution over us.

Lastly, it is admirable to mention here the teaching of the Catholic Church: . . . that when a priest is performing his duty as a priest, v. gr., as in saying mass, hearing confession, etc., he is acting there not in his own person but in the person of Jesus Christ, the High Priest.

**Sem. Iluminado Rojo**  
*UST Central Seminary*

# HERE AND THERE

## FIRST DIOCESAN CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS WORKSHOP HELD IN CAVITE

The First Imus Diocesan Clergy and Religious Workshop was held in the Arnoldus Hall of the Divine Word Seminary, Tagaytay City from September 16 to 19, 1974.

It was participated by 36 diocesan priests, Bishop Felix Perez included, 9 religious priests and 21 sisters, all working in the Diocese of Imus.

According to Bishop Felix Perez, the purpose of the workshop was to set up objectives for the Diocese for the next five years in the areas of social action, liturgy and catechesis (formation) and to forge a closer bond of friendship

and cooperation between the diocesan priests and the Religious working in the Diocese.

Guest speakers were Fr. George Piron, C.I.C.M. for the socio-economic aspect of planning and Fr. Catalino Arevalo, S.J. for the theological aspect.

The group agreed to reorganize the social action, liturgical and catechetical committees of the Diocese to draw up an action program concentrating on the adult Caviteño to make him a more responsible christian with better family, community and national values.

## FLWP FORMS CHURCH GROUP

The Family Life Workshop of the Philippines has announced that a church committee has already been formed in connection with the observance of Family Week in December. Co-chairmen of the committee are Msgr. Justino C. Ortiz and Rev. Ciriaco Lagunsad, members of an inter-

church organization. The plans include a bible service for ecumenical use throughout the country and the inclusion of a special petition in the prayer of the faithful corresponding to the theme of the day. Church Day theme is "renewal and reconciliation."

## SEARCH FOR TOP PRIESTS

**CABANATUAN CITY.** A search for the "10 Exemplary Parish Priests" of the Cabanatuan diocese is now underway.

A project of Council 3692 of the Knights of Columbus in Cabanatuan City, the "search has been approved by KC national body in Manila, according to CAR Judge Agustin C. Bagasao, grand knight

of the council.

All the 46 parish priests will be screened by a screening committee headed by SK Vic Macapagal. The "search" will wind up in April, next year. The 10 priests who will be selected by the committee and later on, approved by the council will be given awards citations.

## CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE MOVES TO NEW HEADQUARTERS

The national office of the Philippine Catholic Hierarchy has moved to a new headquarters in Intramuros.

The transfer was announced by Msgr. Benjamin J. Almoneda, secretary general of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). The CBCP general secretariat is now located at 375 Arzobispo St., Intramuros, Manila, the former guest house of the Archbishop of Manila near the Cathedral (tel. 47-01-55).

Holding office at the new quarters are Msgr. Almoneda; Msgr. Cornelio Parado, assistant secretary general; Msgr. Florencio Yllana, liaison officer and coordinator; and the secretariat staff.

The Catholic bishops throughout the country are members of the CBCP whose objective is to promote the pastoral work of the Church, cooperation and mutual aid among dioceses, as well as "cordial relationship with the civil authority and with all men of good will."

The secretariat is the implementing arm of the bishops' conference which meets twice a year. It operates under the supervision of the administrative council whose incumbent president is Julio R. Cardinal Rosales of Cebu, and Archbishop Jaime L. Sin of Manila, Vice-President, and coordinates the work of 16 episcopal commissions.

## FILIPINO HEADS SAN AGUSTIN UNIVERSITY

A Filipino has been appointed rector of the University of San Agustin in Iloilo.

Rev. Ambrosio J. Galindez, OSA, the third of five sons of Martina Jamero and Pedro Galindez, former town mayor of Garcia-Hernandez, Bohol, is the first Filipino ever to occupy the post since the university's foundation in 1904.

Fr. Galindez completed his elementary and high school studies in his home town. After college

studies at the University of Sto. Tomas, he continued ecclesiastical schooling in the University of Salamanca and the Augustinian International college in Rome. He was ordained priest in 1960.

His first assignment in the Philippines was at Colegio del Santo Niño de Cebu where he was instructor for six years.

In 1967, Fr. Galindez was appointed director of the San Jose parochial school and currently parish priest of Iloilo city.

## TIPAS PARISH SPONSORS ASI SEMINARS

The Asian Social Institute conducted a two-day development workshop on responsible parenthood and citizenship at the Dambanang Kawayan seminar house in Tipas, Taguig, on Nov. 2 and 3.

Fr. Ben J. Villote, project coordinator, said that the ASI work-

shop will be followed by a series of echo sessions for the various leader-sectors in the community.

The panel of ASI facilitators includes Atty. Ramon Tagle, Mina Ramirez, Sr. Mary Andrew, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Moselina, Fr. Raymundo Abadicio and Dr. T. Caja.



Program implementators are Donato Estacio, Jr., Teodoro Estacio, Reylando Ortega, Romy Bilaw, Luz Pagkalinawan, Julia Lopena and the Tipas Action Leaven team.

Parish priests desirous of holding a similar seminar in their parishes may contact Mina Ramirez at the Asian Social Institute, 1518 Leon Guinto Street Malate, Manila (2801)

## SAINT MARTIN SHRINE

The national shrine of St. Martin de Porres, O.P., was inaugurated on November 3 at the Sto. Domingo church in Quezon City.

A Triduum on November 3, 4, and 5 added solemnity to the affair. Officers of the St. Martin de Porres Guild took their oath of office on the last day of the triduum.

## DULAMBUHAY NI SAN JUAN TO BE STAGED

The life story of St. John M. Vianney, the patron saint of diocesan priests, will be presented at the Philamlife auditorium on Dec. 7 and 8.

Behind the staging of the drama entitled "Ang Dulang Buhay ni San Juan M. Vianney" are Archbishop Jaime L. Sin of Manila, Auxiliary Bishop Amado Paulino, and the directors for vocations in Metro Manila.

Fr. Vianney served as pastor of the village of Ars where the faith had practically vanished.

Fr. Marcelino Reyes who produced "Ang Kandelero ng Obispo" at San Sebastian auditorium is the scriptwriter, producer and director of "Ang Dulang Buhay ni San Juan M. Vianney". Playing the lead role is veteran movie actor Miguel Anzures.

## CPAP BALI-BALITA

The Catholic Press Association of the Philippines (CPAP) recently published the third number of *Bali-Balita*, "an occasional newsletter from the CPAP Secretariat." It featured *The Moalboal Times* a "blackboard newspaper" created by Fr. Frank Silva, of Moalboal, Cebu.

Fr. Silva's "newspaper" is unique because it consists of big boards displayed in strategic places: 12 in the poblacion and 12 others in each of 12 barrios. Each morning 12 "editorial staff" members get copies of the day's news from Fr. Silva and go to their assigned boards in the poblacion. They scribe the news on the boards.

The barrio news-boards are under the care of the barrio head teachers who also get their copies of the

day's news from Fr. Silva and put them on the boards. Students copy the items and read them to their parents in remote forms.

The Moalboal Times gives priority to what is vital for meaningful human life in the villages. It reports, for instance, the real price of copra or other crops for that day. This enables farmers to beat the middleman. New laws and decrees go on the boards. So do farm techniques, family planning services, training programs as well as the social announcements: weddings, meetings, christenings, etc.

Looking back over six years of experience with news-boards Fr. Silva believes they have a community building effect: they spark common projects and united action.

The CPAP Bali-Balita also reported on the association's last

meeting and carried sundries on local Catholic publications.

The CPAP was formed in May 1974 "to facilitate collaboration and mutual aid among Catholics engaged in the apostolate of the

press in all its forms." Membership is open to all those with interest and orientation in being a Catholic witness through the press. Inquiries may be addressed to the CPAP Secretariat, P.O. Box 4132, Manila.

## DEATH OF FATHER FOLEY

Father Theodore Foley, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Passionists, died unexpectedly near midnight on 9 October in the Hospital of the Blue Sisters in Rome. For the past ten years he governed the Congregation as Superior General.

Born in Springfield, Massachusetts (USA) on 3 March 1913, he entered the Congregation of the Passionists and made his profession of vows on 15 August 1933. He was ordained priest on 23 April 1940.

## POPE PARTICIPATES IN SYNOD'S WORK

VATICAN CITY. — Pope Paul participated on October 21 in the work of the World Synod of Catholic Bishops in Rome rejecting what he called unnatural uniformity of the church.

Vatican observers saw his remarks to Synod delegates a cautious acceptance of third world prelates' demands for more flexibility in the church to meet the challenges of an increasingly secularized world.

The 77-year-old Pontiff delivered his statement as a drafting committee worked on a final declaration to be presented to him, after approval by the 200 delegates, when the monthlong Synod ends.

He said the missionary who spreads the word of Christ "should learn to draw from all the voices of mankind a harmonious chorus

of praise for God's greatness."

"It should not be wondered at that from a center of one faith there should be spread out throughout the world a many-colored scene of humanity regenerated by christianity," the Pope added.

According to well-placed Synod sources, the final Synod document will include reference to the special needs of what has been called the "local church" — but will not suggest radical change or innovation.

The sources, who have been directly involved in the document's preparation, said it would also include specific mention of the Catholic church's relations with young people and the family unit — a topic which some delegates want as the theme for the next Synod in three years' time.

## NEW BISHOPS' COUNCIL FORMED

VATICAN CITY. — The Roman Catholic world synod of bishops elected Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin of Cincinnati, Ohio,

to a new permanent Council of Bishops whose members may get the right to help choose the next Pope.

## SYNOD'S 1ST DRAFT REJECTED

VATICAN CITY. — The World Synod of Bishops rejected 75 per cent of the first draft of final proposals on evangelization it must give to Pope Paul VI.

The Synod also elected 11 members of its new permanent council which may be allowed to help choose the next Pope.

"It is my impression that very sensitive and important issues were presented in too general a way," Archbishop John R. Quinn of Oklahoma city told a news conference on the draft recommendations. He said three of the 40-page paper's four parts "did not come to grips with the specifics of the issues."

The rejection reflected two conflicting viewpoints among the 209 bishops on the nature of the proposals.

"There is one outlook which desires to give more theoretical em-

phasis to the proposals," Quinn said. "The other seeks to have the Synod conclude with a few brief but pointed action proposals."

The Synod, whose theme is "Evangelization in the Modern World," accepted the draft's first part dealing with concepts and an "integrated picture" of Roman Catholic evangelism. But it rejected the remaining sections dealing with evangelism and human development, group of people giving special claim on the church's evangelizing interest, and the premise that evangelization involves all Roman Catholics.

Quinn said the Synod would discuss its disagreements and give guidance to the 20 bishops assembling the draft on the basis of more than 200 reports delivered since Synod began Sept. 27.

## HUMAN RIGHTS HAILED

VATICAN CITY. — Pope Paul VI and the world synod of bishops issued a human rights message condemning abortion and mercy killing and offering pardon to all who persecute or defame the Roman Catholic church.

The 1,200-word message came as the 209 bishops struggled to resolve an impasse over what kind of pronouncement on evangelization to issue when the month-long synod ended.

The message on 'Human Rights and Reconciliation' was addressed to the church and the world and was prepared in the synod after many bishops requested such a document. Pope Paul liked it and added his name to it.

'It is our desire to raise our voices on behalf of the voiceless victims of injustice,' the message said. 'No nation today is faultless where human rights are concerned.'

## 2 NEW CHURCH BODIES SET UP

Two new commissions to interpret, promote and regulate the relations of the Roman Catholic church with Islam and Judaism have just been set up by Pope Paul VI.

To speed up better relations between the Catholic church and the

Muslim world, the Pope created a commission for religious affairs.

The presidency of the commission has been entrusted to the cardinal president of the Secretariat for Non-Christian or, as it is now commonly called, for Men of Other Faiths. The special office for

Islam has been elevated to the category of a commission.

This was the natural outcome of the development of relations between Christians and Muslims, which have taken a common and friendly orientation after the declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the relations of the Church to non-christian religions.

Section 3 of the Declaration dealt specifically with Islam, explicitly

acknowledging point of doctrine common to both religions, as well as expressing great esteem for the moral life of devout Muslims and the worship they give to God through prayers, almsgiving and fasting.

Cordial relations between Christians and Muslims both at the level of the religious hierarchy and among the faithful have recently been noticed all over the world.

### \$50 MILLION OF MEDICAID FOR ABORTION

WASHINGTON — American medicaid, using federal and state funds, is paying up to 50 million dollars each year to finance more than 220,000 abortions, a Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) memorandum discloses.

Using figures from seven states, Dr. Louis Hellman, HEW's deputy assistant secretary for population affairs, projected that medicaid is

financing between 222,000 and 278,000 abortions annually.

Medicaid is government-paid medical expenses for the needy.

Dr. Hellman said approximately 800,000 legal abortions were performed in 1973 and an estimated 25 percent involved poor people who used medicaid to pay for the operations, at an average cost of 180 dollars each.

### CATHOLIC STATISTICS

VATICAN CITY — Catholics make up just over 18 percent of the world's population with the largest concentration in the Americas, according to statistics issued recently by the Vatican. The church's statistical yearbook for

1972, containing the latest available figures, said 61 percent of the population of the Americas was Catholic. This compared to 40 percent in Europe, 23 percent in Oceania and a low of 2.3 percent in Asia, it said.

**BRIEFLY SAID**

Cardinal Rosales, Archbishop of Cebu speaking on Oct. 2, 1974, at the World Synod of Bishops stated that the predonderant number of young people in Asia and in the Philippines, in particular, makes the problem of their evangelization one of top priority. It is all the more important in that those young people show definite qualities and dispositions rendering them open to the Gospel. Therefore new forms and methods must be found to work out a catechesis adapted to their terms of reference.

We are not minimizing the difficulties which exist: hostility, indifference or ignorance of the Church (especially its institutional character), etc. Today "Youth Culture" is diffused everywhere throughout the world. In the Philippines, in particular, young people are looking for deep and genuine Christian life in the various communities of the faithful. They want to live the authentic experience of Christ in all simplicity and in dedication to the poorest and those most in need. They are open to genuine spiritual, communitarian and social values, and this drives many of them towards socialist and Maoist ideologies, seeing in them a way for a rapid change of existing structures.

As for the laity in general, one can detect greater readiness to work for the Kingdom of God. This calls for recognition of various charisms, however, and the institution of new ministries. It also implies proper formation, which is not always the case, given the shortage of priests. Contributions of women, both religious and lay, have been outstanding. The Christian family too is being brought into the picture as a highly valid vehicle for evangelization.

## **OUR MOTHER**

**Seventh of a Series**

### **MARY AND THE POOR SOULS IN PURGATORY**

**By**

**Regino Cortes, O.P.**

The relationship of Mary with the poor souls in purgatory is an idea in Theology and christian piety which seems to be less emphasized. In our daily prayers to our Lady in the Hail Mary we "pray for us sinners"; in the Hail Holy Queen we pray to her, we cry to her, we who are "poor banished children of Eve in this vale of tears." In the litany we acclaim the title of Mary as "refuge of sinners" and "comforter of the afflicted" but we seem not to have any title for our Lady as Mother of the poor souls in purgatory. Is it possible that the Mother of all Christians would only be a Mother more to the Church Militant than to the Church Suffering? More of an intercessor to poor sinners on earth rather than to the suffering souls in purgatory?

Now that we recall during this month of November the memory of the faithful departed we cannot but reflect all the more on the role of our Mother with regards to the plight of our deceased brothers and sisters in the state of purification. Realizing the efficacy of Mary's intercession with regards to the souls in purgatory we would not hesitate to direct our prayers to her on their behalf.

It is not because their salvation is already assured that these poor souls in purgatory do not need anymore the loving care of a tender Mother. The Church's teaching on the communion of the saints assures us that the relationship among the members of the mystical body of Christ whether on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven is so intimate in as much as every member is united in the person of Christ himself. In this wise, each member should be concerned with one another, that every Christian would attain that fullness in Christ. Who would have more concern for the well being of all the members of the mystical body of the Son

than the Mother herself, and more especially of those members who are suffering? It is, therefore, a postulate of good theology not to bypass Mary as the Mother of the poor souls in purgatory.

No other creature knows more about the lot of the souls in purgatory except Mary. She willingly suffered in union with the sufferings of her Son during her earthly life to experientially realize what suffering is. She underwent three days of anguish in search for her Son who remained in the temple to be able to feel the anguish of a person longing to see the face of God but still could not because of some stain in that person's soul which needs purification. Her sorrows during the passion was more than any mother could bear seeing her beloved Son crucified, dead, and buried, not to have compassion for the sorrows of those who are eagerly waiting for their future glory.

The intercession, then, of Mary does not end with a good death, it continues until all souls reach the threshold of the heavenly kingdom. Our prayer to her should not only conclude "at the hour of our death" but even until all the poor souls are delivered from the sufferings of purgatory.

# HOMILETICS

## I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES

**Fr. Rey Buenaventura**

**Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P. \***

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (December 22, 1974)

**First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14.**

**Second : Romans 1:1-7.**

**Gospel : Matthew 1:18-25.**

**A. The first reading** is traditionally called the "Immanuel Prophecy" of Isaiah. The sign given by Yahweh to King Ahaz in spite of his stubborn rejection of God's plan concerns the carrying out of God's promise to David and his successors (II Samuel 7) in a child born of a young woman. "God with us", however, goes beyond the historical king of Isaiah's time; so Matthew applies it to Jesus, the Son of God, born of a virgin (LXX translation).

**B. The Gospel reading** belongs to Matthew's Infancy Narratives. The pericope on Jesus' birth (1:18-25) following Jesus' genealogy (1:1-17) can be divided structurally into two parts:

1. The announcement of Jesus' conception (vv. 18-23). Mary's unexpected pregnancy became a puzzling test of conscience to Joseph. Being a just man, he resolved to send her away secretly. His justice lies in his well-balanced relationship to God, to Mary and the child she was carrying and to himself (C. Spicq). On that occasion, the Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream. The details belong to the series of divinely-directed stories in the Old Testament in pattern, imagery and style. The central point, however, is the revelation of the message: As Mary was to conceive a child by

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\* Fr. Buenaventura prepared the notes for December; Fr. Rivera those for January.



the intervention of the Holy Spirit, Joseph, her husband, had to give mere legal paternity and Davidic ancestry to her Son. Thus, in the theological perspective of Matthew, Jesus should be divinely incorporated into the house of David through Joseph, inspite of the virgin birth which he presupposed. Further, in quoting Isaiah 7:14, Matthew seemed to give weight on the naming of the child (Nomen est omen; dabar as word and reality): the NAME of Jesus means His mission to SAVE his people from their sins by being GOD-WITH-US.

2. The execution of the message (vv. 24-25). Joseph took the positive role of obeying God's command by taking Mary as the real wife and naming her Son Jesus. Verse 25a not only presupposes a virginal conception of Jesus but also affirms that Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus. No implication can be drawn from it as to later cohabitation leading to some other children, since the Greek particle "heoos", poorly translated by the English "until" or "before" plus the Semitic background of the passage does not warrant such implication.

C. The second reading contains the opening epistolary address and greeting of Paul to the Romans. He includes in a nutshell his "Gospel" of salvation as contained in the apostolic preaching: Jesus, descendant of David according to the flesh, was constituted the Son of God in power according to the spirit of holiness. Through the risen Christ, Paul receives the grace of apostleship to hand over the authentic conviction of his missionary experiences to the Christians of Rome whom he desires to visit.

### CHRISTMAS: SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S BIRTH (December 25, 1974)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7.

**Second** : Titus 2:11-14.

**Gospel** : 2:1-4.

A. The first reading belongs to the famous Messianic prophecies of Isaiah. The prophet envisions the ideal King Messiah of the Davidic lineage as darkness brought about by defeat and humiliation gives way to the light of God's salvific promise and thus victory ushers a new era of peace. The birth of the child according to the royal ideology occurs in the enthronement of the king whom God has adopted as His son. A series of royal titles is invoked during the coronation rite. But the oracle ends with a due reference to God whose zeal accomplishes everything. For us Christians the fulfilment of this prophecy rests on Jesus Christ, the

Son of God whose nativity as Man inaugurates a wholly new saving act of God for us.

**B. The Gospel reading** is taken from the Infancy Gospel of St. Luke. The narrative of Jesus' birth is divided into two parts.

1.) The birth of Jesus in vv. 1-7. Encased in a framework of world history, the event narrows down to what took place in Bethlehem, the ancestral home of Joseph. There Mary gave birth to her first-born son; a technical term for the preferential status of the eldest son with the rights of primogeniture, consecration to God, authority and succession to David's throne rather than an implication of subsequent offspring. (NAB). The narrative concerns the atmosphere of poverty a) swaddling cloth b) manger c) no inn. But the meaning of these realities can be found in a fresher re-reading of Wis 7:4-5, Is 1:3 and Jer 14:8. The swaddling cloth suggests that Jesus is a royal child, a son of David; the manger shows the place of divine protection and sustenance; the privation of inn indicates the permanent indwelling (CM Ghiblin).

2). The shepherds' role: in vv. 8-14. The shepherds as despised group of people are first privileged to receive the Gospel of great joy. Luke employs three titles, Savior, Messiah and Lord; the first is his predilection yet all the three make up the divine reality in Jesus within the context of the manifestation of divine glory. A mere sign, however, is pointed: a child wrapped in swaddling cloth lying in a manger. The angelic hymn follows: Glory to God in recognition of his mighty acts and peace as God's assurance of blessings to men on whom his good pleasure rests.

**C. The second reading** points to the double coming of Christ; (1) His first coming on the cross-road of eternity and time in the Incarnation. (2) His second coming final manifestation as God and Savior in the glorious Parousia. Here we have a clear witness of Paul's belief in Christ's divinity since the Greek expressions "great God and Our Savior Jesus Christ" are governed by a single definite article (JBC).

### FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY (December 29, 1974)

**First Reading:** Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

**Second** : Colossians 3:12-21

**Gospel** : Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

**A. The first reading**, as it comes from the wisdom writings of Ben Sirach, offers a commentary on the fourth commandment:

Honor your father and your mother. Filial piety is a landmark of the traditional Jewish society; so Sirah gives precedence to this duty over and above particular virtues. He adds a salient point characteristic of later Judaism: obedience as performance of the Torah motivates atonement of sins.

**B. The Gospel reading** comes from the Infancy Narratives of St. Matthew covering the Flight to Egypt and Return to Nazareth. Matthew's concern is to present Jesus as recapitulating in his life the history of the Chosen People, Israel. But Joseph's paternal care for the life of the child makes possible the drawing out of Jesus in a Moses-like manner from Egypt to accomplish God's purpose of forming a new Israel or people of God. The story of the flight to Egypt, then, illustrates the divine concealment of the child so that he might fulfil the role of being the leader of the new Israel. Matthew expresses this midrashic narrative on the basis of Hosea 11:1 (NAB).

Then on the return to Nazareth, Joseph has also the providential role to bring Jesus to their permanent domicile in Nazareth. Here again Matthew's point is to draw the hearers and readers of the Gospel to a fulfilment-text nowhere found in the Bible: He shall be called a Nazarene. Five opinions are suggested: (1). The title comes from his origin, Nazareth. (2). It is an attempt to understand Jesus in the light of the Old Testament institution of the Nazarite like Samson in Judges 16:17. (3). It can be referred to the naserim or watchmen in Jer. 31:6-7 insofar as it follows the text of massacre of the Innocents. (4). It can be based on Isaiah 11:1 where the Davidic Messiah is described as a branch (neser) from Jesse. (5). It can be the fulfilment of Is 66:18 in view of his providential mission to the Gentiles found in the mixed population of Galilee, the province which comprises Nazareth.

**C. The second reading** is lifted from the ethical section of Paul's Letter to the Colossians. It is believed to reproduce the structure of the primitive Christian catechesis. Beginning with the list of virtues as introduced by the imperative "put on", it reflects also a baptismal atmosphere. The Christian puts on Christ and Christ-like virtues and puts off vices contrary to the new way of life — an imagery of the old and new white vestment donned after baptism. Ensuing from this essential Christian ethic is a household code which lists the duties of the members of the new Christian community in their husband-wife, parent-child relationships (R. Fuller).

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**  
(January 1, 1975)

**First Reading:** Numbers 6:22-27  
**Second** : Galatians 4:4-7  
**Gospel** : Luke 2:16-21

**A. First Reading.** The pericope is called "the Priestly blessing" because it gives the standard words used by the priests when they blessed the people. All benediction comes from God but it is ministered to men through his representatives. Underlying the value of benedictions is the belief that God's word has infallible efficacy.

"May Yahweh keep you" finds its echo in Christ's priestly prayer at the Last Supper: "Holy Father, keep those you have given me true to your name (John 17:11).

To pray that God's face shine on someone means to pray that God show him special favour. The blessing specifies that this special favour be peace.

Peace, hebrew SHALOM, in biblical language is not just the tranquility of order. It is the sum total of everything conducive to a happy life. At the Last Supper Christ also bestowed the blessing of peace on his disciples (John 14:27).

The text is most appropriate for January 1, set by the Pope as the world day of Peace.

**B. The Gospel Reading. BACKGROUND:** The infancy narrative of Luke uses Old Testament texts not so much by direct reference as Matthew does, but by allusion. In the light of this general observation it is possible that the story of the shepherds: a) emphasizes that the first ones called to worship Christ were the poor — the shepherds had a reputation for being destitute; and b) alludes to the patriarchs of Israel, who were shepherds.

**MEANING:** If the allusion to the patriarchs is admitted, verse 19, "she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart," is best explained in the light of Genesis 37:11. Jacob, the father of the 12 patriarchs, noticing the jealousy of his sons toward their brother Joseph after his dreams, "kept the thing in mind."

Both the patriarch Jacob in the Old Testament and Mary in the New Testament realized that the happenings to which they were witnesses were the beginnings of something great that God would one day bring into full bloom. They kept silent but also

prepared themselves to play their roles in the unfolding of the mystery.

In connection with the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, the following should be noted. Luke shows that Mary's role is not just to be the physical mother of Jesus. A spiritual motherhood is implied when he says that Mary "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." The Son of God was already born but the Church, his Body, still had to be born. Just as, before becoming the Mother of God, she asked herself what the words of the angel could mean (Luke 1:29), so also, before becoming the Mother of the Church, the Body of Christ, she ponders things in her heart.

**C. The Second Reading.** This pauline text is the only passage outside the Gospels that refer to the mother of Jesus. Here she is identified merely as a "woman".

The emphasis of Paul's thought is that we have been delivered from the Law and have become adopted sons of God. However, it should not escape our attention that, to accomplish this, Christ first had to become a subject of the Law. To become a subject of the Law it was indispensable for Christ to be born of an Israelite woman. Hence we have here also an argument for the indispensability of Mary for our redemption.

### **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD** (January 5, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 60:1-6

**Second** : Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6.

**Gospel** : Matthew 2:1-12

**A. First Reading.** A lyrical description of the Jerusalem. When originally written this poem was about the holy city to be reconstructed after the exile of the Jews in Babylon. In eschatological perspective it is about the Church.

The people of Midian, Ephah and Sheba (verse 6) are descendants of Abraham: see Genesis 25:1-4; similarly Kedar and Nebaioth were tribes of northern arabia and therefore also descendants of Abraham: see Genesis 25:13. Clearly, the pericope envisions of God's promise to Abraham: "in your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3 as read in Acts 3:25, Galatians 3:8).

**A. The Gospel Reading. BACKGROUND.** Matthew started his Gospel by stating that Jesus Christ is the "son of David" and the

"son of Abraham." He thereby hinted at his aim of showing how the divine promises to David (2 Samuel 7:12-17) and the Abraham (Genesis 12 etc.) have been fulfilled in Christ.

**HISTORICO-LITERARY CRITICAL NOTES.** "Three Kings" is the popular name for the feast of Epiphany. However, the Bible speaks of "wise men" and "magi" instead of kings, and it does not tell us their number, nor their names. "Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar" are folkloric rather than biblical names. These eastern visitors, have become the "Three Kings" because the liturgical juxtaposition of texts fed the imagination of popular piety. Psalm 72:10-11, speaking of the promised king of the Jews, says that "the kings of Tarshish and of the islands will pay him tribute. The kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts." Isaiah 60:6 says that "everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of Yahweh."

The interpretation that sees in the gold, frankincense and myrrh symbols of Christ's royalty, divinity and Passion, respectively, has patristic and liturgical authority but is non-biblical in the strict sense. Biblically the gifts simply reinforce the teaching that homage was paid to Christ by the gentiles, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

Some biblical scholars (now fewer in number than formerly) say that the star was a true heavenly body (planet comet, etc.). Others, now more numerous, say that it is symbolic. The basis of the symbolism, however, is not generally agreed upon. Some seek it in the prophecy of Balaam: "A star has come forth from Jacob, a sceptre (or comet) has risen from Israel . . ." (Numbers 24:17); others seek it in midrashic legends.

#### MEANING:

1. Matthew certainly wanted to show that Jesus is the New David, the true King of the Jews who fulfilled the prophecy of Micah 5:1.

2. The contrast between the disbelief of the Jews and the faith of the gentiles (the wise men from the east) is also one of the main lessons of this passage.

3. Matthew also points to Jesus as the Offspring of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed.

4. Whatever may be the true nature of the star in the story it certainly represents the divine guidance that led the gentiles (non-Jewish nations) to pay homage to Christ.

5. It should also be noted that the gentiles were first guided by a visible sign and later, more accurately, by the Scriptures read by Jewish Scribes.

C. **Second Reading.** The "mystery" discussed by Paul in Ephesians (see 1:9 etc.) is the hidden plan of God to create a universal community of men in Christ.

To reproduce the force of the three Greek words beginning forms of SYN — in verse 6, SYGKLERONOMA, SYSOMA, SYM-METOTCHA, Moffatt uses coheirs, companions, and co-partners, respectively. They signify the relationship of gentile and Jew in the Church.

### FEAST OF THE LORD'S BAPTISM (January 12, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 42:1-4. 6-7

**Second** : Acts 10:34-38

**Gospel** : Matthew 3:13-17

A. **First Reading.** The passage is taken from the first song of the Servant of Yahweh. Although the Israelite people are sometimes spoken of as the "servant of Yahweh", as in Isaiah 41:8, in the four "songs" — Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12 — the Servant is a mysterious individual. The New Testament will later identify him as Christ: Matthew 3:17; Luke 4:17-21; Acts 3:13; 8:32-38.

"Servant" is not a derogatory title. It refers to the role of the Davidic king (2 Samuel 18), the messianic king (Ezekiel 34:23-24), and the prophet (Amos 3:7).

The Servant is God's "chosen one" like Moses (Psalm 106:23), David (Psalm 89:4), and all Israel (I Chronicles 16:13; Isaiah 41:8),

B. **The Gospel Reading.** **BACKGROUND.** Matthew's Gospel was probably written for Jews converted to Christianity. It shows a special interest for Jewish customs and problems.

**HISTORICO-LITERARY CRITICAL NOTES.** Of the three Synoptics Matthew alone gives the dialogue between Jesus and John the Baptist in verses 14-15. Taking account of the background of his readers, some of whom might have been bothered by the question of the relationship between Jesus and John, he shows that Jesus submits to John only "for the time being" and because of his mission from God. The "righteousness" bestowed by John's baptism is temporary; that given by Christ is permanent.

Differing also from Mark and Luke, who give the words from heaven in a form addressed to Jesus, Matthew gives the third person form. This is not for the benefit of the crowd, which is not mentioned at all, but for the readers. They are invited to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and as the Servant-Messiah announced by Isaiah 42:1.

**MEANING.** Pursuing the thought of the Isaiah text, God's favour rests on Jesus, the Servant-Messiah, and endows him with the spirit "that he may bring true justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1b). The Baptism of Christ therefore inaugurates the public ministry of Jesus, and brings to fullness the righteousness which Old Testament rituals, including the Baptism ministered by John, only foreshadowed.

**C. The Second Reading.** The coming of the Holy Spirit on Jesus after his baptism (Mt. 3:16) was considered by the early Church as his "anointing" that singled him out as the Messiah-King. The text, especially verse 38, reinforces the meaning of the Gospel reading.

## SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (January 19, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 49:3, 5-6  
**Second** : I Corinthians 1:1-3  
**Gospel** : John 1:29-34

**A. The First Reading.** The second song of the Servant of Yahweh, from which this passage is taken, presents the Servant as another Jeremiah. Called, like Jeremiah, from his mother's womb, he has, like Jeremiah too, a vocation to preach to Israel and to be a prophet to all nations (see Jeremiah 1:5; 2:2; 1:10).

The reading has been chosen to harmonize with the Gospel. In this light, Jesus is the Servant of Yahweh: he received his vocation in his mother's womb (Luke 1:31), was sent to the house of Israel (Luke 10:6; 15:24), but is destined to "a light to enlighten the pagans" (Luke 1:32).

**B. The Gospel Reading. BACKGROUND.** After the prologue John's Gospel describes the opening week of Christ's ministry. The passage under study narrates the second day.

**HISTORICO-LITERARY CRITICAL NOTES.** Among the evangelists only John refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God. However, three other New Testament writers allude to or expressly mention this title. In Acts 8:31-35 we are made to understand that Jesus, in his suffering and death, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:7-8 about



the Suffering Servant described "like a sheep that is led to the slaughter-house, like a lamb that is dumb in front of its shearers . . ." I Corinthians 5:7 calls Christ "Our passover (lamb) who has been sacrificed." I Peter 1:19 says that we have been redeemed "in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ."

Whatever might have been the meaning of "Lamb of God" to John the Baptist, the Christian reader would take it to designate Jesus as the Passover Lamb or as the Servant of God, or as both.

Verse 29b: "takes away the sin of the world." Sin is in the singular not because it refers to original sin but because the evil that men have done is considered collectively.

Verse 33b: "the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." This phrase sums up the whole purpose of the Messiah's coming, namely, that mankind might be born again in the Spirit.

Verse 34: "I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God." To give witness to Jesus is the principal task of John.

**MEANING.** To get the meaning of the passage we must bear in mind that it must be understood not from the viewpoint of John the Baptist who "gave witness" to Jesus before his Passion and Resurrection, but from the viewpoint of John the Evangelist and his Christian readers, already instructed by the events of Christ's paschal mystery. In this light:

1. Jesus is the Suffering Servant who was "like a sheep led to the slaughter-house."

2. He is also the Passover Lamb who was sacrificed so that we could celebrate our deliverance from the slavery of sin to enjoy the freedom on the children of God.

**C. Second Reading.** The opening formula of the pauline letters modified the current usage to hint at Paul's theological orientation. The addressees are "those sanctified in the Lord" because they have been incorporated to Christ in baptism.

The expression, "to call upon the name of the Lord", occurs frequently in the Old Testament with the meaning to adore God (see Psalm 99:6; Joel 2.32). In the New Testament "those who call upon the name of the Lord" are the Christians united by their adoration of Christ as Lord. Clearly, we have here a witness to early Christian belief in the divinity of Christ.

**SANTO NIÑO**

**(Feast proper to the Philippines: January 26, 1975)**

**First Reading: Exodus 3:13-15**

**Second : I Corinthians 1:1-3**

**Gospel : Matthew 1:18-25**

**A. First Reading.** The pericope deals about the revelation of God's proper name to Moses. God calls himself YAHWEH. The old traditional explanation would want this translated as, "I am who I am". This, however is too philosophical, abstract, "essentialists", to suit the semitic context. Authors are not agreed on alternatives for this old explanation. Albright explains YAHWEH as a causative form of the verb to be. God's proper name would then show that "He Causes to be what Comes into Existence."

**B. The Gospel Reading.** (Same as for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 22, 1974). In Hebrew the name Jesus is YEHO-SHUA which combines the words YEHO, a shortened form of God's proper name (YAHWEH), and SHUA, which means "he saves." YAHWEH SAVES.

**C. The Second Reading.** (Same as for the Second Sunday of the Year, January 19).

## II. HOMILIES

By

Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P. \*

**December 22: Fourth Sunday of Advent**

### DO NOT BE AFRAID

**THEME:** We should imitate the example of Mary and Joseph by setting aside our personal plans and getting involved in God's plan of salvation.

**OUR CONDITION:** We are social beings and it should be natural for us to get involved in common projects. But when working with others and for others we sometimes get hurt. Rubbing shoulders with others generates friction. Our good intentions are sometimes misunderstood. Our good deeds are given ugly twists. Because of such sad experiences we tend to withdraw from "the maddening crowd" and keep to ourselves.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** God has to draw us out of our shell. He does this tactfully, lest we get frightened. He did not proceed differently when he wanted the collaboration of Mary and Joseph for the coming of his Son to the world.

Joseph was a just man. He lived by his conscience. He did what was right in the eyes of God. Apparently that was all he wanted to do in life. He had no ambition to get into the public eye. Then one day, all of a sudden he was faced by the dilemma of choosing between private peace and social duty; between his desire to live a quiet life and his obligation to denounce what appeared to be a crime against the chastity of betrothed persons prescribed by law. His first reaction was to flee. To avoid involvement.

But God intervenes. Joseph has a mission to fulfill. He will have to set aside his wish for anonymity, and take upon himself the duty of protecting the honor of the Mother of God, and of

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\* Fr. Rey Buenaventura prepared the homily on the Holy Family.

giving to her son a legal claim to davidic descendance. All of a sudden he is placed in the spotlight and instructed not to be afraid but to act and get involved in the drama of salvation being directed by God.

Joseph obeys. But from the way the Gospel describes his action he preserves his self-effacing nature even when taking a stellar role in mankind's greatest moment.

Mary, too, must have looked forward to the quiet, hardworking life of a housewife in an obscure Israelite town. But when God chose her to the Virgin who will give birth to Emmanuel, she obeyed.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born: through the obedience of a man and a woman through their acceptance of involvement in God's plan of salvation.

**OUR RESPONSE.** We, too, should be ready to get involved when God calls us to play a part in a salvific action. In the beginning we might, like Joseph, seek to flee because we are afraid of hurting ourselves or hurting others. But let us put ourselves in God's hands and let him make us his instruments. Yes, we will have to change our personal plans. But we can be sure that obedience to God and involvement in his work is always for the best.

**December 25: Christmas**

## COME AND GET IT

**THEME:** People are attracted when something worthwhile is given free. Shouldn't we also feel attracted by the divine realities given to us free?

**OUR CONDITION:** At the C.O.D. Department Store in Cubao, Quezon City there is a yearly display of animated figures illustrating the Christmas story or a Christmas theme. The show happens in full view of the public and there is no charge for watching it. Because of this thousands of people flock to witness the colorful and inspiring sight.

I am sure all of you know of instance when something worthwhile is offered free to the public. It might be a parade, songs by a movie idol, a chance to win a car, etc. In all these occasions there is a big crowd. If the affair takes place inside an enclosure the people flock to the gates, press and push, all wanting to get in.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** God is offering something very worthwhile to us — free. It is not just an animated display of the Christmas story, it is the reality of Christmas itself. He is giving us “the power to become children of God.” Surely this is better than a parade or a few popular songs, or a grand raffle prize.

God is so good that he is also giving us the means to receive what he offers. It is as if he gives us a party and he also sends a car to fetch us from home and bring us to the party. This car, this means, is faith. Our Bible passage tells us that the power to become children of God is given to those who have faith. And God himself gives us this faith.

This Christmas Eve our Holy Father Pope Paul VI opened the Holy Door of St. Peter's basilica so that pilgrims who are expected to go to Rome by the hundreds of thousands could more easily enter the holy building and venerate the relics of the Apostles. This is a symbolic act. It symbolizes God's goodness to each and everyone of us. He not only gives us the building that contains our Salvation, he also sees to it that the doors of this building are open to us. He makes it easy for us to enter.

This, my dear friends, is the real meaning of Christmas. God, our Father, is so good to us that he makes it easy for us to enjoy salvation. He gives it to us free. Of course a price is paid for our redemption but the price comes from God. Or, more properly speaking it comes from the God-made-man, Jesus Christ Our Lord. He became a man so that in the name of all men he could pay the price of men's redemption and enable all men to have a free entrance to God's dwelling place.

**OUR RESPONSE.** The building is ours, the doors are open. Yet, we will never get inside if we do not move. Let us move: run if we can, but at least walk. Let us leave behind all our worries and fears, all our sins, and embrace Jesus Christ. He makes everything easy for us even if we are hardened sinners. He gives salvation to us free of charge as long as we really want. So, this Christmas let us say to him: Jesus, be my Saviour.

**December 29: Feast of the Holy Family**

## **OBEDIENCE AND AUTHORITY IN FAMILY LIFE**

**THEME:** Obedience and authority in family life is a two-way street that helps us become more human and Christ-like.

**OUR CONDITION.** Nowadays we hear complaints that young people tend to disregard obedience to authority, especially that of

parents. The media flash-slogan —Ang pagsunod sa magulang ay tanda ng anak na magalang— strives to counteract this present malaise. But the other side of obedience must also be closely looked at. How do parents behave before their children?

**THE GOOD NEWS.** The word of God expresses this fundamental human value in the form of a commandment: "Honor your father and mother." This commandment preserves human family life in its two-fold aspect of obedience and authority. Children have the responsibility to respect and honor their parents. Parents have also an equal responsibility to behave and in a grown-up manner, act in such a way that they be respected and honored by their children. How many times have we heard parents complain that their children are defiant of authority? But have they realized that such behavior and attitude spring from the bad example, if not immature exercise of authority, which their children see in them?

The Holy Family of Nazareth in today's Gospel offers us an example to live by. The Parent's concern for the child evokes the corresponding response of Jesus' obedience to Mary and Joseph. It was at Nazareth that Jesus learned the human art of living — accepting in obedience and respect the values of the Jewish family, the cultural and religious traditions of his nation, the ideals of the sons of Abraham and descendants of David — heirs of the Messianic promises. Jesus became fully human in this world of family life. And if ever at the height of his God-sent mission, he obeyed the higher call of forming another family — the Church, the basis for such community life was certainly the human family in Nazareth where he progressed steadily in age, wisdom and grace before God and men.

**OUR RESPONSE.** We are called by physical birth to be inserted in a human family. Obedience and trust, respect and authority are the structural values to make a family truly human and truly christian. The examples of the Holy Family at Nazareth can make us realize that the possibility is a present-day reality to us, if at this liturgical celebration, we reflect on and assimilate the authentic meaning of the slogan: The family that prays together stays together — in respect and obedience, in authority and responsibility. Our Lord says further, "Whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Let us make sure to gather in the name of the Lord so that he would be with us.

January 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

## BEHIND EVERY MAN

**THEME:** Mary is both the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church, the Body of Christ. She is our spiritual mother who will help us have peace and success.

**OUR CONDITION.** St. Augustine, speaking of his mother St. Monica, said, "she brought me forth, both in the flesh, that I might be born this temporal light, and in heart, that I might be born to Light eternal." (Confessions, Bk. IX) what would have been life if he did not have a spiritual mother? He himself confessed that he was on the way to perdition and would have been lost.

We all feel the need for a spiritual mother. If the woman who gave birth to us could also be our spiritual mother that would be excellent. But sometimes we have to turn to a sister, an aunt, a friend, a wife. We have to find one. "Behind every successful man," they say, "is a woman."

**THE GOOD NEWS.** For our spiritual success God has singled out a woman to back us up — no less than his own Mother Mary. Her role was not only to be the mother of Jesus, but also to be the mother of the Church, the Body of Christ.

The Gospel reading tells us that Mary, reflecting on the Nativity of Christ and the events surrounding it, "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." It was necessary for her to do this so that she could understand the work of Jesus and cooperate with him. By so doing she would become his Associate in our redemption, our spiritual mother. Just as she asked herself what the words of the angel could mean when she was informed of God's choice of the Mother of his Son, so also she "pondered things in her heart" when it began to dawn on her that she was being prepared to become the Mother of the Church.

We do not have to search for a spiritual mother. Mary stands ready to draw us to her heart, and make us true brothers of Jesus.

**OUR RESPONSE.** Like Mary let us treasure and ponder in our hearts the mystery of her divine and ecclesial maternity. Let us honor her both as the Mother of God and our Mother. In a special way let us ask her to make us true brothers by making us instruments of reconciliation among men and of peace on earth. Let us start the new year right by asking our spiritual mother to stand by us and make us authentic Christians throughout this year.

January 5: The Epiphany of the Lord

COME CLOSER

**THEME:** God wants all nations to be blessed through Christ, this offspring of Abraham. A commitment to work for unity is our best gift to Christ.

**OUR CONDITION:** The United Nations has its faults but people still want it to exist. Ecumenism too, has its pitfalls, but we want more of it. Our country, consisting of the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao regions, feels the pull of forces threatening to make it fall apart, but we still want to be one Filipino nation. If we are members of a group we know that there are often quarrels that work toward the disintegration of the group, but we try to patch them up. In short, in spite of our selfish tendencies, deep down in our hearts we want the unity of men, we want everyone to share in a common good, we want fellowship among us.

**THE GOD NEWS.** God wants all men to acknowledge that we are brothers having him as our common father. In the past he gave his special blessing to just one people, the descendants of Abraham and Isaac. But even then it was his plan that through the offspring of Abraham all nations would be blessed.

The New Testament has revealed that the "offspring" of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed is none other than Jesus Christ. When he was born, wise men from the East, representing all non-Jewish people, were invited to pay him homage. The scribes of Jerusalem ministered to them, in accordance with God's plan that salvation should spread from the Jews to the gentiles. But the principal credit is to be given to the wise men themselves, who diligently followed SIGN and WORD in order to find the newborn king.

When God sent his Son to our world, he sounded a call for all men to unite and, as one body, accept the salvation offered to all. But some men, like Herod, not only refused to pay homage to Christ, but also showed hostility to him.

Perfect unity has not yet been achieved. But somehow, because wise men came from the East to pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews and King of Kings, men are closer to one another.

Christian folklore likes to identify the wise men as Three Kings, Melchor, Gaspar and Baltazar. Furthermore, folklore paints one of them white, another brown and another black. These details may not be historical but they symbolize the fact that all races are called to unite in just one Christian religion.



**OUR RESPONDS.** Let us work for the unity of all men, starting with our family, our social group, our parish, barangay, city and country. As opportunities arise let us practice ecumenism and make our Christian religion a factor unifying men instead of dividing them. This commitment to the brotherhood of all men under the fatherhood of God is the greatest gift we could offer to the Christ Child.

**January 12: Feast of the Lord's  
Baptism**

### ANSWER TO INSECURITY

**THEME:** The human condition is steeped in insecurity but Jesus has inaugurated his messianic reign and offers the security of salvation to all. This security is still specially offered to us in the Sacraments.

**OUR CONDITION.** At one time or another in our life we feel insecure. We ask ourselves whether what we are doing or plan to do is right. The situation is specially painful in the case of growing adolescents. Sometimes they are exalted and enthusiastic; sometimes they are down and depressed. They do not understand themselves. Even when what they are doing is right, they feel they are not doing it for the right motives. How many times have priests heard young people say, "Father, I feel like a hypocrite. I feel that I please other people just so that they would praise me!"

Even adults often feel insecure. Parents wonder whether their health would hold out until they could see their children well established in life. Sometimes they worry about their finances. A businessman worries about his investments. Priests and nuns also worry about themselves. About the Church or their Order. About the country.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** Even a man like John the Baptist, whom our Lord Jesus Christ called the greatest of all past prophets (Matthew 11:11), felt insecure. When he was instructed by Jesus to baptize him, he felt insecure. He thought it was not the right thing to do.

The only one who has always been sure of himself was our Lord Jesus Christ. He was absolutely sure that everything he did was in accordance with God's plan. He told John the Baptist to go ahead and baptize him so that they would fulfill "all that righteousness demands."

By submitting to the baptism of John, Jesus started to put an end to all the rituals of the old Testament and substitute them with new, more efficacious rituals. The event marked his inauguration as the Messiah, as the descent of the Spirit in the form of a dove coming down on him, and the voice from heaven attested.

The shadows of the Old Testament are cast away by the light of the Messiah. All past uncertainties are solved by his presence. The expectation of salvation is brought to an end by the coming of salvation in the person of Jesus Christ.

**OUR RESPONSE.** "What should we do in order to be saved?" is a legitimate question for pagans. But for Christians it is obsolete. We need not have any insecurity about the way to salvation. It is the way taught by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

By uniting ourselves with Christ let us participate in that absolute security he had that he is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Concretely, our Lord has taught us that the way to salvation is the way of the Sacraments. These are the rituals initiating us to eternal life and making it efficacious in our present situations. They are the packages containing the benefits of the messianic kingdom that Christ inaugurated. Let us reach out to them and let us experience the secure hand of Jesus who takes hold of us through the sacraments, and leads us securely to eternal salvation.

**January 19: Second Sunday of the Year**

### **A LAMB STORY**

**THEME:** We are like lambs that have wandered from the fold, but there is a Lamb of God who calls us to himself. We find him in the Blessed Sacrament.

**OUR CONDITION.** The theme song from "The Cardinal" describes man "like a lamb that in springtime wanders far from the fold" and when the darkness and the frost comes he gets lost and grows cold.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** The Bible speaks of another lamb: Jesus, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." The passage makes clear what the Old Testament said when it described the Messiah as a Suffering Servant who is led like a sheep to the slaughter house (Isaiah 53:7-8). It also alludes to the Passover Lamb which is sacrificed in the temple before being brought to the house where the family celebrates deliverance from slavery and the gift of freedom as God's people.

Our story, then, is like the story of a lost lamb being saved by another sacrificing lamb.

Putting it another way, our story has been stated in the theme song from "The Cardinal": we grow cold... we grow weary... we have sinned... we go seeking shelter... we cry in the wind... we grope and blunder... we're weak, we're strong... we walk alone... till we find to our wonder every path leads to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

**OUR RESPONSE.** The song also suggests what we should do after finding the Lamb of God at the end of our wayward journeys. We should ask him to stay with us.

Concretely, we can find the Lamb of God in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us receive him and ask him to stay with us.

**January 26: Santo Niño**

### WE MADE HIM OUR OWN

**THEME:** Just as our ancestors made the spanish image of the Christ Child their own "Santo Niño," let us make our Christianity today a force that would purify the ambiguous and strengthen the good in Filipino traits and customs.

**OUR CONDITION.** Historians tells us that an image of the Child Jesus was presented to the queen of Cebu as a baptismal gift when she was baptized on April 14, 1521. Antonio Pigafetta, who accompanied Magellan in the first spanish expedition to reach the Philippines, wrote:

"After dinner the priest and some of the others went ashore to baptize the queen who came with forty women. We conducted her to the platform, and she was made to sit down on a cushion, and the other women near her, until the priest should be ready. She was shown an image of our Lady, a very beautiful wooden Child Jesus, and a Cross. Thereupon she was overcome with contrition and asked for baptism amid her tears... She asked to be given the little Child Jesus to keep in place of her idols (and we gave it to her) and she went away."

The expedition left the Philippines not long after Magellan's death on Mactan island on April 27, 1521.

What the Spaniards found when they returned to Cebu 44 years later is told by Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, head of the expedition in a letter to Philip II of Spain:

"When we entered this village, one of the soldiers went into a large and well-built house of an Indian where we found an image of the Child Jesus... This was kept in its cradle, all gilded, just as

it was brought from Spain and only the little cross which was generally placed on the globe in his hand was lacking. The image was well-kept in that house and many flowers were found before it, no one knows for what object or purpose."

As far as Legazpi and his men could gather, the image they had found was the same one presented to the queen of Cebu in 1521. In the meantime, however, after the first converts reverted to paganism, the Cebuanos continued to worship the "Santo Niño" as one of their *diwatas* or deities.

When Legazpi had a shrine built for the "Santo Niño" and the natives saw the white men kneel in prayer before it, they were favorably impressed.

The pagan homage paid to a Christian symbol which the natives considered their own gave the Augustinian Father Andres de Urdaneta and his small band of missionaries something to start with in their heroic work of planting the seeds of Christianity in the Philippines.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** God came to be with us and this is not to be interpreted in a merely eternal way. He came to give more value to everything human that is good. The legacy of our ancestors, like respect for the old and for authority, regard for a woman's honor, hospitality, bayanihan, etc., are values that are also basic to Christianity and should be enlivened by the Christian spirit.

As for traits and customs that could be improved, Christianity should not erase the particular Filipino flavor in the process of improvement. Lavish fiestas for example, should be avoided, but the desire to have a fiesta should not be suppressed. It should only be re-oriented towards something socially beneficial.

Jesus came to save us from our sins but not everything we had when he came falls under the category of sin. Let us indeed get rid of sin with the help of Jesus. But let us, also, with his help, appreciate what is good in us, and in our Filipino heritage.

Jesus came to take from us the good previously given, to enable us to make him our own. Let us do this, just as our ancestors made the Spanish image of the Christ Child their own "Santo Niño".

**OUR RESPONSE.** We should be grateful for the Christian faith given to us. But let us not forget that the best form of gratitude is to let this faith take away what is bad in us — our sins — and let it stamp the divine character on everything we have that is good.