

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

**THE SYNOD IN BRIEF**

**THE POPE AND THE SYNOD**

**CONCLUDING DOCUMENTS**

**SUMMARIES OF REPORTS**

**SPEECHES OF PHILIPPINE PARTICIPANTS**

**DRAFT FINAL DOCUMENT**

**A THEOLOGIAN SPEAKS ON THE SYNOD**

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## **Synod of the Holy Spirit**

The Third Synod of Bishops opened amidst apprehensions that it was taking a bite too big to swallow. "Evangelization is a very large issue," said Cardinal William Conway of Armagh in Northern Ireland.

As the Synod progressed, some Bishops felt they were going nowhere. However, it was noted that the discussions were "very candid and perceptive" and that "the Synod members were talking more personally than the Fathers of the Council did, and that, in consequence, they were learning more from one another than the Council Fathers did."

When the Third Synod of Bishops voted on the Draft Document, they were flabbergasted to find out that only one out of four parts received a majority of approving votes. The secular press forthwith labeled the Synod as a big failure.

But the ways of God's Spirit are not the ways of men. The Synod was the Synod of the Holy Spirit, as the Bishops soon realized. "We are consoled in the Holy Spirit by what the Lord allowed us to accomplish at this Synod and wish to share that consolation with the entire People of God...", they said in their final Declaration (n. 1).

What did they accomplish? The Synod is their message. They honestly came to grips with vital issues and when they could not find solutions that would suit all situations they did not attempt to agree on abstract and empty compromises, but simply resolved to reflect more deeply on the orientations their discussions had taken.

In retrospect the Third Synod of Bishops emerges as a Sign of the Times. It is a Sign pointing to the "UNITY which the Holy Spirit effects in a VARIETY of conditions wherein the Church's life is nourished" (Declaration, n. 2). It is a Sign that invites Christians to recognize that the Holy Spirit "is always at work in the life of the Church itself and IN ALL HUMAN HISTORY, so that everyone may have the fulness of a better life" (Declaration, n. 6); his action "OVERFLOWS THE BOUNDS OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY" (Declaration, n. 11).

Following the example of our Bishops, let us revitalize our evangelizing efforts by letting the Holy Spirit blow more strongly in our lives and let him take us where he wills: to the heights of Liberation and the valleys of Basic Communities; to the roaring ocean of Youth and the unexplored rivers of Women's Rights; to the alleys of Local Churches and the open fields of Popular Religiosity.

# THE SYNOD IN BRIEF

## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SYNOD

- On September 15, 1965 Pope Paul VI issued an Apostolic Letter "Motu Proprio", **Apostolica sollicitudo**, establishing a Synod of Bishops for the Universal Church. — *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AA), Vol. LVII (1965) pp. 775-780; *The Pope Speaks* (TPS) Vol. 10, No. 4, pp. 339-342.

This document anticipated the final formulation of the Second Vatican Council's views on a Synod of Bishops, expressed in the Document **Christus Dominus** or Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office, n. 5, which was approved and promulgated on October 28, 1965.

- On December 8, 1966 the Cardinal Secretary of State, with papal approval, issued the Regulations, **Ut generales normae**, establishing the procedures for the meeting of the Synod of Bishops. — *AAS* Vol. LIX (1967) pp. 91-103; *TPS* Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 70-78.

This was revised in 1969, see *AAS*, Vol LXI (1969), pp. 525-539.

## FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- September 29, 1967 to October 29, 1967; 24 sessions.
- The Synod's conclusions were submitted to the Holy Father in the form of proposals or reports on each of the five subjects on its agenda:

principles for the revision of the Code of Canon Law (1st to 4th sessions)

doctrinal questions (4th to 9th sessions)

seminaries (10th to 14th sessions)

questions concerning mixed marriages (14th to 17th sessions)

liturgy (18th to 23rd sessions)

- The Cardinal Presidents of the Synod were: Jean Villot, William Conway and Pericle Felici.

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- Participants from the Philippines were: **Cardinal Rufino Santos**, **Archbishop Lino Gonzaga**, and **Archbishop Juan Sison**.
- On October 28 the Synod issued a brief message for peace addressed to all men, especially to the leaders of nations and to those suffering the hardships of war (See TPS, Vol. 12 No. 4, p. 392).

### FIRST EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY

- October 11, 1969 to October 28, 1969; 11 sessions.
- The Synod of Bishops is convoked to an Extraordinary Meeting if the topics involve the good of the universal Church and require speedy resolution. In such a meeting the national Bishops Conferences are represented by their presidents alone.
- The question needing speedy resolution by the Synod was identified by the Pope as the definition of the nature and powers of Episcopal Conferences and their relationships with the Apostolic See and among themselves. It was a question of how to put **episcopal collegiality** into practice.
- The Cardinal Presidents of the Synod were: Carlo Confalonieri (Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops), Valerian Gracias (Archbishop of Bombay), Agnelo Rossi (Archbishop of Sao Paolo).
- Participant from the Philippines: **Archbishop Lino Gonzaga**.

### SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- September 30, 1971 to November 6, 1971; 34 sessions.
- Two subjects were discussed:
  - “The Ministerial Priesthood”
  - “Justice in the World”
- On November 30, 1971, the Holy Father authorized the publication of the two documents containing the Synod's proposals on the two topics. However, he reserved to himself the right to examine the proposals more carefully and to decide what recommendations should be convalidated as directive guidelines or practical norms.

- The two documents have been published in our Boletín, Vol. XLVI (1972) pp. 58-80; 106-121.
- The Cardinal Presidents were: Leon Etienne Duval (Archbishop of Algiers), Paolo Muñoz Vega (Archbishop of Quito), John J. Wright (Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Clergy).
- Participants from the Philippines were: **Archbishop Teopisto Alberto**, **Archbishop Antonio Mabutas**, **Bishop Julio Labayan**.

### THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- September 27, 1974 to October 26, 1974; 25 sessions.
- Only one topic was discussed: **"Evangelization in the Modern World"**.
- Before taking up the Working Paper on the topic, the Synod considered two reports:

On the Work of the Secretariat of the Synod and of the Consilium of the same Secretariat. — The report was given by the Secretary General, Bishop Ladislao Rubin.

On the Panorama of the life of the Church, covering the period 1971-1974. This concentrated on the pastoral tendencies in the churches during the last three-year period. Its first part reported the realities which testify to the Church's vitality; its second part dealt with the problems confronting the churches. — The report was made by Archbishop Lorscheider of Fortaleza, Brazil.

- The Synod's Working Paper had two parts:  
Mutual exchange of experiences in the field of evangelization.

Reflection on the theological questions that have emerged from pastoral practice:

- As an initial step in the discussion of the first part, the synodal Fathers listened to panoramic reports of situations in different continents:

Africa — report of Bishop James Sangu of Mbeya  
 Latin America — report of Bishop Eduardo Pironio of Mar del Plata, President of C.E.L.A.M.  
 North America, Oceania and Australia — report of Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati

Asia — report of Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Karachi

Europe — report of Archbishop Roger Etchagaray of Marseilles .

- In the Eighth general session on October 4, after the Secretary General's summary of the discussions, the Fathers formed 12 Study Groups ("Circuli Minores", also called Language Groups). They devoted themselves to ten principal areas of discussion:

1. **Interior Life**, including contemplation and conversion;
2. **The Local Church** and its local problems;
3. **Basic Communities**: the positive and negative aspects; the distinction between "basic communities", "small communities", "reflection or prayer groups";
4. **Popular Religiousness**: the sense of religiousness or hunger for religious values being expressed in many different ways in modern times;
5. **The Pastoral Care for Lapsed Catholics**;
6. **Dialogue and Evangelization**, dealing with dialogue with other Christians, non-Christians and non-believers, including atheists and Marxists;
7. **Human Liberation and Evangelization**, which asks the question where does concern for the fully free human person meet and merge with concern for man's need for salvation?;
8. **Evangelization of the Young**, a pressing problem for every part of the Church;
9. **Special Groups**, involving the family, workers, intellectuals and future political and civil leaders;
10. **Evangelization and the Principal Rights of the Human Person**, which include religious liberty, the right to freedom of conscience and of civil action.

- In the Ninth general session on October 8, the second part of Working Paper, dealing with Theological Questions, was introduced for discussion by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Cracow.
- The Theological Questions were discussed in 12 Study Groups on the 15th session and reports of these discussions were read on the 16th session, October 17. These reports were then discussed in general sessions.

- In the 19th session on October 19 the Synod decided that henceforth the General Assembly will meet every three years.
- The Draft Final Document of the Synod was read in the 20th session on October 22, and then the Fathers proceeded to vote on it. When the votes were counted it turned out that only the first part received a majority of approving votes; the other three parts were rejected.
- Cardinal John Krol (Archbishop of Philadelphia), read a **Statement on Human Rights** and it was approved by show of hands. This happened in the 21st session on October 23. The Bishops also discussed what to do about the Synod's final document. In the subsequent sessions they decided to conclude the Synod with a **Message to the whole Church** and with a **List of the themes** on which the Synod showed special interest and which should be submitted to the Pope.
- The Bishops approved the amended Message and the amended List during their 24th session on October 25.
- The Synod closed on October 26 with the Holy Father's Address, a ceremony of Prayer and Blessing, and the giving of papal souvenirs.
- The Cardinal Presidents were: Franz Koenig (Archbishop of Vienna), Juan Landazuri Ricketts (Archbishop of Lima), Paul Zoungrana (Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Africa).
- Participants from the Philippines:

Elected: **Cardinal Julio R. Rosales**, **Bishop Jose T. Sanchez**,  
**Bishop Francisco F. Claver**.

Appointed by the Pope: **Bishop Mariano Gaviola**, Secretary  
General of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences.

# THE POPE AND THE SYNOD

*Angelus Message September 22, 1974*

## SYNOD — AN HISTORIC HOUR

*Before the "Angelus" with the faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square on Sunday 22 September, Paul VI called the attention of those present to the imminent opening of the Synod of Bishops. He spoke as follows:*

Today we invite you to unite your prayer with ours for the success of the Synod of Bishops. Beginning on 27 September next, it will continue throughout the whole month of October, here in Rome, in Vatican City, near the tomb of St. Peter, the first apostle, to consider prayerfully the great subject, "Evangelization in the world today".

What is the Synod of Bishops? Everyone knows by now. It is an ecclesiastical institution which we, weighing the signs of the times, and even more trying to interpret in depth the divine plans and the constitution of the Catholic Church, established after the II Ecumenical Vatican Council. Its purpose is to foster the union and collaboration of the Bishops of the whole world with this Apostolic See by means of a common study of the conditions of the Church and the concordant solution of the questions related to her mission.

It is not a Council, it is not a Congress, it is not a Parliament, but a Synod of a particular nature, composed of representatives elected by the various Episcopal Conferences, of the heads of the Congregations of the Roman Curia, some Superiors of religious Orders, and a few other additional members nominated by the Pope, altogether about two hundred members. Some experts are admitted.

This Assembly is of great importance in God's Church because of its number, its composition, its competence, its method of work,

all the more so because the subject discussed concerns vital problems, both doctrinal and practical.

This year the general subject bears upon all questions concerning the operative presence of the Church in the midst of mankind, in connection with its prime purpose, which is to proclaim the Gospel, imbue men with faith and guide them along the way to Christian salvation. The confrontation of the Church with the world, already presented by the constitution "Gaudium et Spes" in the recent Council, will be considered, or rather the presence of the Church in the world. We are well aware what immense problems, difficult but stimulating, this presence raises, today especially in the Church herself, who is mother and teacher, animated by a missionary, pastoral, liberating, peaceful and religious spirit, a spirit loving with the same charity through which Christ brought salvation.

All the faithful sons of the Church must live in deep spiritual union with her at this period this is a historic hour of her life. Especially by praying, as we now do, with Mary, who presided over the Supper Room, at Pentecost.

## THE POPE'S OPENING ADDRESS

*Pope Paul VI, presiding at the first meeting of the Synod of Bishops in the Synod Hall on the afternoon of 27 September, delivered the following discourse in Latin to the assembled participants.*

Venerable Brothers,

After this morning's liturgical celebrations we are here assembled in the Synod Hall. We have come to speak once more among ourselves and to inaugurate, in accordance with the established agenda, the activities with which this Assembly will be occupied in the days ahead. What we have already said has been directed in the form of prayer to the Lord Jesus. We have done this in the conviction that the very serious theme of Evangelization, depending as it does on the unified design of the love of the Father, on the mandate of Christ and on the mission of the Holy Spirit, should first be situated in this lofty perspective in order subsequently to be studied thoroughly.

Hence we wish at this time venerable Brothers, to extend an affectionate greeting to all of you who have made a sacrifice to set aside the ordinary duties of your dioceses. Permit us to extend a particular greeting to the Coadjutor of the esteemed Archbishop of Hanaoi. The latter was not able to come to the Council or to the previous Synods, and now by reason of health cannot be present at this Assembly. Yet for the first time, by sending Archbishop Joseph-Marie Trinh-Van-Can, his Coadjutor, he renders alive and present in our midst a chosen part of the Church—and one most dear to us—that of North Vietnam.

As we invoke once again divine assistance on this undertaking which is now beginning, we wish likewise to express to each of you our trust to thank you from our heart and "in a holy embrace" to convey all our best wishes.

Permit us to express likewise at least for a moment, our pleasure at the picture which you offer us. Your competent and diligent presence, sensitive as it is to the demands of the universal Church is already in itself an eloquent proof—if there were any need of that—of the reality of ecclesial communion. Let us then repeat the often-used but ever meaningful words of the Psalm: "How good, how delightful it is for all to live together like brothers". (Ps. 133, 1).

### IMPORTANT AND EXTENSIVE THEME

This communion is such that it associates the mind and heart in a valuable and urgent service, and on the other hand constitutes the most suitable atmosphere and that ideal condition for the fraternal dialogue that you will soon begin. This communion at the personal level of you who have come here to represent visibly and effectively the ecclesial communities spread throughout the world among "every race, language, people and nation" (Rev. 5, 9), goes on to an even closer relationship, one of "dwelling together", and must be expressed in sincere, respectful and—we hope—fruitful exchange on the problems of the Evangelization of the modern world.

It has been said repeatedly that this is an important and most extensive theme. But let it be added immediately that this theme is likewise bold and exigent, because it obliges us to study the nature, in these turbulent years, of the real socio-cultural conditions of mankind in which and for which the Church lives. It vividly touches on our responsibility as Pastors, because it asks us in a burning and, we would say, provocative manner a precise question about the very reason for our existence in the midst of

human society. Who are we? What are we doing? What should we be doing? We are a "little flock" (Lk 12, 32) both as persons assembled here and as the synthesized expression of our Christian communities, and how can we presume to give a full answer to these essential questions and to fulfil together in an effective and adequate way the mission of salvation that has been confided to us?

In our liturgical encounter this morning we already gave you a first thought in this regard, as a guideline and an encouragement, when we faced once more the original, effective and theological aspect of this mission: we in fact pointed out its "terminus a quo". "I am sending you" (Jn 20, 21; cf. Lk 10, 3), the Lord whispered to us, as if to remind us that, even though we are still in the world, we are here always as envoys, ambassadors, apostles and missionaries. We would like now to complete this concept by putting forward the second aspect—that which is final, ecclesial and human—that of Evangelization, looking, that is, to the corresponding "terminus ad quem". To whom are we sent? These two terms may serve usefully to define the field of the task of Evangelization which you will be considering during the Synod.

Without of course anticipating in any way the contributions or the replies that we await from you, we will now dwell on the theme, in order to trace at least its general and basic outline and so offer a useful contribution to the coming discussion.

### NECESSITY FOR EVANGELIZATION

It seems to us that the first feature of Evangelization is the necessity for it. As we recalled this morning, there corresponds to the validity of the Catholic priesthood—inasmuch as it is a derivation from and a direct sharing in the priesthood of Christ—the validity of our mission in relation to the growing spiritual needs of the people of today. Evangelization is not an optional invitation for us, but a strict obligation, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, the passionate teacher and minister of Evangelization, says with an almost threatening admonition—and he was addressing himself!—"Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9, 16). This warning, so rigid and harsh, might appear at first sight in contradiction with the gentle and persuasive tone of the proclamation of the Good News, but in fact it is salutary and timely: it makes one reflect, it must make one reflect upon the abiding necessity of the work of Evangelization and of the corresponding responsibilities of all those who, within the unified multiplicity of the People of God, share in various ways in the one and undivided apostolic ministry. Evangelization therefore is not an occasional or temporary task but a permanent and constitutive necessity of

the Church: from the command "Go therefore and teach all nations" (cf. Mt 28, 18-20; Mk 16, 15) of her Founder, to the incisive word of Paul and to that equally firm statement of Peter and John: "We are not able to keep silent about that which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4, 20), the mandate continues consistently and cogently down to the most recent Council. And we do not feel it necessary for us in speaking to you who in large part were the protagonists of that event, to quote the unequivocal Conciliar texts.

### UNIVERSALITY OF EVANGELIZATION

Thus there present itself a second note, one intimately connected with the previous one and one that serves to define even better the "terminus ad quem" that we have mentioned: we are speaking of the **universality** of Evangelization, which means the need to bring the Gospel message to all men — without exceptions based on geography, race, nationality, history or civilization — as happened on the day of Pentecost: "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2, 5). This too is an aspect that finds its place in an equally essential and constitutive dimension of the Catholic Church — the missionary aspect — and orients the Church towards the goal assigned to her in the next already quoted, where the command "go, teach" is applied to "all nations". Here too the Conciliar teaching has accustomed us to this understanding of the Church, which "acting out of the innermost requirements of her own catholicity and in obedience to her Founder's mandate . . . is missionary by her very nature" (*Ad Gentes*, 1, 2). Moreover, working to ensure that every tongue confesses that Christ is the only Lord and Saviour of all, to the glory of the Father (cf. Phil 2, 11), has always constituted the constant activity of the Church, thanks to which Christianity was enabled to establish itself so quickly in the early centuries.

In this perspective of the universality of Evangelization we shall encounter another question, as important as it is delicate, that of "ecumenism", which is now being studied by the Church with the liveliest interest and the most fraternal respect. It will be a question to be studied with the spirit and with the norms that are proper to it, but with renewed charity and ever reanimated hope.

Likewise we cannot omit a reference to the non-Christian religions. These in fact must no longer be regarded as rival, or obstacles to Evangelization, but as a field of lively and respectful interest and of a future and already begun friendship.

And what shall we say of those geographical and cultural regions where religion no longer finds place? An immense problem? And what of the ocean of unbelief, mistrust and hostility, where religion

cannot reach? We shall not for this reason halt the efforts of our Evangelization; we shall rather strengthen it with hope and prayer, wisdom and patience. Where can the charity of the Gospel find a limit? "Love no flame can quench, no torrents drown" (Song of Songs, 8, 7). Even though the Gospel were folly, our witness to it would be equally unconquered. What problems! Let us not be paralyzed by fear! Let us meditate once more on the words of Jesus: "I shall draw all men to myself" (Jn 12, 32).

Undoubtedly the difficulty which tends to diminish the effort of spreading the light of Christ in the world or of renouncing an explicit proclamation of the Gospel is based on reasons entirely deceptive: on the one hand it could seem an unreal pretension to propound the Gospel in conditions which humanly speaking are so adverse and unfavourable on the other hand, one does not see how there can be safeguarded respect for freedom and for the religious and moral values that are to be found also among non-Christian peoples, values in which we nevertheless glimpse a providential predisposition to the fullness of Christian revelation. It will thus be the Synod's care to see how it may be possible to reconcile this respect for persons and cultures and sincere dialogue with them — which is one of the basic conditions of the true Christian attitude — and the universal nature of the mission entrusted by Christ to the Church.

### FINALITY OF EVANGELIZATION

Then there is a third element of Evangelization to be kept in mind: its specific finality. It will be necessary to define more accurately the relations between Evangelization properly so called and the whole human effort towards development, for which the Church's help is rightly expected, even though this is not her specific task. We are aware of the objective difficulties encountered in this regard by the Church's sons and daughters who are dedicated to apostolic work; they are very often today urged to forget the priority that the message of salvation must have and thus to reduce their own action to mere sociological or political activity, and the message of the Church to a man-centred and temporal message. Hence the need to restate clearly the specifically religious finality of Evangelization. This latter would lose its reason for existence if it were to diverge from the religious axis that guides it: the Kingdom of God, before anything else, in its fully theological meaning, which frees man from sin, and proposes to him love of God as the greatest commandment and as the ultimate destiny of eternal life.

This however does not mean that in Evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems, so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need (cf. Mt 25, 31-46), and repeated by the teaching of the Apostles (cf. 1 Jn 4, 20; James 2, 14-28). We ourselves made this duty the subject of our Encyclical **Populorum Progressio**.

### RELIGIOUS PURPOSE

In fact, the Church, following the example and teaching of her divine Saviour, has never failed to promote the advancement of the peoples to whom she brings faith in Christ. Her doctrine, like her moral teaching, has always been translated into concrete institutions which urge men on to a progressive improvement in all sectors, from the properly religious to the political, social and civil. As the Second Vatican Council affirms, the mission of the Church is not "in the political, economic, or social order. The purpose which Christ set before her is a religious one. But out of this religious mission itself come a function, a light, and energy which can serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 42). This, especially when referred to the laity, takes on a great importance, since the latter are called to "seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs" (*Lumen Gentium*, 31), and they must "even when pre-occupied with temporal cares... perform eminently valuable work on behalf of bringing the Gospel to the world" (*ibid.*, 35).

There is no opposition or separation, therefore, but a complementary relationship between Evangelization and human progress, which, while distinct and subordinate, one to the other, each calls for the other by reason of their convergence towards the same end: the salvation of man.

All of this undoubtedly imposes a profound reflection on the various forms that evangelizing action can take. It is true that the world of today poses formidable problems for the Church, but one should not forget the immense possibilities, undreamt of at one time, which today's world offers along the paths of those who, in the name of Christ "bring the good news" (Rom 10, 15). Who can say, in fact, what vast horizons the means of social communication have opened up to the universal and simultaneous diffusion of the saving Word? To renounce these favourable opportunities, to restrict ourselves to corrosive criticism, would mean failing to keep the appointment with the hour of God, and this with incalculable harm for the future of Christianity.

This means that the action of Evangelization today must be thought of with a wide and modern outlook: in methods, in works, in organization and formation of the workers of the Gospel. It is a work which you, Venerable Brothers, are preparing to carry out in this Synod with a great sense of responsibility. May your labours, with God's help, come up to expectations.

It is obvious that it will never be possible to have recourse to methods which are in open conflict with the spirit of the Gospel: neither violence, therefore, nor revolution, nor colonialism in any form will serve as means for the Church's evangelizing action, nor politics for itself, even though it is the duty of Christians to make their contribution to public administration.

Instead, it will be your task to bring face to face the traditional concept of the action of Evangelization and the new tendencies, which seek their justification in the Council and the changed conditions for the times. There will certainly be a preferential consideration for the structures and institutions of the Church which have already been tested for centuries. But, without renouncing the past or destroying values which have been acquired, there will be an effort to remain serenely open to everything good and valid to be found in the new experiences, thus reconciling "new things and old", especially when it is a question of movements working in collaboration with the Hierarchy. In any case, you will make your own the Pauline motto: "Test everything; hold fast what is good" (1 Thess 5, 21).

And finally, keep a healthy optimism, and be sustained by a twofold bold confidence on which, as on two wings, your work must soar towards new conquests for the Gospel: confidence in your labours, because you are working for the Church; and confidence, above all, in Christ, who is with you, who is living with you, who is making use of your collaboration and experience in order to extend in the world the kingdom of justice and holiness, love and peace.

We entrust this good wish to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, who we have already proclaimed Mother of the Church, and who, from the apostolic age, has ever been honoured as Queen of the Apostles, that is of all the Pastors of yesterday and of today.

With our Apostolic Blessing.

*Address at the Propaganda Fide College  
On Mission Sunday*

## **UNDERSTAND THE GREAT QUESTION OF EVANGELIZATION IN ITS TRUE LIGHT**

*On Sunday, 20 October, Paul VI and the Bishops attending the Synod accepted the invitation of Cardinal Rossi, Prefect of the S. Congregation for Evangelization, to observe Mission Sunday with ceremony at Propaganda Fide College on the Janiculum Hill overlooking St. Peter's. The ceremony took the form of a Liturgy of the Word in the Aula Magna of Propaganda Fide's Urban University, in the course of which the Holy Father delivered the following address. Afterwards the Pope and the Bishops remained for lunch with the students and staff of the College.*

Why are the members of the Episcopal Synod gathered here today? We accepted for them the invitation extended to us, not without our personal satisfaction, by Cardinal Agnello Rossi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, understanding the double reason for our presence in this noble and famous building. It contains the Pontifical Urban College and the Pontifical Urban University two institutions of great importance for the Catholic Church. Both were intended for the preparation of pupils and teachers for the missionary apostolate, that is, for the evangelization of one of the vastest sectors most qualified to receive Christ's message.

The spirit, the study and the work of our Synod is concerned with this evangelization. Where could we find a more suitable place to celebrate an hour of its intelligent work? Was not this dwelling built, nearly fifty years ago, after the celebration of the Holy Year in 1925, with prophetic intention by our great predecessor Pius XI, of immortal memory, to give the Catholic Church a new centre in keeping with the new times, from which there could be irradiated a culture, a pedagogy, a missionary fervour more in keeping with the apostolic mandate entrusted by Christ to his Church, and more proportionate to the needs of catholicity and of the world that still does not know the vocation of the Gospel?

## APPEAL OF MISSION SUNDAY

Here, venerated Brothers, and you teachers and guests of this blessed missionary centre, we all feel ourselves missionaries. The very places speak! Here there is affirmed and shines forth that evangelization, concerning which our Synod, and with it the whole Catholic hierarchy, nay more our entire holy Church of God, is toiling these days to meditate on its mystery and understand the duty it lays upon us, to study its conditions, determine its means, and above all to live during this happy hour its "urgent charity". Here it invests us with its supreme interest, here it lets us meet the risen Christ, as if He were addressing to us his imperative and galvanizing words: "Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes" (Mt 28, 19). Here we feel not only stimulated, but exalted, almost heedless of our innumerable deficiencies, to attempt, on the word of the Master and in the impetus of his Spirit, the noble task of proclaiming the Gospel of salvation of mankind, to the world, with new vigour, with new language and with new testimony. The Church has summoned us here almost to experience in a beloved sanctuary of hers our specific and privileged vocation as missionaries, apostles, witnesses to the salvific intervention of God the Father, by means of his Son and our Brother Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, in the ineffable communication of the Holy Spirit, to open to the world a new kingdom of justice and life (cf. 2 Cor 13, 13).

Today a special circumstance increases in us awareness of this divine plan, and it is the celebration of Mission Sunday, which the Church has fixed for this Sunday. A wonderful harmony of thoughts, intentions and prayers, which today makes the Catholic Church, spread all over the earth, "one heart and one soul" (Acts 4, 32) surrounds us and assails us. Can we, whom our Synod has made students of the difficult and marvellous phenomenon of evangelization in the world today, remain extraneous, remain indifferent to this inspiring coincidence? Shall we not unite, like humble brothers, our spirits with those of the faithful all over the world to celebrate "Mission Sunday" with them or rather also for them?

Oh, yes! We think that this physical presence and spiritual position of ours is providential to understand the great question of evangelization in its truest light. This is a panoramic point from which we can look with amazed confidence at the dynamic and decisive line of the major questions that the subject of evangelization presents to our laborious reflection. Let us mention one: how to reconcile the catholicity of the Gospel with its unity? Does not this centre of study and missionary preparation show us that the irradiation of the Gospel to all the peoples of the earth is the first statutory law here, with its legitimate consequences: recognition

of every civilization of a really human level, of every language worthy of expressing to God the voice of one people, of every historical and civil structure capable of guiding the development of a people in its specific personality and in the brotherhood of a just and free life in common with other peoples?

### SYNOD DISCUSSIONS

In the discussions of our Synod we have noticed a marked desire for ethnico-geographical diffusion, which we will not call centrifugal, but a vital, natural expansion, in love with free universality, pluralism that is not ambiguous, pentecostal promotion... Well, is not this citizenship canonized here from the outset in the evangelical vocation of every human expression? Will the tribute due to the maturity of the many new peoples harm the unity of the world, which is revealed more and more every day, not only as the goal of civil progress, but as the supreme desire for love, the testament of Christ's heart: "unum sint", let them all be one? (cf. Jn 17, 11 and 19 and 21 and 22 and 23). No, it will not harm it, because the greater the spread towards catholicity, the more vigorous and necessary the convergence towards unity. A double movement, if the comparison is permitted, diastolic and systolic, will characterize more and more the circulation of life in that mystical Body of Christ, the Church, one and universal.

### THIS ETERNAL CITY

And just as we, sent by the Lord to succeed in this eternal city, which guards with the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul the succession of their central and universal mission, just as we not only do not fear, but on the contrary promote, with the authority conferred on us by Christ, everything that can foster the irradiation of the Church over the face of the earth and in the drama of universal history, so we are confident that the same authority, collecting in the one fold of Christ the peoples and souls that have the good fortune to be his, will not arouse mistrust and resistance. We are pastors, we are brothers; not lords, masters; and even in the exercise of the power, by no means empty, of the keys of the Kingdom, which Christ put in our hands, our boast is only to fulfil, as far as our conscious weakness makes it possible, the words of Jesus Christ: "sint consummati in unum, et cognoscat mundus quia Tu, (Pater) me misisti et dilexisti eos" (Jn 17, 23).

We mean: how much light is cast by this focal point on the realities of our religious and temporal life. These realities often become intricate problems, without plausible answers, when we

consider them outside the framework in which the effort of faithfulness to Christ and human wisdom places them, as they are here, almost in symbolic expression, and in a still potential experience of better and better progress. There come to mind, for example, certain characteristic questions of the subject studied by the Synod, such as the unquestionable identity of the faith, which, in apostolic and missionary language, pours forth and invents flexible forms embodied in the most varied ethnical and historical phenomena.

### THE NEW MAN

It is not surprising, therefore, that from a centre such as this, of the one faith, there should fan out on the international plane, as a natural consequence, the most variegated scene of the human figure regenerated by Christianity. The new man, St. Paul teaches us, who, with St. Peter, is at home here, refers to the image of his Creator, "and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything" (Col 3, 11; Gal 3, 28). The fixed truth of faith, "that expresses itself in love" (cf. Gal 5, 6) opens to the apostolate, to the missionary, the ways towards all the cardinal points of earthly geography, not to impose an unnatural uniformity everywhere, but so that he can draw from all the voices of human civilization choral praise to the "marvels of God" (Acts 2, 11).

We could speak in this way of ecumenism, where the recovery of united harmony becomes more difficult. We think that in this laboratory of communion happy formulas of reconstituted Catholic union can be found by means of a critical and just complementarity of ever real religious and spiritual values. Then another result of complementary integration can have its justification and discipline here: true religion and true liberation. There is so much talk about it today, but already the practical formulas of its implementation are applied in different but effective ways.

Two conclusions, therefore, venerated Brothers. The first is a blessing that we must all give to this house, to those responsible for its origin, its development and its function. Superiors and pupils of yesterday and today, this blessing is for you. For you, benefactors and teachers, for you, members of the various Mission Societies under the guidance of our valiant Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, and for you especially venerated Cardinal Agnello Rossi.

The other conclusion, rising to heaven is a humble and fervent prayer for our whole Catholic missionary world. In Christ, may it be so.

October 26, 1974

## ADDRESS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD

*At the conclusion of the Synod, during the 25th and final general session, Paul VI delivered the following address to the Synodal Fathers.*

Venerable Brothers,

Here we are at the end of our Episcopal Synod. Before breaking up this important meeting we all have an instinctive desire to pass a judgment on it and to draw up a balance sheet of it. And while we recollect ourselves before Christ, who scrutinizes hearts, in order to make this final evaluation together, we cannot help but be filled with a sense of sincere satisfaction and realistic optimism. How in fact could we not appreciate what we have experienced for the fourth time, carrying out with a clear and unanimous will the desire of the Second Vatican Council ratified by us with the institution of the Synod? Once more the Bishops, strengthened by Christ's mandate "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations" (Mt 28:19), and convinced that his words "are spirit and life" (Jn 6, 63), have assembled in **Nomine Domini** together with us to study the most urgent problems of the Church. This year these problems have been those of Evangelization. Where can there be found in the Church a setting more fitting than that of the past days for a fruitful exchange between those in charge of the local Churches, or their delegates, on questions so vital for the entire Catholic Church — an exchange carried out, moreover, in such a fraternal, simple and genuine atmosphere? The Synod has demonstrated that the Bishops desire to have a greater understanding of the problems of the content and of the presentation of the various questions; they feel able, therefore, to respond to their mission with love, with humility, with a sense of limitation, but with deep understanding.

Certainly the width and the complexity of the theme did not allow it to be dealt with exhaustively in a short time. Nor did they allow the hoped for conclusions to be arrived at in their fullness. But, in the present state of the Church, this Fourth Synod has once more made it possible to hear the voice of the local Churches, to

evaluate situations better, to trace out the important elements of Evangelization, to study what emphases and what forms it should take on for the men of our time. Therefore we consider this evaluation as a positive one. The Synod puts into the hand of the Successor of Peter, for the benefit of the entire Church, a most effective instrument, one rich in reflections, in suggestions, in proposals. We entrust these doctrinal and spiritual riches to the accompanying grace of God: "It is God, for his own loving purpose, who puts both the will and the action into you" (Phil 2, 13). And we cannot do otherwise than praise the Lord for the many and excellent things which this Synod leaves behind.

### SENSE OF URGENT DUTY

We keep in fact in our heart the memory of all that we have been able to experience in the Synod, as in a daily and concrete reflection of the reality of the Church, of her marvellous possibilities and of her tremendous burdens. As in the case of the early community of Jerusalem, gathered around Peter and the Apostles, we have been "faithful to the teaching of the Apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (Acts 2, 42). We have reflected on the responsibility of deepening and spreading the magisterium of the Apostles, which the Church guards intact down the centuries, amidst the change of ideologies and fashions. We have had a lively sense of the fellowship in the wonderful brotherhood manifested in the exchanges, in the innumerable encounters, in the orderly carrying out of the sessions, in the many-sided contributions of those present, who have brought here the voice of different cultures that are fused together in the reality of the one Catholic Church. We have gathered together for "the breaking of bread" in the concelebration of the solemn opening; we have prayed together in unison before each session and in the large and moving encounter at **Propaganda Fide** College, experiencing in a real way the truth of Christ's promise "where two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them" (Mt 18, 20).

It is thus that we feel able to say, in this affectionate leave-taking, that this has been a clearly positive experience.

### POSITIVE RESULTS

The Synod has been positive above all else because the hierarchies have shown themselves conscious of their urgent duty of carrying out the apostolic mandate entrusted to them, which is that of preaching "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2, 3; cf. 1, 23), and of the urgency with which they wish to meet the needs of the world.

The Synod has also been positive in a special way for the consensus shown on many points which are of great importance:

1. There has been made clear the relationship of distinguishing, of integrating and of subordinating human advancement to the Evangelization of the mystery of Christ, which implies knowledge of the Blessed Trinity, sharing in the divine nature and the eternal salvation of the world now and in the future.

2. There has been underlined the responsibility of Evangelization, entrusted by Christ to the Apostles, and now to their successors: the Bishops, in communion with the Roman Pontiff, who, with the special mandate given to them have received a greater outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. With them are associated the priests, as direct and subordinate collaborators. It has also been made clear that the religious and the laity, among whom the youth and particularly parents, are responsible for Evangelization.

3. There has been inculcated the relationship between Evangelization and the formation of its subjects, with an insistence on the necessity and importance of spiritual and doctrinal preparation and of a truly Christian life in harmony with the Gospel message, in order to give credibility to this message and not place obstacles in the way of its acceptance by non-believers.

4. There has been manifested unanimous respect for the human and religious values existing in the non-Christian religions and non-Catholic confessions, with a fitting appreciation of their values and the opportunity to integrate them into the object of Evangelization or into prayer, with an emphasis at the same time on the need to maintain the purity and unity of Catholic faith and ecclesial doctrine.

5. It has been seen that the Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, is at the same time the object and the subject of Evangelization. Also outside her there can be, if God wills it, illumination by the Word of God, but the fullness of the Gospel Message, with all the means of salvation that it brings with it — the sacraments, the liturgy, the full explication, without errors, of Christ's Gospel — is had only in the hierarchical Catholic Church, that is, in communion with the Supreme Pastor, the Successor of Peter, the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of the unity both of the Bishops and of the faithful. The Church is fully "in Christ as a sacrament or sign and instrument of the intimate union and unity of the entire human race" (*Lumen Gentium*, 1):

6. It has been rightly concluded that the local Churches are co-responsible for the evangelizing mission, in communion with the

universal Church, since the whole Church is in a state of mission and is missionary.

7. There has been placed clearly in evidence the action of the Holy Spirit in the work of Evangelization, for it is he, "the soul of the Church", who is the infuser of grace and charity into the hearts of believers, particularly of the Apostles, of the Bishops and of the Priests. These are great themes for reflection, and they cannot fail to render this Episcopal Synod a very positive one.

### WRONG INTERPRETATIONS

It is also to be called positive because the Synod, as it contemplates the immensity of this task, has frankly recognized the difficulty of expressing in an immediate document all the aspects and obligations of Evangelization. We regret that certain quarters have wished to interpret this episode as a sign that the Synod has not succeeded; indeed this fact in no way detracts from the enormous richness and real validity of the work accomplished. It has had the further advantage of highlighting the opportuneness that the working methodology of this new postconciliar body should be reviewed. And this is something that we shall willingly do, making use of your reflections and with the help of the council of the Synod which has just been elected.

The Synod has also been positive because the Bishops have sought to listen, together with "Mary, his mother" (Acts 1, 14), and gathered about Peter, as in a new Cenacle, to the voice and impulse of the Holy Spirit. And in the certainty that in the carrying out of their task of teaching they are authoritatively assisted by that Spirit — they have placed themselves "under the shadow of his wings" (cf. Ps 16, 8, cf. 46, 2) — in order to reflect and decide. One cannot give others what one does not possess "No skill is presumed to be taught unless it is first learned by careful study" (St. Gregory the Great, *Regula Past.* I, 2; PL 77, 14).

### OTHER POSITIVE RESULTS

This Synod has been positive because the Church has been alerted to many healthy currents of thought, which obviously concern the *munus docendi* of the Episcopate closely united with the supreme Magisterium of this Apostolic See.

It has been positive because of the reaffirmed priority of the duty of communicating to mankind the joyful Message of the Word of God; the glad tidings of eternal life, that gives access to the Paschal Mystery, and of which we Pastors are the humble, in-

adequate but authentic channel: "Something which has existed since the beginning . . . , we saw it and we are giving our testimony, telling you of eternal life which was with the Father and has been made visible to us. What we have seen and heard we are telling you so that you too may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing this to you to make our own joy complete" (1 Jn 1, 1; 2-4).

It has been positive, because there exists today in the Church an awareness, a deeply felt sense of the additional duty of using all the external means that art, life and technology today put at our disposal, in order to spread the joyful news.

In a word, there has been a call to greater responsibility on the part of all, to more prayer, to a deeper interior life, to a greater spirit of poverty, self-denial, genuine love for the Church and souls, to greater fidelity to God's Word. There has been a harmonious exaltation of the Blessed Trinity, that in Christ calls people to the knowledge and sharing in its own life; there has likewise been an exaltation of the person and mandate of the Saviour. For these reasons the predominant feeling at this moment is one of deep spiritual happiness, a happiness that expresses itself in a hymn of gratitude to God.

We would not be objective if we did not note that some points demand better definition. Among the multiplicity of the arguments treated we praise the spontaneity and the sincerity that has been shown. Yet not all the elements are to be retained: some of them, although justly emphasized in certain aspects, need to be placed in proper proportion. Some, especially among those that have come out of the *Circuli minores*, must be better defined, nuanced, completed and subjected to further study. We cite some of the examples about which we cannot remain silent.

#### **. DANGER OF DIVERSIFIED THEOLOGIES**

Above all, the relationship between the particular Churches and the Apostolic See. We sincerely rejoice at the increasing vitality of the particular Churches and of their ever more manifest will to assume all their proper responsibilities. At the same time we hope that proportionate care will be taken so that, in the furthering of this essential aspect of ecclesial reality, no harm will come to the firmness of the "communio" with the other particular Churches and with the Successor of Saint Peter, to whom the Lord has entrusted the serious and enduring role—one full of love—of tending his lambs and sheep (cf. Jn 21, 13-17), of confirming his brethren (cf. Lk 22, 32), and of being the foundation and sign of

the unity of the Church (cf. Mt 16, 18-20). His intervention, therefore, cannot be reduced only to extraordinary circumstances. No: we say with trepidation, by reason of the responsibility that falls upon us, that the the Successor of Peter is and remains the ordinary Pastor of the Church in her unity and entirety: "By virtue of his office, that is, as Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the whole Church, he has full, supreme and universal power in the Church. And he can always exercise this power freely" (*Lumen Gentium*, 22). It is not a question here of a dialectic of powers, but of a single desire, that of following the will of the Lord with total love — everyone with the contribution of the faithful fulfilment of his own role.

Thus we consider necessary a word on the need of finding a better expression of faith to correspond to the racial, social and cultural milieux. This is indeed a necessary requirement of authenticity and effectiveness of Evangelization; it would, nevertheless, dangerous to speak of diversified theologies according to continents and cultures. The content of the faith is either Catholic or it not. All of us on the other hand have received the faith of a constant tradition: Peter and Paul did not transform it to adapt it to the Jewish, Greek or Roman world; but they watched vigilantly over its authenticity and over the truth of its single message presented in a diversity of languages (Acts 2, 8).

Human liberation, moreover, has been rightly emphasized. It forms part of that love which Christians owe to their brethren. But the totality of salvation is not to be confused with one or other aspect of liberation, and the Good News must preserve all of its own originality: that of a God who saves us from sin and death and brings us to divine life. Hence, human advancement, social progress, etc. is not to be excessively emphasized on a temporal level to the detriment of the essential meaning which Evangelization has for the Church of Christ: the announcement of the Good News.

In addition we have noted with satisfaction the hope furnished by small communities and the reminder they give of the work of the Holy Spirit. But this hope would be truly stunted if their ecclesial life, in the organic unity of the single Body of Christ, were to cease or be exempted from legitimate ecclesiastical authority or be left to the arbitrary impulse of individuals.

### GOING FORWARD IN HOPE

In these points as in other minor ones which we do not now have the time to refer to, the Synod has already clearly given adequate elements for an answer. But it is necessary to put them

together and to subject them to further study. If we point out the more important ones this is by reason of our duty as an overseer who watches vigilantly to see where the paths begin along which the Church journeys in search of an ever more incisive expression of her own doctrine. We could not allow false directions to be followed. We would be negligent in this fundamental obligation of ours to confirm our brethren.

A reality moreover pervades these particular observations. And it is the unanimous desire to infuse into the Church a new, general, coordinated and generous impulse for Evangelization. In a measure and with a clarity that perhaps she has never had before the Church assumes a consciousness of this fundamental duty of hers. It truly seems to be a moment that is worthy of the recent Council, one that is in conformity with the essential vocation of the Church, responding to the needs of the world and dissipating certain negative phenomena which we know.

Venerable and beloved Brothers!

The Church goes into action once again with joy and hope, with humility and courage, with firmness of faith, with confidence in the help of Christ and the intercession of Mary, with immense love, with a commitment of conversion and embracing reconciliation in the spirit of the Holy Year, the universal Jubilee.

Our grateful thoughts turn to all the Bishops who are awaiting this work of regeneration in the world; their collaborators, the priests and religious — those effective instruments for carrying the Gospel to the modern world. Our grateful thoughts go moreover to parents, those first collaborators of the evangelizing Church within their own "domestic Church" (*Lumen Gentium*, 11); to women, exemplary, religious and faithful collaborators; to youth and to children — the hope of a bright tomorrow; and in a particular way to intellectuals to whom the Church looks with great confidence, expectation and hope.

### GO, MAKE DISCIPLES!

We greet with paternal encouragement the local Churches, entirely committed to Evangelization, and the ministers of the Gospel, especially those who in many regions suffer for the name of Christ "but there is no chaining the word of God" (2 Tim 2, 9). We express our encouragement to the esteemed and worthy catechists, and particularly the missionaries, those hidden heroes of Evangelization in the world: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Mt 5, 13). We embrace all our sons and

daughters, inviting them to be instruments and conscious collaborators of the missionary Church: so that the Word of God, with the help of all "may spread quickly and be received with honour" (2 Thess 3, 1), "so that the world may believe" (Jn 17, 21) and "so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15, 28).

In this moment in which we leave each other, we wish to repeat once again for our mutual strength the invitation of Christ: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28, 19); "Look around you, look at the fields; already they are white, ready for harvest!" (Jn 4, 35). We must fulfil the will of God, who has sent us. The vast and stupendous world awaits the proclamation of liberation from sin and from the evils that it brings with it, the proclamation of salvation in the Cross of Christ. It is true: "The word of the Cross is folly" (1 Cor 1, 18); but it pleased God "through the foolishness of the message that we preach" (*ibid.* 2, 21) to save those who believe. For this reason we trust solely in the help of the Lord. The difficulties are enormous, the expectations are many, the responsibilities are formidable — but "be brave", says the Lord, "I have conquered the world" (Jn 16, 33). Christ is with us, he is in us, he speaks in us and through us and he will not let us lack the necessary help.

### PREACH JESUS CRUCIFIED

Christ Jesus, Word of the Father, Crucified Saviour, we turn to you in this concluding hour of the Synod, just as we have called upon you at its beginning. You have been present in our midst and our hearts were burning within us as you talked to us along the way and explained the Scriptures to us (cf. Lk 24, 32). You will guard our resolves and give new life to our ecclesial service; you will illumine our minds and give strength to our words; you will sustain us in our labours. You will guide our steps in the most fitting ways of proclaiming your Gospel; and you will pardon our shortcomings. We are your poor servants and it is only the certainty of your promise that sustains us. Give strength to Peter, give strength to your Bishops, give new heart to their flocks. See, our trust in ourselves, only in you; this trust is our treasure. Encourage us, give us confidence, grant us your blessing — you who with the Father and the Holy Spirit live and reign in us and in your Church, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Angelus Message October 27, 1974*

## **LOVE OF GOD IS THE ROOT OF LOVE FOR ONE'S NEIGHBOUR**

*Before reciting the Angelus with the faithful in St. Peter's Square on Sunday 27 October, Paul VI spoke to them about the conclusion of the Synod as follows:*

Well, yesterday the Synod of Bishops ended. It has assumed, it seems to us, the significance of a historic and guiding moment for the Church in the fact and the intention to rediscover and and reaffirm her mission in the world. This mission is to proclaim Christ, to make Him live in hearts by means of the power of the Spirit, and thus promote the transfiguration of mankind (cf. L. Bouyer, *L'Eglise*, 572). Nothing new, except the new understanding of this religious-social innovation in life and history. The Gospel is this. The Council is here; and its secret energy derived from the Gospel, and operating with new and youthful imperative in our days, and, God grant, in the future, has been experienced in the Synod. It is a conclusion, and it is a beginning. It may perhaps be qualified as a historic date. To such an extent that it was found difficult to contain the overflowing riches of its contents in an improvised final document. We will have food for thought.

But there was a message, which burst out, as it were, from the fullness of the Synod's meditation; and you know it, also because it is understandable to those who are not initiated to theological thought, but who are, on the contrary, eagerly open to its human and sociological derivations. It is the appeal for "Human Rights", read on Wednesday 23 October in the XXI general Congregation of the Synod by Cardinal Krol, and unanimously approved by the Synod Fathers.

A fine thing. Once more it is seen that the affirmation of the Rights of God generates that of the Rights of man. This is what the religion of the Gospel is: love of God is the root of love of our neighbour, and everyone is our neighbour! The renewed affirma-

tion of the value and of the human and sociological duty of these logical and consequent human Rights comes at the right moment today, when there is so much talk of liberation and promotion of humanity towards the laborious levels of justice, equality, brotherhood and solidarity. Human dignity is thus vindicated, by virtue of that religious sentiment, which so many people seek to frustrate, and at the moment when civil society, touching the peak point of its happy and progressive evolution, still tolerates contradictory conditions and hypotheses and verges on dangers of new and dreadful conflagrations.

History is always a drama of obscure destinies. And the Church, intrepid and loving, raises her banner of justice and peace.

Let us thank the Lord, and renew our commitments of service and love for every man our brother.

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## OUTSPOKEN SYNOD

Press reports make it clear that members of the Synod are discussing major problems in a thorough manner, with no apparent desire to smooth things over into superficial consensus. They are too in a critical mood, critical in particular of themselves and their fellow bishops and fellow priests. This makes for interesting reading. The reports suggest that the Synod members are talking more personally than the Fathers of the Council did, and that, in consequence, they are learning more from one another than the Council Fathers did.

Most of the Synod members were chosen by the episcopal conferences to which they belong. It is reasonable to assume that they wield authority among their fellow bishops. They will return to their own regions far better acquainted than ever before with the problems, and the solutions, of distant parts of the Church.

This Synod, which did not look very exciting in prospect, may turn out to have been one of the most exciting events of the 1970s.

*Sunday Examiner*

# CONCLUDING DOCUMENTS

## MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS' SYNOD ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

*The following is the text of the message "Human rights and reconciliation", read by Cardinal Krol in the 21st General Assembly of the Synod on October 23, approved by a show of hands vote.*

The Holy Father, in union with the bishops assembled at the Synod for the study of evangelization, issue the following message.

Two anniversaries of special significance to the Church and the world have occurred since the Synod of 1971: the tenth anniversary of Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Both documents remind us that human dignity requires the defense and promotion of human rights.

We are gathered in a Synod whose theme is evangelization, the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus. While the truths about human dignity and rights are accessible to all, it is in the Gospel that we find their fullest expression and our strongest motive for commitment to their

preservation and promotion. The relationship between this commitment and the ministry of the Church has been manifested in this Synod in our sharing of pastoral experiences, which reflect the transnational character of the Church, her entrance into the very consciences of people, and her participation in their suffering when rights are denied or violated.

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Reflecting on these experiences in light of the Gospel, we address this message on human rights and reconciliation to the Church and the entire world, especially to all in positions of responsibility. It is our desire to raise our voices on behalf of the voiceless victims of injustice.

Human dignity is rooted in the image and reflection of God in each of us. It is this which

makes all persons essentially equal. The integral development of persons makes more clear the divine image in them. In our time the Church has grown more deeply aware of this truth; hence she believes firmly that the promotion of human rights is required by the Gospel and is central to her ministry.

The Church desires to be more fully converted to the Lord and to perform her ministry by manifesting respect and regard for human rights in her own life. There is renewed consciousness in the Church of the role of justice in her ministry. The progress already made encourages us to continue efforts to conform ever more fully to the will of the Lord.

From her own experience the Church knows that her ministry of fostering human rights in the world requires continued scrutiny and purification of her own life, her laws, institutions, and policies. The Synod of 1971 declared that "anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes." Awareness of our limitations, faults and failures in justice helps us understand better the failings of other institutions and individuals. In the Church, as in other institutions and groups, purification is needed in internal practices and procedures, and in relationships with social structures and systems whose violations of human rights deserve censure.

No nation today is faultless where human rights are concerned. It is not the role of the Synod to identify specific violations; this can better be done at the local level. At the same time we desire by our words and actions to encourage those who work for human rights, to call upon those in authority to promote human rights, and to give hope to those who suffer violations of their rights. We call attention here to certain rights most threatened today.

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**The right to life:** This right is basic and inalienable. It is grievously violated in our day by contraception, sterilization, abortion and euthanasia, by widespread torture, by acts of violence against innocent parties, and by the scourge of war, genocide, mass campaigns against the right to life. The arms race is an insanity which burdens the world and creates the conditions for even more massive destruction of life.

\* \* \*

**The right to eat:** This right is directly linked to the right to life. Millions today face starvation. The nations and peoples of the world must make a concerted act of solidarity in the forth-coming United Nations Food Conference. We call upon governments to undergo a conversion in their attitude toward the victims of hunger, to respond to the imperatives of

justice and reconciliation, and speedily to find the means of feeding those who are without food.

\* \* \*

**Socio-economic rights:** Reconciliation is rooted in justice. Massive disparities of power and wealth in the world, and often within nations, are a grave obstacle to reconciliation. Concentration of economic power in the hands of a few nations and multinational groups, structural imbalances in trade relations and commodity prices, failure to balance economic growth with adequate distribution, both nationally and internationally, widespread unemployment and discriminatory employment practices, as well as patterns of global consumption of resources all require reform if reconciliation is to be possible.

\* \* \*

**Politico-cultural rights:** Reconciliation in society and the rights of the person require that individuals have an effective role in shaping their own destinies. They have a right to participate in the political process freely and responsibly. They have a right to free access to information, freedom of speech and press, as well as freedom of dissent. They have a right to be educated and to determine the education of their children. Individuals and groups must be secure from arrest, tor-

ture and imprisonment for political or ideological reasons, and all in society, including migrant workers, must be guaranteed juridical protection of their personal, social, cultural and political rights. We condemn the denial or abridgement of rights because of race. We advocate that nations and contesting groups seek reconciliation by halting persecution of others and by granting amnesty, marked by mercy and equity, to political prisoners and exiles.

\* \* \*

**The right of religious liberty:** This right uniquely reflects the dignity of the person as this is known from the Word of God and from reason itself. Today it is denied or restricted by diverse political systems in ways which impede worship, religious education and social ministry. We call upon all governments to acknowledge the right of religious liberty in words and foster it in deeds, to eliminate any type of discrimination, and to accord to all, regardless of their religious convictions, the full rights and opportunities of citizens.

\* \* \*

As we observe the Holy Year of renewal and reconciliation, recalling the Great Year of Pardon (Lev 25) and the gift of power of reconciliation offered us by Christ (Lk 4, 18-19; Eph 2, 13-17), we reassert that the

Church must strive to be a sign and source of reconciliation among all peoples. People have a right to hope; the Church today should be a sign and source of hope. Hence the Church offers pardon to all who have persecuted or defamed her and pledges openness and sympathetic understanding to all who question, challenge and confront her. We call finally upon

each person to recognize the responsibility which he or she has in conscience for the rights of others. Enlightened in our understanding of evangelization and strengthened in our commitment to proclaim the Good News, we affirm our determination to foster human rights and reconciliation everywhere in the Church and the world today.



## NEWLY ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE SYNOD

- For AFRICA:** Archbishop Jean Zoa of Yaounde (127 votes)  
 Archbishop Hyacinthe Thiandoum of Dakar (98 votes)  
 Archbishop Denis E. Hurley of Durban (65 votes)
- For AMERICA:** Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati (103 votes)  
 Archbishop Alois Lorscheider of Fortaleza (148 votes)  
 Bishop Eduardo Pironio of Mar Del Plata (108 votes)
- For ASIA, OCEANIA and AUSTRALIA:** Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro of Karachi (119 votes)  
 Cardinal Stephen Sou Hwan Kim of Seoul (86 votes)  
 Bishop Patrick D'Souza of Varanasi (84 votes)
- For EUROPE:** Archbishop Roger Etchegaray of Marseilles (140 votes)  
 Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Cracow (115 votes)  
 Cardinal Julius Doepfner of Munich and Freising (53 votes)

## APPOINTED BY THE POPE

At the start of the 24th general session of the Synod, on October 25, the Secretary General, Bishop Ladislao Rubin, announced that the Holy Father had appointed the following as members of the Council of the Secretariat of the Synod:

**Cardinal Franjo Seper**, prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith;

**Most Rev. Michael Doumith**, Bishop of Sarba of the Maronites;

**Most Rev. Enrico Bartoletti**, former Archbishop of Lucca, Italy.

# **DECLARATION OF THE SYNODAL FATHERS**

**Approved at the conclusion of the 1974 Assembly of the Synod**

1. We are consoled in the Holy Spirit by what the Lord allowed us to accomplish at this Synod and wish to share that consolation with the entire People of God, beginning with our

brothers in the Episcopate whom we have represented, and with all those as well who in any way feel themselves tested by the Gospel of Christ.

## **UNITY IN VARIETY**

2. In the fraternal communication of our experiences, carried out in confident attachment to Paul VI, the Successor of Peter, we have had occasion to verify the close and vigorous unity which the Holy Spirit effects in such a variety of conditions wherein the Church's life is nourished.

At the same time we experienced the richness contained

in variety. It expressed itself in our attempts to radicalise the Gospel in its entirety among peoples of differing cultures, promulgating in some way the method of the incarnation which God wishes to use in his work of salvation through Christ. In that way the Good News of the Saviour shines forth more effectively.

## **THE SYNOD IS THE MESSAGE**

3. The copious riches which we have found in such mutual communication could not easily be reduced to unity without jeopardising its integrity. Having certainly become richer through this experience, we have preferred to offer the integral fruits of our exchange to the Holy Father with great confidence and simplicity, and to await a new impetus from him. Also, we want to pursue in our own particular Churches the rich

experiences which we encountered at the Synod. This we will do in a spirit of dialogue, especially with priests and religious, with theologians and with all the faithful in general. Now, however, in this declaration of ours, we wish simply to manifest some fundamental convictions and a few of the more urgent guidelines, to advance and deepen the work we have begun.

## ESSENTIAL MISSION

4. Sustained by our faith in Christ who died and rose again to save us, and fortified in the Church by our paschal experience, we wish to confirm anew that the mandate to evangelise all men constitutes the essential mission of the Church. Indeed, the deeper and more widespread current changes seem to us — whether in religion, ideology, culture or mores — the more evident and urgent be-

comes the necessity to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to every individual man. It is evident and urgent, especially for those to whom the announcement of the Good News of Christ has not yet been brought, wherever they might be on the face of the earth, so that the evangelisation and the foundation of the Church may take root in all peoples and places.

## MISSION OF WHOLE CHURCH

5. Christ's love and His mandate urge all the faithful to dispense to others the gifts received freely from Him. Therefore, the duty to proclaim the Gospel belongs to the whole People of God, gathered by the Holy Spirit in the Church through the Word of God and the Eucharist. No real Christian may absent himself from this duty which he must carry out in keeping with his state and in communion with his pastors. We hope that this Synod, with the Supreme Pontiff's insistent World Mission Day exhortation, will have offered to all the sons of the Church a new opportunity to renew the intimate

and efficacious conviction of their rightful participation in the task of evangelisation.

In a special way we address young people whom we regard not merely as subjects to be evangelized, but also as particularly suited to evangelizing others, especially their own age group. Furthermore, we are convinced that young people, to the extent that they are searching for the fundamental values of the Gospel and demanding true authenticity in conceiving and witnessing the faith, challenge us adults and compel us to renew unceasingly the new commitment to evangelise.

## GOD'S GRACE

6. We are also profoundly convinced that without the grace of God, which is spread by the Father in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we

should be completely incapable of carrying out this mission as it should be carried out (c.f. Rom 5:5). This work certainly demands incessant interior con-

version on the part of individual Christians and continual renewal of our communities and institutions. In this way, faith will become stronger, purer, more intimate and we shall become better fitted and more credible as witnesses of the faith through the coherence of our individual and social life with

the Gospel which we must preach. We shall acquire the ability to discover and discern the signs of the times and to recognize and respect the action of the Spirit of Christ, who is always at work in the life of the Church itself and in all human history, so that everyone may have the fullness of a better life.

### PRAYER AND EVANGELIZATION

7. This makes evident the need for intimate union with God, through assiduous prayer, meditation of the Word of God, contemplation, all strengthened and sustained by frequent participation in the sacraments. In this way the People of God will be able to render more efficacious the testimony of a real brotherly community, diligent to respond speedily to the

expectations of men of good will, in evangelical solidarity with their more distressing problems. In this way, the Church will be a more credible witness to the joyful announcement of the Saviour of humankind; she will be a more suitable instrument of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel.

### OBSTACLES

8. In our discussions we did not ignore either old or new difficulties and obstacles which seem to hinder the work of evangelisation. Some phenomena of our time have been given careful examination. Secularisation is one of them. Although it has some positive aspects, it nevertheless inclines to the ideology of secularism, which completely excludes God from the horizon of human life and therefore from the profound meaning of existence. Another is atheism in its manifold forms, which is wide-spread in

many countries. Such phenomena should be examined carefully and their causes sought more deeply so that the appeal of God—which demands greater purity in the confession and testimony of our faith — may be discovered. Another major difficulty has not escaped us, a difficulty which is used with astuteness and often with violence, namely, hindrance to religious liberty and the life of the Church, and even the reduction of the Church to silence.

We did not forget those who are oppressed, especially all

those who are suffering persecution for the Gospel. Bearing in themselves the good news of the Cross, they are performing

preeminent work of evangelisation and are of great assistance to the whole Church in the fulfilment of its mission.

## COMMUNICATION

9. We are also convinced of the difficulties — arising from rapid and radical change in the conditions of our times — in making the evangelical message more intelligible to today's men. But we also know that communication of the Gospel is a dynamic process. This communication takes place through word, work and life, all closely connected, and is determined by various almost constitutive elements of the hearers of the Word of God: that is, their needs and desires, their way of speaking, hearing, thinking, judging and entering into contact with others. All these conditions which differ widely from place to place and from time to time, impel the particular Churches towards an appro-

priate "translation" of the evangelical message. In accordance with the principle of incarnation they must devise new but faithful "ways to take root." Furthermore, the development of the means of social communication has opened new ways to evangelisation in keeping with the ways in which today's people think and act. At the same time, we firmly believe that the Holy Spirit works unceasingly in Christ's Church, through the work of those who give witness of a holy life, through the pastoral experience of those whom God has called to govern the Church and of all their collaborators in the ecclesial ministries, and through fruitful collaboration between pastors and theologians.

## ECUMENICAL ACTION

10. In putting these things into practice, we intend to collaborate more diligently with those of our Christian brothers with whom we are not yet in the union of a perfect communion, basing ourselves on the foundation of Baptism and on the patrimony which we hold in common. Thus we

shall henceforth be able to render to the world a much broader common witness of Christ, while working to obtain full union in the Lord. Christ's command impels us to do this; the work of preaching and rendering witness to the Gospel demands it.

## DIALOGUE WITH ALL

11. Confident in the Holy Spirit's action which overflows the bounds of the Christian community, we wish to promote dialogue with other religions which are not Christian, thus to achieve a deeper understanding of the Gospel's newness and of the fullness of Revelation, and to be able to show them thereby the salvific truth of

God's love which fulfills itself in Christ.

We intend also to seek the collaboration of all men of good will who, for reasons which are undoubtedly diverse but sincere, are in search of a deeper meaning to life or are committed to gaining more human conditions of life for their brothers.

## LIBERATION

12. Among the many subjects dealt within by the Synod, special attention was drawn to the mutual relations between evangelisation and integral salvation or the complete liberation of man and of peoples.

In this matter of great importance we experienced profound unity in reaffirming the intimate connection between evangelisation and such liberation. We were spurred on, not only by our close relations with our faithful and with other men, whose life and common fate we share, but primarily by the Gospel, mercifully entrusted to us, which constitutes for all men and society the Good News of salvation. That Good News is to be initiated and made manifest on earth from now on, although it is only beyond the confines of this present life that it can attain its complete fulfilment. Prompted by the love of Christ and illumined by the light of the Gospel, let us nur-

ture the hope that the Church, in carrying out the work of evangelisation more faithfully, will announce the total salvation of man or rather his complete liberation, and from now on will start to bring this about. The Church, as a community totally involved in evangelisation, must conform to Christ who explained His own mission in these words "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for this He consecrated me with anointing and sent Me to announce glad tidings to the poor, to give the prisoners their freedom, the blind their sight, to set the oppressed free" (Lk 4:18).

Faithful to her evangelising mission, the Church, as a truly poor, praying and fraternal community, can do much to bring about the integral salvation or the full liberation of men. She can draw from the Gospel the most profound reasons and ever new incentives for promoting generous dedica-

tion to the service of all men—the poor especially, the weak and the oppressed—and for eliminating the social consequences of sin which are translated into unjust social and political structures. For the Church, supported by Christ's Gospel and fortified by His grace, can harness such dedication to the elimination of deviations. Thus the Church does not remain within merely political, social and political limits (elements which she must certainly take into account) but

leads the way towards freedom under all its forms — liberation from sin, from individual or collective selfishness — and to full communion with God and with men who are like brothers. In this way the Church, in her evangelical way, promotes the true and complete liberation of all men, groups and peoples.

In this spirit of human and evangelical solidarity, throughout these days we have wished to send the world a message on human rights and reconciliation.

## CHRIST IN THE WORLD

13. By our mission, it is our duty to be present among the men of our times, to bring the presence of Christ, the incarnate Word among them. Therefore, in returning to our particular Churches, we, as disciples comforted by the experience of the Risen Christ, shall discover new opportunities of fostering more effectively the evangelisation of the whole world and its authentic liberation.

We are of course aware that we shall have to face numerous difficulties. However, we journey towards the future with great hope. This hope springs from our profound union with the Crucified Christ who leads us to participate in an effective way in His Resurrection.

Thus, it will come about that, more deeply rooted in the

perennial actuality of Pentecost, the Church will know new times of evangelisation. While striving to be faithful to its mission in today's world, the Church commits itself completely to the service of the future world. Although the destinies of this future world are unknown to us, Christ the Lord and centre of human history spurs us on to greater and greater progress. The time falling between Easter and the Parusia is the time of tension and of aspiration towards the world which must come.

In such a period it is the task of the Church to prefigure and prepare the final actuation of the Kingdom of God. We know that the Lord helps His Church continuously and accompanies us on our pilgrimage. He will be with us all days (c.f. Mt 28:-

30), comforting us with the gifts of His grace, gradually leading us to the whole truth through the action of His Holy Spirit (c.f. Jn 16:13), confirming our word with signs (c.f. Mk 16:26), while we confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father (c.f. Phil 2:11).

On the eve of Holy Year which is about to be celebration in Rome, let us nurture the hope that all the People of God, profiting from this special occasion of grace, through conversion of hearts, complete renewal and interior reconcilia-

tion, will fulfil more completely their duty of evangelising, and that the Church will be seen more clearly as having been sent to the peoples to be the universal sign of salvation.

As we end our work in the Synod, let us raise our eyes and our hearts to the Blessed Virgin Mary the Mother of the Church, to receive, following her example, the Word of God with an to offer it to the docile spirit, to offer it to the world after meditating upon it and faithfully translating it into daily life.

## NOTE

The other document approved by the Synod in its 25th Session on October 26 is a list of topics discussed by the Fathers. The list reportedly consists of twelve major topics each in turn comprising several sub-topics. In the 22nd session (October 23) it was announced that the task of the commission preparing the list was to define the main orientations which emerged from the synodal discussion. In the 23rd session (October 24) Cardinal Koenig explained that the list does not summarize opinions but simply gives in orderly form the themes that emerged during the synodal debate. In the final voting, 170 voted for the list and 21 voted against; one ballot was spoiled.

# SUMMARIES OF SOME REPORTS

## ON PASTORAL LIFE

*In the opening session of the Synod on Friday, September 27, Archbishop Aloisio Lorscheider of Fortaleza, Brazil, presented the "Panorama" or general view of the life of the Church covering the period between the 1971 and 1974 assemblies of the Synod. The Panorama was prepared by the General Secretariat of the Synod.*

"Real progress in pastoral work can be noted today in the Church," he said. "Nevertheless, it appears that the council has not yet had full effectiveness in the life of the Church with regard to its interior renewal: the council is being applied rather more in its exterior form

than in keeping with the spirit."

There are "signs of strength and vigour" as well as problems, he said. He praised new concern for social justice in the Church, growth of community life and a new spirit in seminaries.

## UNITY AND DIVERSITY

But he also underlined an "urgent and immediate need" for studying the essence of Christianity to meet problems caused by a "demand for pluralistic options." He also cited a need to improve coordination between Rome and local Churches.

"There is an urgent and immediate need to study the basic constituents of Christianity and the historical origins of supernatural religion," he asserted. "What is the relation between

revealed and non-revealed religion? How does Christianity become part of various cultures?"

Pluralism is raising questions in the Church. How can demands for pluralistic options met "within the unity of Faith and of the ecclesial community?" How such options can be kept "within their just limits?"

"How can the Christian community really retain its true

nature—African, Asian, European, American, and so on in its way of acting and its liturgy?"

Greater coordination "between the centre and outer areas is called for" regarding the institutional structure of the Church.

"The centre remains neces-

sary and no one denies its merits. The area beyond, however, seeks to find ways, inspired by collegial service, of making the Church's organic pastoral action on a universal scale more effectively present to the world of today."

### **ZEAL FOR JUSTICE**

Church action in the field of justice and "social liberty" is being "argued vehemently." Church participation "in political controversies, even of a violent revolutionary nature," is being urged in some countries.

Some priests of the kind he termed "the third man of the Church," try to carry out their ministry to the oppressed on the margins of the institutional Church. These priests do not attack the institutional Church but stay within it to make it aware of the need for the reform of social structures. They hope that with the destruction of social structures "we can attain the 'reform' of ecclesias-

tical structures and the 'birth' of a new Church," he said.

His litany of problems included Church-state relations at a time when public opinion "seems to demand greater distance and independence" of Church from state.

On the positive side, the archbishop said that today perhaps more than ever before, there is an awareness and concern among Christians for social justice. Such concern is focussed on "those who are most abandoned," such as prisoners, and "those on the margins of society." He singled out for special praise the work of nuns in this regard.

### **SMALL ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES**

The archbishop's panorama address saw great hope in the development of small ecclesial communities. A note-worthy sign should be looked for in such communities "integrated into parish and diocesan communities and also into environments of deeper culture and

Christian life."

The archbishop saw new zeal reflected in the conferences' reports on promoting vocations. Minor seminaries are being "integrated into a wider pastoral vision" and some major seminaries which had been closed are reopening.

### **FORMER PRIESTS**

In regard to former priests, Archbishop Lorscheider said:

"In some places, priests who have left the ministry are the

object of special pastoral concern. Sometimes meetings are held with them to examine their situation. Moreover an effort is being made to find out how they really feel and what form their service of the Lord can take."

Other signs of hope he men-

tioned were the growth of national and international bishops' conferences and of priests and pastoral councils. However, he said of the latter two that they have not always "lived up perfectly to expectations" in all cases.

## ON THE ASIAN CHURCHES

*The 2nd session of the Synod on Saturday, September 28, was mainly given to five reports delivered by Bishops from five different continents. Their aim was to provide a frame of reference for the discussion of the first part of the Synod which was planned as a mutual exchange of experiences in the field of evangelization. The following is a summary of the report on Asia, given by Cardinal Joseph Cordeiro, Archbishop of Karachi.*

The present situation in Asia, Cardinal Cordeiro stated, is characterized by wide-spread and rapid transformation, by modernization and by profound social change. Added to those factors there is secularization and a breakaway from the traditional type of society. Industrialization and all its consequences, moreover, violently threaten Asiatic peoples with irreparable alienation and with the disintegration of their centuries-old models of life and social relations.

1. **Evangelization in an evolving socio-political world.** There is a radical change taking place. Many Asiatic countries were colonies, and the continuation even now of an almost colonial state of affairs constitutes an obstacle to evangelization. The local church cannot establish itself as it should because Chris-

tianity's image is that of an imported religion. What can be done to do away with that problem? In what ways can the so-called new churches and old churches cooperate? Does such collaboration not extend to evangelization as well?

Here are some characteristics peculiar to evangelization in Asia: Christians are the minority in relation to the other great religions. Many Episcopal Conferences doubt that their resources are sufficient to meet that need; all agree, however, that neither the positive elements and inherent truth of the other religions, nor their position in the economy of salvation dispense us from the necessity and obligation to preach Christ crucified. An exchange of experience will thus be of great help.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that those great religions are intimately linked with the official positions of governments. It must be added that the former also feel the effects of change in our times, especially in the social field. That may constitute either an aid or an obstacle to evangelization, depending on whether or not dialogue is favoured.

**2. Suggestions on recent transformations and changes in Asia.** The recent causes are secularization and industrialization. Coming with material benefits, they can be at the basis of a number of ills, not just for man in general but for the work of evangelization as well. Thus, such difficulties as neglect of God, injustice and poverty tend to separate doctrine from life, and the Gospel from its concrete influence. Such dichotomy tends to lessen the Church's credibility.

Notwithstanding secularization, however, the atmosphere in many regions still remains religious and conducive to prayer. Accordingly, the bishops there propose the increase of contemplative life. They favour renewal of the liturgy as a genuine expression of the life of the people. In that they see a way of overcoming the dichotomy between faith and life, stressing that faith is dynamic and at grips with reality rather than presenting it as overly conceptual.

Many efforts have already been undertaken in this sense,

but many difficulties must still be overcome (lack of men and means, necessary time for study, plurality of cultures in the same country, frequent changes in the same culture, frequent changes in the same culture, ect.). Greater liberty to experiment in the liturgical field is desired, in order to adapt it to the original character of each people.

Another obstacle to evangelization is found in the dangerous divisions not only between the different Churches but even within the Catholic Church itself. Ecumenism should be seriously encouraged. One notes, however, an inadequate preparation of the people and the dangers which can derive from too precipitous a pace or one that drags excessively. The biblical apostolate in general can confer much on ecumenism, as also translation and diffusion of the Bible in different languages and dialects.

The question remains: what must be done so that small communities can truly constitute a sign of charity in the work of evangelization? What is the value of pastoral and presbyteral councils in evangelization? What are the experiences of the Church in Asia in evangelization and in the formation of young people who constitute the majority of the inhabitants of the continent and what must be done to overcome the crisis of vocations?

There is also the urgent problem of poverty and justice; the

Synod must pronounce itself clearly to eliminate the frequent confusion between humanitarian action and evangelizing action. Some people distinguish clearly between the two fields; others prefer to speak of the evangelization of the whole man, basing it on a deeper concept of salvation as the complete and integral fulfilment of God's plan in man and in humanity, as one can read in the Declaration of the Bangkok Conference (1972).

Evangelization essentially consists in preaching the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection; therefore, even if material progress reaches its highest level, the Cross will always remain an essential part of evangelization. The Church should always be aware of the close link between development and evangelization; one must take care that concern for development does not lead to the destruction of the true Christian vocation.

**3. Testimony of Social Communication's accomplishments and media.** Notwithstanding

the efforts already accomplished, many Asiatic countries experience dire poverty which is often aggravated by natural factors. In the past, until some 25 years ago, the Church gave common witness at the institutional level (schools, hospitals, leprosaria, social works of charity). Now, not just through lack of personnel, but for political motives as well, many consider that such witness is insufficient. It is not a general opinion, but it is becoming more widely held.

The question arises, therefore: what structural changes are necessary to render such witness more Christian? Are the said institutions (viz. hospitals) to be considered as they were before, i.e., independent and private? And should the Catholic formation of youth be done outside the school and with new and better methods?

The Episcopal Conferences recognize the importance of social communications' media. They recognize moreover, the need for closer cooperation in that field.

## PRESS CONFERENCE

*At a press conference after the second session of the Synod Cardinal Cordeiro said that he was asking that local Churches be given "sufficient authority for experimentation," especially in liturgy and catechetics.*

Those areas, he said, are ones where a people's "native genius" can be most easily expressed. However, many bishops' conferences are not taking advantages of existing freedoms to experiment.

There is need "which has never been greater" for dialogue with the world's great Asian religions, he said. He also stressed the importance of a renewal of contemplative prayer, especially in Asia, where, there is "an atmosphere which calls for prayer."

"We see large groups of young people coming into Asia looking for a life of silence and prayer and seeking to understand the meaning of contemplative prayer."

When asked why his Asian report did not mention the Peoples' Republic of China, he answered: "The Church in China is a Church of Silence and I did not hear its voice."

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in a meeting last May in Taiwan addressed themselves to mainland China and expressed hope for good relations in the future.

"There is great hope for the future regarding the mainland if the Church moves in the direction it is already moving in," the cardinal said. He did not comment further.

## ON THE THEOLOGY OF EVANGELIZATION

*In the ninth session of the Synod on October 8, 1974, the Bishops were ready to discuss the second part of the Working Paper, which aimed at provoking a reflection on theological questions that have emerged from pastoral practice. As an introduction to the discussion Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Cracow, gave a report on Evangelization in the Contemporary World. Some important points of his report are given here.*

"Whether we consider the intellectual and ideological field, or the area of morality and the global concept of existence,

evangelization finds itself facing more opposition today perhaps than in the past," he said.

He cited growing opposition

from the world to the divine plan of salvation, an opposition which "takes the various forms

of secularism as well as practical and theoretical materialism."

### 'COUNTER-GOSPELS'

These contemporary trends, these "counter-gospels," contain much of the Gospel within them but give the gospel an "opposite meaning." "Jesus Christ and gospel will be forever 'a sign of contradiction.'"

A "prime condition" for the evangelizer is the need for a "certainty of the faith, or doctrinal certainty." That certainty of the faith "assumes particular importance in our times when, under the impetus of the Holy Spirit, the Church has embarked on that particular way of evangelization which is bound to the concept of dialogue."

Catholics must be ready to involve themselves in evangelization "without indulging in passive attitudes as regards the faith and salvation of others." Evangelizers cannot halt "at

the first stages of pre-evangelization" in relations with non-Christians.

"Whatever can be said about 'anonymous Christians' and the so-called 'implicit faith,' the Lord's mandate to make the implicit faith more explicit remains:"

The cardinal maintained that the main responsibility in the work of evangelization is "assumed by the bishops."

"Even though the laity has a very important role in the cause of evangelization . . . it still does not alter the fact that bishops must pray assiduously for vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, for it is in that area more particularly that the work of preaching, the care of the sacraments and the testimony of eternal life are entrusted."

### LIBERATION—TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

Conversion of the "whole man to the living God" is, along with faith, the "foundation on which the work of evangelization is based."

Liberation "is obtained to the extent of the strength and maturity of conversion to God."

"Liberation in the social and economic sense, even if it does not in itself concern the Church's mission directly, is

nevertheless closely connected to its duty of promoting justice and peace in the world."

In a section of his talk headed "Eternal salvation and human promotion," the cardinal said: "Orientating towards eternal life in present day evangelization is especially connected with concern for that true human promotion which the Church always considers an in-

tegral part of her mission and her activities in the world. Eternal salvation and human promotion cannot be separated from the activities of the Church

and the faithful who are always intimately united in the same work of creation and redemption."

### PRESS CONFERENCE

At a Vatican press conference following the cardinal's speech, Archbishop Angelo Fernandes of New Delhi, India, pointed to several "weaknesses" he found in the working paper's theology section.

"Absence of the theology of the local church which in point of fact has become the focal point of the voice of the witnessing Church in the synod" might be the working paper's "most fatal omission," he said.

He also objected to an "old ecclesiology" (theology of the Church) which he said appears in the working paper. This ecclesiology reduces the Church's mission to "preaching and administering the sacraments" and obscures the Church "as sign and symbol of intimate union of men with God and of the unity of the human race."

In regard to links between human development, liberation and evangelization in the working paper, the archbishop said: "Here again overemphasis in the eschatological dimension of salvation precludes the widespread thrust of men for fullness of life here and now from finding its here and now from finding its rightful place within the overall economy of salvation."

He also objected that the document was too "Church-centred" rather than Christ-centred, that it did not deal adequately with "integrating interreligious dialogue into the very notion of evangelization," and that there was an "almost complete neglect" of the ecumenical dimension.

"One cannot but wonder whether such a document would stimulate bishops into grappling with those crucial questions which many men of today are levelling at the Church and failure to deal with which would leave them even more unconcerned than they already are with the message of the Gospel," he concluded.

## Summaries of

# SPEECHES OF PHILIPPINE PARTICIPANTS

## CARDINAL JULIO ROSALES

**Fifth Session October 2, 1974**

*The comments of Cardinal Rosales summarized as follows were made during the first part of the Synod, when the Bishops were exchanging experiences in the work of evangelization.*

The preponderant 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.

## **CARDINAL JULIO ROSALES**

**Tenth Session October 9, 1974**

*The Synod started to discuss the Theology of Evangelization in the ninth session on October 8. Cardinal Rosales spoke on the topic the next day.*

The theology of the local Church is of major importance at this moment of ecclesial life. The communion which the young Churches are looking for with all the other Churches having Peter at the head, presupposes true maturity, vitality and responsibility in all Churches. One notes, that as in missionary work of all times, commitment to human promotion, development and justice should be considered as an integral part of evangelization; preaching of the Gospel and communication of Christ's life through the ecclesial ministry, has never been separated from real commitment for human and social promotion and from action for justice.

With regard to popular religiousness, one must not fall into the excesses of some priests and theologians, who, not understanding a people's culture, history and local sensitivity, condemn such religiousness without mercy.

One must also keep in mind, that, according to different regions, the same problems have different solutions. It is wise to be sensitive towards different situations and conditions.

While dialoging sincerely with other religions, one must stress that it is our task to preach Christ and Christ Crucified: He is the only Redeemer of men, the only Mediator with the Father.

## **BISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA**

**Fourteenth Session October 12, 1974**

*During the discussion on the Theology of Evangelization Bishop Mariano Gaviola of Girba, General Secretary of the Federation of Asian Bishops, shared his reflections with the Fathers of the Synod.*

Theological considerations after exchange of experiences has proved itself very useful and in harmony with the spirit of the Council as well as with the Pope's teaching.

The question remains how in the past, under conditions not all that different from our own, Christianity was able to propagate itself rapidly today it seems to typify only the past. True, times have changed; in addition, it must also be admitted that in the past—apart from prayer, asceticism, the witness of the saints, martyrs, etc., — conversion was something very useful to kings and heads of state. That should cause those who are responsible for governing to ponder the problem too.

The historical reality of governments cannot be ignored. The Church teaches that we render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but would it not be useful for the Church to collaborate sincerely towards finding the proper ways to greater justice?

It is good and necessary that we react to problems arising from contact between Church and world. Yet there is always the danger of forgetting our own house. From within the latter every undertaking should begin, unless we want to be an old house with modern furnishings or like some old grandmother sitting solemnly on our throne in this world.

## BISHOP JOSE SANCHEZ

Fourteenth Session October 12, 1974

*The Synod was still debating the Theology of Evangelization when Bishop Jose T. Sanchez, Coadjutor of Lucena, contributed to the discussion as summarily reported here.*

Evangelization takes its root in the will of the Father who wishes all men to be gathered into a single people, the People of God, and in the mandate conferred by Christ upon the Apostles (Mt. 28).

Christ was sent from the Father and likewise sent the Apostles, founding the Church as the sacrament of salvation and as man's means of union and unity.

The end of evangelization remains man's conversion leading him to Baptism, the sign of acceptance of the Gospel and faith in Jesus, sign too of his incorporation into the community of the faithful. The task of pastors — bishops and priests — should be that of carrying the Gospel to the two-thirds of humanity which still does not know Christ, keeping in mind that all men ardently desire peace and common solidarity.

## CARDINAL JULIO ROSALES

**Sixteenth Session October 17, 1974**

*In the 16th session in the morning of October 17, the Synod Fathers listened to the reports of the 12 Work Groups on the Theology of Evangelization. Afterwards the Secretary General gave the floor to those Fathers who asked to speak. The first to rise was Cardinal Rosales*

He stressed the contribution of lay people and especially of catechists and women in the work of evangelization, and the importance of receiving and fulfilling the directives and commands of the Holy Father. He then spoke on the problems of the local Churches pointing out that they too are "signs of the time": a) the entire world is contemplated in a global vision, in which all men are interdependent, b) the active presence of Christ is noted in the accelerated evolution of our times. The Church must be aware of this in order to advance the global aspect of evangelization.

The theology of the Cross must be at the centre of evangelization. And the messengers of the Gospel must be the preachers and witnesses who complete Christ's Passion.

## BISHOP JOSE SANCHEZ

**Seventeenth Session October 17, 1974**

*At the conclusion of the 17th general session in the evening of October 17, 1974, the President Delegate of the day, in closing the debate on the reports of the Work Groups, stated that the other interventions would be submitted in Writing and issued in a summarized form by the Information Committee. The following summarized comments of Bishop Sanchez were included.*

In order to establish the theological basis of evangelization it must be remembered that God wishes all men to be saved. For that reason He sent His Son who established the Church and gave it the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the means of salvation through the Word of God and the sacraments (Rom 10).

From Christ, the Church received the right and the task of evangelizing all men. Thus, it not only sends preachers of the Word but continues in se the fullness of the mission of salvation.

## NOTE

*Bishop Mariano Gaviola was among those who asked for clarification and information after the report of Cardinal Pericle Felici, President of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law. This happened on the 18th General Session on October 19.*

*Bishop Claver spoke in the 22nd General Session held in the afternoon of October 23. The Synod was then discussing what to do in view of the fact that only the first part of the Draft Final Document was approved by the Bishops while the three other parts were rejected.*

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## WCC SECRETARY DESCRIBES ADDRESS TO SYNOD

The Rev. Dr. Philip A. Potter, Secretary General of the World Council of Churches (WCC) described his address to the world Synod of Bishops as a "historic occasion."

"I tried to insist that all people of God have evangelization as their basic reason for existence, and that this is the theme 'par excellence' of ecumenism. I tried to say that some years after Vatican Council II the Vatican and the WCC converged in their goal, aims, ways and the meaning of evangelism.

"I also tried to speak of the signs of the times, in relation to what is happening in the world: secularization, the social and racial

struggle, the questions put by savants, youth which is often the mirror of us all..., the movements of nonChristians such as Muslims, Jews, Buddhists who seek a common community, the Church itself as no longer dominating.

"I am not pessimistic. This is an exciting time. We share, men and women in the world today, this love and mutual respect, sharing his presence among us."

(Continued on page 872.)

## THE DRAFT FINAL DOCUMENT

*The report, divided into various points on which the Fathers must make their observations and which will be used as the draft of the final document, was handed out in the 20th session of the Synod on October 22.*

*These points were printed in pamphlet form which were real voting-papers: at the end of each there was the formula for voting: placet, non placet, placet iuxta modum.*

*The pamphlets were to be handed back the next day containing the views of the Fathers and signed.*

*Cardinal Wojtyla and Cardinal Cordeiro alternated in the reading. A summary is given hereunder.*

*When the session was resumed, Cardinal Koenig invited the Fathers to pronounce themselves on the substance of the text by a written vote on the various parts of the report.*

*While the votes were being counted Bishop Rubin, the General Secretary read the list of those who had been elected to the Council of the General Secretariat of the Synod.*

*Later the results of the voting on the substance of the different parts of the final document were announced. One hundred and ninety-two Fathers voted and the results were as follows:*

*First part: placet: 143, non placet: 47; second part: placet: 82, non placet: 95; third part: placet: 65, non placet: 124; fourth part: placet: 82, non placet: 107. **Only the first part, therefore, was approved.***

*Preamble (nos. 1-3) Expresses the concern of the episcopate for the problem of evangelization, which is recognized as essential for the Church's mission and for today's world. The message of the Gospel must be made more intelligible for the world, mindful of three phenomena existing therein: the sub-human state of many peo-*

*ples oppressed by unjust structures; the fact that the worth of evangelizers is questioned by many, especially those who have abandoned religious practice; questioned too by non-Christian religions, by the secularized world, by atheism, etc. It is the intention to open dialogue with all of them.*

## PART I

## EVANGELIZATION IN ITSELF, I.E., THE SERVICE OF THE GOSPEL FOR THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

*The Holy Spirit in Evangelization* (nos. 4-6). The action of the Holy Spirit is underlined in that He diffuses everywhere "the seeds of the Word". The signs which make such action recognizable today (conciliar renewal, desire for a deeper spiritual life, attraction to prayer, desire for religious experience, even extraordinary experience at times, small communities, the desire for peace and unity dissatisfaction with purely human answers to fundamental problems of existence, etc.). Neither the phenomenon of religious indifference nor the obstacles put in the way of evangelization by the presence in the world of the *mysterium iniquitatis* are to be overlooked. A healthy discernment of the signs of the times is important. From the seminary onwards, the ministers of God should be adept at such discernment.

*Christ the Lord, the Centre of Evangelization* (nos. 7-9). Salvation comes from Christ alone. Consciously or not, all men are guided by the Spirit to its fullness. That action must be helped, making it easier for them to know Christ, who died, and rose again, to know His plan for salvation. Nor must the part played by the Blessed Virgin be forgotten. In a proper sense she can be said to have an evangelizing role, just as, after the birth of Christ, she helped and supported the Apostles of the Gospel.

*The Church, the Sacrament of Salvation* (nos. 10-11). Christ actualizes His mission by means of the Church, through which He continually renders the incarnation and the work of salvation actual. Today, unfortunately, many people, especially the young

and the working people, set the figure of Christ against the visible Church, rejecting it as an institution and accusing it of obscuring Christ, dwelling only on its human aspects and deficiencies. Humbly confessing the culpable responsibility of many Christians, it is necessary to repeat that the Church has always exercised profound sanctifying activities and still does so today. Unfortunately many people no longer appreciate sanctification carried out in the obscure fulfilment of their daily duties; it is not rarely that Christians abandon themselves to morbid self-criticism; this is an obstacle to evangelization.

However, all these phenomena should act as a stimulus to sanctity, to consistency in Christian life, to continuous individual and ecclesial conversion. The inevitable human failings do not justify separating Christ from the Church, which always remains Christ's Mystical Body and the dispenser of His mysteries. It goes without saying that many of those who set the figure of Christ against the Church often have a distorted or subjective view of Christ.

*Conversion and the Interior Life* (nos. 12-15). Continuously attentive and obedient to the Spirit—which presupposes prayer and the interior life—the Church must continuously reform herself and renew herself in conversion to God. In such a way her witness will be valid.

The life of prayer and contemplation must be nurtured by the assiduous reading of the Word of God (especially of the New Testament), different forms of liturgi-

cal piety, private prayer, popular devotions, etc.

*Witness* (nos. 14-15). Particularly within the family and professions, witness belongs to evangelization, making the faith which is professed visible in deeds, and also demonstrating how much grace and evangelical values confer on the full development of the human personality.

Witness is exercised especially through individual and community charity, being involved in public and political life for the healthy transformation of structures. What is efficacious and greatly desired today is also the witness of a life which is poor and dedicated to the poorest and emarginated classes (the needy, old, sick, immigrants, etc.).

*Preaching* (nos. 16-17). Occupies the central position in evangelization and therefore constitutes the principal duty of the Church, following the example of Christ and of the Apostles. Today, especially, preachers must proclaim the Gospel in its entirety and (as is taught by the Church) present its content in a meaningful way to men of today in their concrete context. Preaching is still more urgent today when people reduce Christ to the role of a social reformer, forgetting that He proposed a true doctrine entrusting its inviolable deposit to the Church. Without the genuine doctrine of Christ, moreover, it is difficult to orientate oneself properly and to live in a Christian manner amidst the spreading of ideologies which

deviate from the Gospel. And finally, involvement in favour of one's brothers in order to be truly Christian, must set out from a profound interior motivation of faith; this presupposes knowledge of the values which have been revealed.

*Adaptation of the Catechesis or the Way of Transmitting the Gospel*. (nos. 18-19). Always in fidelity to the deposit of faith, it is necessary to transmit the Word of God in its entirety as was explained and applied by the Church. Worthy of admiration is the strength of those who announce the Gospel, even at the cost of personal suffering; but what is to be deplored is the attitude of those who silently pass over certain truths of the faith which are less convenient to man (what is necessary is the Cross, belonging to the Church, a life conforming to the Gospel, etc.).

Fidelity is not contrary to the necessary adaptation required to make oneself understood, especially by the young, the workers, cultured people, etc. Zeal for the systematic catechesis of the young and for their preparation for the sacraments must remain keen.

*The Mass-Media* (no. 20). Their importance and usefulness in evangelization are stressed. Worthy of praise are those who serve them well. Given the influence that the media can exercise, it is urgently necessary to prepare expert operators, according to the directives of the Council and of the Holy Father.

## PART II

### EVANGELIZATION AND HUMAN PROMOTION

*Evangelization and Liberation* (nos. 21-23). Bringing the relationship between evangelization and liberation into a new light,

one must first of all bear in mind that evangelization tends towards the salvation of man.

However, Christians should

avoid taking the pretext of their aiming at the true life, to escape from their earthly duties. Christians must involve themselves deeply with all other men. Charity should stimulate them to provide for all the needs of their brothers, not only by alleviating their sufferings but by pledging themselves to increase the happiness of all men, in the faith.

Although the building of a better world is not an essential part of salvation, Christians must nevertheless cooperate for the promotion of liberation, which is like a part of evangelization, and give the work of liberation a new dimension an new dynamism.

*Evangelization and the Defence of Human Rights.* (no. 24). Among human rights, religious freedom, which the Second Vatican Council declared is based in the very nature and dignity of the human person, is deemed to be of primary importance (cf. *Dignitatis humanae*, 2, 4). The preaching of the Gospel entails that doctrine and life according to the Gospel should be effectively translated into practice. Other forms of oppression and domination should be condemned whether they spring from different ways of colonialism, racial discrimination or unjust economic structures.

## PART III

### VARIOUS GROUPS QUESTIONING THE CHURCH TODAY

*The Local Churches* (no. 25). Every local Church has the task of taking the nature and traditions of each people into consideration, purifying those elements from counter-Gospel elements if there are any, and seeing to it that the people's conversion and adherence to Christ are more vital.

*Popular Religiosity* (no. 26). Popular religiosity is to be recognized as a valid and operative manifestation of a community's life and history. It contains many positive elements. It should be purified and left to greater interiority and maturity, thus being closely linked to everyday life.

*Non-Practising Christians* (no. 27). The Christian must feel the unity between faith and life. The Church must be concerned with leading non-practising Christians back to a living and Catholic faith through preparation to receive the Sacraments. It should be done in such a way that they gradually go through a new catechumenate phase and become conscious again

of the responsibilities which they assume with the reception of the Sacraments.

*Youth* (no. 28). Attention should be given to young people not just because they are the "creators" of the future world, but also because they are in the present. Despite contestation, many young people show commitment and desire for the interior life and contemplation; they want to know the Scriptures and investigate the most important problems of human life, etc.

The Church invites young people to the work of evangelization. She invites them, first of all, to continue filling themselves more with the spirit of Christ Jesus so as to present Him to those who, although they do not profess themselves Christian, nevertheless know Christ and His Gospel and love and follow Him in their own way.

*Women* (no. 30). An increasingly important place in evangelization belongs to women, be they religious or lay. Their status in

the Church should be better defined and they carry out their specific role in the work of evangelization.

*The Christian Family* (no. 31). The Christian family is the first cell of the Christian community. In it the Gospel is first proclaimed and the life and understanding of Christ is welcomed in the heart. Because of various social changes also, very great attention must be paid to the apostolate of the family.

*Small Communities* (no. 32). Small communities often proceed from a correct perception of brotherhood and seriously seek ways in which Christ's Gospel can be truly applied, in strict communion, in prayer and meditation of the Sacred Scriptures. They can become positive elements in the Church of today and constitute an evangelical leaven. To avoid their becoming too closed in, what is asked is sufficient cohesion with the other communities and with the hierarchy.

*Ecumenism* (no. 33). All the Church's efforts for renewal, and for a more profound life of prayer and contemplation must have the effect of allowing her to advance still further on the paths of unity between all Christians. It is urgent to overcome the scandal of divisions which constitute a grave obstacle to evangelization. The initiatives which will lead to the restoration of unity with the separated Churches should therefore be intensified.

*Non-Christian Religions* (no. 34). The non-Christian religions are experiencing a process of renewal and exercise an influence on the very national identity and unity of the majority of the populations, especially in Africa and in Asia.

They contain positive values and their followers have a certain experience of God.

In the secularized world not a few men preserve the religious sense but remain outside the Church's activities and institutions.

How can they be led to a personal faith which buds forth in active ecclesial and sacramental participation?

It is necessary to intensify religious dialogue, a fundamental element of evangelization, in the light of *Aetate Nostra*.

*The Secularized World* (no. 35). Secularization, which is a greatly increasing phenomenon, exercises a profound influence on the life of the world and provokes great changes. If it has some positive aspects, e.g., when it proclaims relative autonomy for temporal values, it also contains erroneous tendencies and negative effects, such as the denial of the transcendent, disdain for religion, religious indifference, hedonism, lack of piety and atheism. The dangers are many.

On the other hand, adherence to the faith and to the Church will always be the fruit of a personal, interior and free act. The Church's methods should be adapted to these new problems, taking account of the necessary judgments.

*Atheism* (no. 36). In *Gaudium et Spes* the Council already made an analysis of contemporary atheism. We must certainly not renounce the service of offering the Gospel to all men. Enormous difficulties exist which can diminish, thanks to dialogue with non-believers. But the violation of freedom—of religion and conscience—must be denounced as absolutely inhuman, on the basis of the defense of fundamental human rights. Our prayers must include non-believers; they are our brothers who have need of our greatest concern.

## PART IV

## EVANGELIZATION AS THE WORK OF THE ENTIRE CATHOLIC CHURCH

*The Successors of the Apostles and their Co-Workers* (no. 37). Evangelization is the responsibility of the whole Church, that is, of the entire People of God. All Christians, by virtue of their baptismal incorporation into Christ, participate in His prophetic, priestly and royal roles. All therefore according to their possibilities and charisms, are called to the proclamation of the Gospel.

Nevertheless, it is the will of God that pastors assume their prime and special role. In virtue of the sacrament of Orders, they are mandated to direct the People of God.

The mission of evangelization—the promotion and direction of the People of God—is incumbent first of all on the Supreme Pontiff and the Episcopal College with the help of priests and deacons.

The Church hierarchy discerns and guarantees the authenticity of the various charisms and of the Church's doctrine.

*Religious* (no. 38). In the Christian people, religious (both men and women) have their proper function in evangelization based on the specificity of life, wherein even today the evangelical counsels can still be lived.

Institutes of contemplative life have a special importance and remind everyone of the priority of spiritual values. A special mention is to be made of Secular Institutes in this duty of evangelization. Their presence in the world contributes greatly to the spread of the Gospel.

*Theologians and Intellectuals* (no. 39). Their influence is great.

Ideology often determines the movement of history. The Church has great hopes that from art, from philosophical reflection and from scientific research greater vitality will result and that the timelessness of Gospel values will be put in greater relief.

Theologians deserve special mention in evangelization. By their investigation they greatly help the People of God, allowing them to understand the riches of the Gospel in an ever newer and deeper way.

However, their work demands prudence. Research must not disturb the People of God as though dogmas had lost their certitude and the Church had doubts concerning its own doctrines.

The Synod hoped that there will be a permanent dialogue of mutual communion and understanding between theologians and pastors.

*The Laity* (no. 40). After referring to what was said in the Council about the role of the laity in evangelization (*Lumen Gentium*, 17, 33; *Apost. Act.*, 23, 25, 2); all Christians are reminded that the duty of announcing the Gospel derives from the demands of the Gospel and from the action of the Holy Spirit in souls. The Spirit of Christ urges the faithful to communicate His gifts to all their brothers.

The mandate to evangelize comes therefore from this divine vocation and not only from the command of Christ and of the hierarchy.

Therefore, it is the whole Church which evangelizes. The lay people, becoming aware of their role, generously and simply involve them-

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selves in the mutual sharing of their gifts. Each person, in fact, needs the gifts of others, since Christian community demands such communion.

*Parishes and Schools* (no. 41). Their institution is of the greatest importance for catechetical and sacramental evangelization, even for those who are non-Christians and the indifferent. Catechesis falls to the parishes while it is for the schools to educate the

young; therefore those who work in educational institutions lend great assistance to the work of evangelization.

*Dedication to Missionary Activities* (no. 42). Let us reconfirm our concern for this activity which is immense today. We invite all the faithful to collaborate in this work with a clearer vision and greater strength.

The salvific design of God in Christ, His love for us, is not only revealed but it is communicated. The Lord's mandate to evangelize the whole world was made to all the disciples and to all the People of God. In missionary activities the life of Christ is shared and light and strength which answers his aspirations are infused in the heart of man; light to interpret history, strength to imprint on human efforts the dynamism of charity. And so the poor are evangelized, those who hunger and

thirst for justice are sated, joy and peace are given to men. And so Christ's glory is manifest, to the praise and honour of the Most Blessed Trinity.

*Conclusion* (no. 43). We cannot but recall all those who down through the centuries announced the Gospel and gave witness of Christ. Nor can we forget those who today go in danger of their lives for the cause of the Gospel and the Kingdom.

Even if in the past and also today we do not always respond to our vocation with fidelity, it is nevertheless urgent for us to devote ourselves to the missions, to perpetuate Christ's presence among men. We are aware of the difficulties and obstacles, but let us enter into the future with hope in Christ who was crucified and rose again.

May a new Pentecost come and may there arise new times for evangelization. We trust in the future as Christ the Lord of history urges us.

The task of the Church is to prepare for Christ's return. We know that the Lord is among us to strengthen our announcement.

The document concluded with an invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother and model of the Church.

# A Theologian Speaks

## ON WHAT THE SYNOD SAID

Father Catalino Arevalo, S.J., Asian member of the Pontifical Theological Commission, attended the Synod as a theologian. After the Synod he gave a talk on the work of the synodal Fathers at the Catholic Centre of Hong Kong at the invitation of the Centre for Pastoral Studies. The following is a summary of his talk, reprinted from the *Sunday Examiner*, December 13, 1974 page 11 and December 20, 1974 page 11. The subtitles have been somewhat modified.

### INTRODUCTION

The Synod that was held in Rome in the month of October published two final documents, one of which is simply a list of the topics taken up in the Synod discussions. It consists of twelve major topics each in turn comprising a number of sub-topics covering the whole range of activities which make up the life of the Church. However, about four of these topics emerged as the more significant ones by reason of their

recurrence in the Synod discussions. The first one is undoubtedly that of the *local Church* which becomes even more prominent if we include in it the two other topics of *popular religiosity* and *basic or small communities*. The second one is the role of the *Holy Spirit* in evangelization; the third, evangelization and human *liberation* and finally, the question of *youth*.

### YOUTH

The last topic mentioned was one that awakened the Synod Fathers to the awareness that more than 50% of the world, so we are told, and 60% of Asia is below the age of twenty-five. Therefore, the very future of the Gospel and that of the Church depend on how, first of all, the young can be evangelized and how actively they can be

involved in the work of evangelization itself. As Archbishop Etchegaray of Marseille puts it, the crucial question whether the Church can evangelize the contemporary world depends on whether she can evangelize the young, and on how deeply the Gospel can enter into their life.

## THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Before going into some of the themes more fully, it is useful to provide first of all a certain theological context. We can say that the Synod reflects a contemporary shift in the understanding of evangelization as well. As has been pointed out by theologians (e.g. Father Yves Congar), our traditional concept of salvation was primarily one that was "heaven"-centred, individualistic, static and contemplative in its emphasis. It was individualistic because the main concern was the redemption of the individual soul; static and contemplative because salvation was portrayed as "heaven", a state in which the blessed souls were in rapture, contemplating the eternal vision of God.

Such an understanding of salvation also tended to translate itself into an understanding of the Church seen as simply a preparatory stage (an anteroom) for heaven and therefore marked by roughly the same characteristics. The primary concern was once again the static arithmetic (a "banking system" of the sins and merits of each individual Christian. It was also contemplative because as emphasized by certain forms of traditional theology, the highest expression of the Christian life was the contemplative one, the monks being far better than the priests in active apostolic life and the poor laity no more than second class Catholics since they did not have the time or the vocation to spend long hours with God and God alone. The stress on the contemplative and "contempt for the world" dimensions thus created a kind of a Church which was a refuge from the world and from history. And what was the world but the place from which people were to be saved and whose sole meaning was to be at the

service of the Church, the temporal being subordinate to the spiritual.

As with all caricatures the above description is over simplistic and much exaggerated. No doubt, however, there is also a great deal of truth in it. The question of salvation in the contemporary understanding of the Christian faith is not seen or spoken of primarily in terms of a heaven in the after life. Heaven as previously portrayed is not very often used nowadays in contemporary preaching. Rather we find in its place the richer concept of the Kingdom of God which is much more biblical and societal. In emphasis, it is not primarily concerned with the salvation of the individual but that of mankind as a whole. It is not static because it is seen as a process of history moving towards the Kingdom which is the perfect community of men in union with the Father, the Son, the Spirit and joined together in a communal reality of justice, truth, freedom, love and peace, a teaching for instance, developed in Pope John XXIII.

The Kingdom of God is both a gift of God and—by God's grace—also a construction of man. As it is built within history it is seen not as static or primarily contemplative but must necessarily be an active and dynamic task. This is precisely the meaning of the human vocation on earth, that God gave man the grace and power of the risen Jesus to create even within history the conditions of the Kingdom. He is placed on earth so that little by little, through the power of, the Risen Christ, he may construct a society that more and more resembles that eschatological reality. Although he will never be totally successful because of

the presence of sin, however, there is a profound Christian faith that this whole reality which we call secular history at its deepest level,

in its profoundest thrust, follows the purpose of God and finds its ultimate fulfilment in his Kingdom.

### DYNAMIC VIEW

The concept of evangelization and Church implied in this more dynamic view of salvation is considerably broader than the "older" one. The end-term of the proclamation of the Gospel is not the creation of a "sacred zone" on earth, lifted above and quite separate from the integral reality of human history. Rather in and through the preaching of the revealed Word God participates in the process of man creating his own history and directing it towards the realization of the Kingdom. Evangelization is not the oral proclamation alone; it is also (and inseparably) action and witness of life. In its final statement the 1974 Synod clearly states that the communication of the Gospel is "a dynamic process that takes place through *word, work, and life*." And if evangelisation

involves an integral human process, then "the needs and aspirations of man, his ways of speaking, hearing, thinking, judging, and the ways he enters into contact with others" must be taken into this process and be numbered among its constitutive elements.

This dynamic understanding of evangelisation implies a certain theological approach which is present in the way the Synod was structured: a sharing of experiences followed by theological reflection on this sharing. To answer the question, what is the message of the Gospel for the world of today, one begins with the experience, the questions, the needs, the aspirations of contemporary men and peoples: this is the point of departure. Mankind and history question the Gospel; in turn the Gospel questions them.

### LOCAL CHURCH

Here perhaps we can see the particular importance of the local Church in the task of evangelisation. The local Church is, in a true sense, the mystery of the local Church in a given place and time, among a given people, a particular human community, in touch with, and present to, the particular experiences and concerns of this given community. It is the local Church, rooted in the same ongoing

life, traditions, history, customs, history, language, thought, sensibility, art of the surrounding human society, which can be (and must be) the primary bearer of Christ's life and His Gospel within each particular human community, serving it in its own development and growth, as it moves towards its own future, sharing its own destiny, tending towards the realization of God's Kingdom.

### BASIC COMMUNITIES

The phenomenon of small communities ("basic communities") is one of the most significant developments in the contemporary Church in almost all continents. Surely they attest to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit on

the "grass roots" level of the Church. In them, cells of a more intense and more intimate experience of Christian faith and life are being developed throughout the world.

Small communities are made up

of Christians on the level of what sociologists call "primary communities". They pray together, study and reflect on the scriptures together, celebrate the liturgy together, plan together for a common Christian presence and action in the milieux in which they find themselves. It has been said that this may well be the most significant "new reality" in the Church today; perhaps the answer the Holy Spirit is giving us in our search for a renewal and "new forms" of the Christian life in *depth*, especially among the laity. Sociologists tell us that by and large the traditional parochial and diocesan structures in many re-

gions of the world are no longer very effective in making the Christian community an "*experienced reality*", in deepening the faith, hope and love of the faithful.

The Fathers of the Synod, having heard of various developments in this area, on the whole take a rather positive attitude towards them. Much of the future life of the Church may depend on their proper growth. Pastors are urged to encourage them wisely, to keep in close touch with them, to oversee them with understanding and trust as they grow, to keep two-way channels open between them and the more traditional Church structures.

## HOLY SPIRIT

In the past, Latin ecclesiology tended to be somewhat unilaterally institutional and "hierarchiological": almost total attention was given to the "apostolic succession" and its powers. The theology of the Holy Spirit was rather neglected. Even Vatican II has no well-developed and deeply integrated theology of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the world. Many Bishops at this Synod tried to correct this lack. The Holy Spirit is seen by them as the principal agent of evangelisation, working in and through

the Church, but also in and through "the world". The Spirit blows where He wills; His activity goes beyond the bounds of the visible institution of the Church. He can (and does) work in the great religious traditions of mankind, even in the great human secular movements (cf. *Gaudium et Spec.* 26). He works too, within the Church, "from below"; in the gifts given to the laity, to "small people" in the community. The pressure of the Spirit seems to be active in our midst with a special force and power in our time.

## EVANGELIZATION AND HUMAN LIBERATION

Finally we shall turn to the question of the relationship between evangelisation and human liberation, which is of particular relevance to the third world countries of Asia. In the Synod the question arose in the following form: does the work of evangelisation include the work of human liberation? We know already from the Synod of 1971 that "action in behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gos-

pel." This is substantially reaffirmed by the 1971 Synod. In other words, the preaching of the Gospel is incomplete in today's world if the work of human liberation, i.e. its integrating component, is not part of it.

When we speak of a theology of liberation we speak in the first instance of that human liberation which takes place within history and amidst historical structures. At the starting point of this theology is the recognition that these structures of injustice and oppres-

sion have been built up in the centuries by man's selfishness and sin, and thus it is not enough to change man's hearts alone effectively to bring justice and love into the world. As long as there are operative and unyielding structures of injustice and inequality, of exploitation and oppression, then the work of human liberation is not yet complete. Of course, what stands in the way of even the partial realization of the Kingdom on earth is, fundamentally, sin. And sin is ultimately selfishness, when the self is placed at the centre of the world; selfish-

ness, the refusal to share. It is the basis of all injustice in the world and it expresses itself in both individual and collective forms. For sin does not only corrupt the individual person but it also crystallizes into historical and social structures, whether they are economic, social, political, cultural or religious. Sin and injustice are built into self-perpetuating institutions and structures in human life. Liberation is then a task of changing them into new structures of selflessness, of equality, participation and sharing.

### RELIGIOUS DIMENSION

Of course there is a religious dimension to the task of integral human liberation. The teaching of the present Synod is this: the human liberation which springs from the Gospel is not only within history but also goes beyond historical structures, reaching into the depth of the human person, freeing him from sin into grace, and the communion with God and fellowmen. There is also an eschatological dimension to it because Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of this process the final fulfilment of which is in the realization of the Kingdom, when all things shall be gathered up in Christ, and God will be all in all. And lastly, it has also an evangelical dimension, a *gospel* way of liberating man. The Synod statement is clear. Once we include these above mentioned dimensions within the understanding of human liberation, there is no further dispute that the Church and every Christian must involve themselves in the struggle to transform and reshape these structures that stand in the way of justice and brotherhood among men. In other words, if the Gospel has a meaning within history and not something outside it then the preaching of the Gospel must also transform itself into action

in the economic, social, political, cultural and religious areas of human life. There is no evangelization concretely possible in history without involving the task of liberating man, so much so that if the Church does not involve herself in this task she is not preaching the Gospel in all its wholeness, for man. On this point the Synod Fathers found themselves "profoundly at once." The Synod text, on the Gospel and human liberation, has two good paragraphs which call for our study and reflection.

When we insist that the Church and Christian must participate in the task of liberating men, it amounts to saying this: if sin creates structures of alienation and oppression, then the grace of Jesus Christ must be powerful enough to enter those structure and change them. St. Paul said, "There where sin once abounded, there grace super-abounds." Otherwise we are saying that the Paschal mystery of Christ can convert the individual heart but is powerless over the collective realities of society, or that the grace of Christ cannot operate within the full historical reality of human society. Now after the '71 and '74 Synods we can confidently say that the work of evangelization

must necessarily and integrally involve the participation of the Church and every Christian in the liberation of men from the oppressive structures. This is "Catholic teaching," what the manuals used to call *doctrina Catholica*; anyone who denies this does not grasp the concrete implications of the Gospel and Catholic teaching in the real world of today. This is an acquisition now clearly with us after a hundred years of Papal teaching beginning with Leo XIII and finding its lapidary expression in the Synod of 1971, an expression renewed in the Synod of 1974. This is not to say that we are downgrading the eschatological religious and evangelical dimensions, but the very contrary. For

it is said in the final Synod statement that total liberation in Christ is exactly the same as integral human liberation. When all is added up, the two things are one.

In the Holy Father's Angelus address on the meeting of the Latin American bishops that immediately followed the Synod, He said, "The word 'progressive' today seems insufficient. It is not enough to be progressive. There is talk of liberation, a word which the Church highly appreciates and a word which the Church has made her own, finding in it above all the basic doctrine of the liberating redemption of mankind from evil, from sin which is the major obstacle to real freedom."

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## WCC SECRETARY...

(From page 859)

Queried about the need to struggle against injustice and the "right to revolt" in certain countries, Dr. Potter said:

"I said in my speech that to utilize contemplation and struggle is revolutionary because for us Christians our faith is a revolutionary faith which completely changes our mentalities, our attitudes, our actions. If evangeliza-

tion acts, it is an explosive evangelization but we live in a world where the power of oppression has been extraordinarily strong."

Although he has been a pacifist, he is "in solidarity with those who suffer, spiritually and morally and physically."

"We have to do our part in the struggle for recognition of basic rights."

**Our Mother**  
**Eighth of a Series**

**MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH**

**By**  
**Regino Cortes, O.P.**

January 1 in the Christian calendar is not only the celebration of the beginning of a new civil year. Before, it used to be the feast of the Circumcision being the eight day after the celebration of Christ's birth. In the new liturgical calendar, however, this day has been designated as the feast of the Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is not only the Mother of Christ in his physical body but also the Mother of his Mystical body, the Church. Thus, we have a new title applied to our Lady as the Mother of the Church.

The title of Mary, Mother of the Church was only announced in our times by Pope Paul VI on November 21, 1964. Not even the Litany of Loreto makes mention of it. It was a very fitting complement to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church proclaimed by Vatican II. This title is certainly justified being aware of Mary's dignity as the Mother of Christ. In fact after the Resurrection of our Lord she was together with the Apostle in the Cenacle, "praying for the coming of that same Spirit, in order that the Church be born on Pentecost." (Pastoral of American Bishops on Mary, no. 115).

The fear that Mary's title as Mother of the Church would be a stumbling block towards Ecumenism and Christian Unity should reasonably and unfoundedly be dispelled. Whoever is the Mother who wants her children disunited? The two greatest virtues which every individual who glories being called a Christian should possess as the strongest foundation for Christian unity are the virtues of Charity and Humility. These are the two virtues in which our Lady had greatly excelled. The true sequel then to this title of Mary, Mother of the Church could be Mary, Mother of Christian Unity. It is only those who belittle the dignity of Mary as the Mother of the Word made flesh who in reality create an artificial stumbling-block for Christian unity.

As Mother of the Church Mary will see to it that the members of her Son's mystical body would someday reach their fulness in the Spirit. This is not just a poetical dream or a flowery yet inane expression but a future reality which is the object of Christian hope.

# **HOMILETICS**

## **I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES**

**Regino Cortes, O.P.**

**Msgr. Mario Baltazar, O.P.\***

### **FEAST OF THE LORD'S PRESENTATION: FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (February 2, 1975)**

**First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4.**  
**Second : Hebrews 2:14-18**  
**Gospel : Luke 2:22-40**

A. The Messianic connotations in the **First Reading** of today's Mass is clearly manifested. The episode of our Lord's Presentation in the temple in obedience to the Mosaic Law as prescribed in Leviticus 12:8; Exodus, 13:2 and 12, was also in a way the fulfillment of this prophecy from Malachi: "And the Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple." The messenger spoken of in the text who will prepare the way before the Lord is an echo of Isaiah 40:3 who was identified by Malachi 3:23 to be Elijah. This text will afterwards be applied to John the Baptist, the new Elijah by Matthew 11:10 and Luke 1:76.

B. The Gospel narrates the purification of the Blessed Mother and the "redeeming" or buying back of Jesus as the first-born prescribed in the Torah or Law of Moses. For the purification of the Mother the Law prescribes (Lev. 12:8) that "She is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting a lamb one year old for a holocaust, and a young pigeon or turtledove as a sacrifice for sin... If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for the holocaust and the other for the sacrifice for sin." The first born has to be redeemed at the price of five shekels (Nb. 18:15). St. Luke emphasizes that

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\* Fr. Cortes prepared the notes for February; Msgr. Baltazar those for March.

instead of a lamb the Holy Family offered in sacrifice a pair of turtledoves which is considered as a "poor man's sacrifice". There is no prescription in the Law, however, that the child should be brought to the temple. Still for St. Luke this episode of Christ's presentation in the temple brought about a chain of biblical fulfillment of a number of messianic prophecies of old.

"Israel's Comforting" or *Naham Israel* was also a traditional idea with messianic connotations. The Messiah is God's Anointed Comforter. Simeon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, saw in the small Child the fulfillment of those messianic expectations.

The mention of the child's father and mother clearly indicates that St. Joseph was in the mind of St. Luke a true parent of Jesus which we find more explicitly stated in Matthew 1:24.

C. The Second Reading taken from the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the congruity of Christ's redemption assuming not an angelic nature but our human nature, a **descendant of Abraham**. It was not because of angels that he came but for men. He took on our mortal nature so that through His death he would destroy the power of the devil, the Prince of death.

Verse 18 has an existential note. "Because he has himself been through temptation he is able to help others who are tempted." This is part of the mystery of Christ's condescension which the Greek Fathers love to speak of.

## FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(February 9, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 58:7-10  
**Second** : 1 Corinthians 2:1-5  
**Gospel** : Matthew 5:13-16.

A. The First Reading emphasizes a novel concept of fasting, which would really bring salvation. In the preceding verses not included in the Reading the Israelites were complaining why in spite of their fast salvation was still long in coming. The Lord God through his prophet answered the community the insufficiency of their concept and practice of fasting. The fast which God would be pleased of is "sharing the bread with the hungry," "welcoming the poor and the needy to one's own house, "clothing the naked," in short works of mercy and charity. This kind of fasting is compared to the light which would remove the darkness of misery. This idea of "light" seems to be the link with the gospel reading which speaks of the Christian as "light of the world."

B. The Gospel taken from St. Matthew is contextually a part of the Sermon on the Mount. This portion has a special importance in stressing the world-dimension of Christian responsibility. The Christian is the "salt of the earth," "the light of the world." He is proclaimed to the world as the source of its preservation or salvation; its moral well-being is affirmed to be dependent on the disciples of Christ. But if this "salt" loses its preservative value, a warning to Christ's disciples themselves, then a worse thing would happen to them. They will be trodden underfoot. The disciples of Christ should also be the light of the world, lighting the dark path on the way to the Father, by their exemplary way of life, by their truthful doctrine. If they run away from this task, they will be like a lamp hidden under a bushel which would have lost its usefulness.

C. St. Paul in this passage of the Third Reading stresses a much higher wisdom hitherto unknown to the world. It is the wisdom of the Cross, the knowledge of the Christ crucified. After his trials and sufferings at Macedonia and his disappointment at Athens, the land of the Philosophers, he became convinced more and more that the only wisdom that matters was that of knowing Christ.

### FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (February 16, 1975)

**First Reading:** Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7.

**Second** : Roman 5:12-19 or 5:12-17:19.

**Gospel** : Matthew 4:1-11.

A. The First Reading narrates the Creation and Fall of our first parents. Like a potter God fashioned the body of man out of clay, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living person. Life therefore, is conceived here as the breath of God that is why its withdrawal as expressed in Psalm 103:29 also causes death, the end of human life. The style of the narrative in this biblical passage is a popular story so that we should beware of making it a scientific historical document. But the biblical message is clear: God created the world; there was a special creation for man, at least with regards to the source of his life which is the breath of the divine.

God planted a "garden in Eden" and placed man there. Note that the garden was not Eden but the place where the garden was. The well-known name "Paradise" has been derived from the Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint, which used the name "paradeisos", a noun of Persian origin which could mean a royal

park, or enclosed pleasure garden. The word "Eden" according to Assyriologists could have come from "edinu" an Assyrian noun denoting an open plain or desert, a sort of description of the territory where the Garden was located.

The second part of the reading narrates the Fall of Man a linking idea with the Gospel of today's Mass which deals about the temptation of our Lord. Our first parents fell induced by the Tempter, this was vindicated by Christ the new Adam who conquered all His temptations.

B. Jesus was tempted three times in the Gospel narrative of St. Matthew, but there was one underlying goal: to allure Him to glory without the passion, to induce Him to take the crown without the cross. But our Lord knows all of them to be deceptive.

First the tempter allured Christ to satisfy his bodily needs by performing a miracle which he answered that even his physical needs may be satisfied by the words coming from God, a quotation from Deuteronomy 8:3. Secondly he was tempted to display his power in a spectacular manner by jumping on the pinnacle of the Temple. Another scriptural quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16 dispelled the second attempt. The third attempt was much more alluring, a suggestion that Satan would give the world to our Lord without any struggle, without any passion if only our Lord would only adore him. This was the culminating point. How could he worship Satan even at the wonderful offer of gaining the world? The final victory came on His side commanding Satan to obey God instead.

C. The Second Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans is a contrast between Adam and Jesus. Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death also entered the world. Through the fall of one man so many died, thus it would cause no surprise that through one man, Jesus Christ, an abundant free gift should also come into the world, the gift of redemption from sin, the gift of life. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT (February 23, 1975)

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4a  
 Second : 2 Timothy 1:8b-10  
 Gospel : Matthew 17:1-9.

A. The First Reading narrates the election and call of Abraham, the Father of the chosen community of salvation. He was told

by God to leave his country, his family, and his father's house to go to the Land which God himself would give him. The first verses contain God's irrevocable promises to Abraham which had the object of faith and hope of the chosen people. The promise of a blessing to all nations through Abraham is also repeated in Genesis 18:18 and 22:18. This promise of universal blessing was realized in Christ.

**B. The Gospel Reading** gives the Transfiguration episode also narrated by Mark, 9:2-8 and Luke 9:28-36. This happened a little after the confession of Peter of Christ's divinity 16:17. Again our Lord took as witnesses of this glorious manifestation the three apostles, Peter, James, and John. Although the mountain of the Transfiguration is not mentioned by name in the gospel narrative, tradition has placed it at Mount Tabor, some few kilometers south east of Nazareth. In the presence of His three disciples our Lord's countenance was transformed, "his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light." And then there appeared conversing with him Moses, representing the Law, and Elijah, representing the Prophets, two witnesses of his messianic mission. It is quite significant that in St. Luke the theme of the conversation between Christ and the two representatives of the Old Covenant, Moses and Elijah was his passion which St. Luke termed as Christ's "exodus," His passage from this life to the next, or the passage of the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

**C. The Second Reading** taken from 2 Timothy gives a short description of St. Paul's doctrine on divine election. It is not an easy life to be called for the service of the Good News. But having confidence in the power of God and the redemption wrought by Christ's blood we should not fear nor have any misgivings of being a witness of Lord. Let us all the more be thankful to God for having chosen us without any merit on our part to be witnesses of the Gospel.

### **THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT (March 2)**

**First Reading:** Water is the sign of life, the anticipation of baptism.  
(Ex. 17:3-7)

The pericope refers to an episode in the Sinai desert when the wandering Israelites lacked water. They began to quarrel with Moses. He overcomes this crisis by miraculously drawing water from a rock. From this incident, later rabbis were to build a legend that the rock followed the Israelites through the desert as an ever present source of water. Still later, St. Paul interpreted this Exodus

episode along with the rabbinical legend (which he does not hesitate to use for attaining a didactic purpose) as a type of Christ. The present liturgy sees this pericope as an anticipation of baptism, inasmuch as the sacrament uses water to produce a new life in the recipient.

**Second Reading:** We have peace through God's work in us.  
(Rom. 5:1-2, 5-8)

This pauline pericope is a triadic text and can serve as a starting point for the Trinitarian dogma. It presents the theme of the Christian, who, once justified, is reconciled to God the Father and experiences a peace which distressing troubles cannot upset. The Christian experiences also a hope that cannot be disappointed, and a confidence of salvation of which he can truly boast. The basis for that peace, hope and confidence is God's love for men eloquently demonstrated by the outpouring of the Spirit and the vicarious suffering of Christ for the sinners.

**Gospel:** Christ promises water which will give us eternal life through baptism. (Jn. 4:5-42)

The salient points of this long and very readable pericope shall be indicated, which are at any rate in keeping with the style, language and purpose of the fourth Evangelist. To start with, this is the pericope's backgrounder. The Samaritans were the descendants of inter-marriage between the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom and the pagan colonists whom the Assyrian conquerors had settled in the land. Their religion was also an inter-marriage between Jewish and pagan elements.

Accepting only the first five books of the OT, the Samaritans rejected the prophets and all prophetic emphasis on the Jerusalem Temple. This caused great hostility between them and the Jews, erupting at times into actions like the destruction by the latter of the Samaritan temple on M. Garizim a hundred years before Christ.

The amazement, therefore, of the Samaritan woman at Jesus, a Jew, asking her for a favor is understandable. The conversation that follows is in accord with the pattern of John's studied presentation of the misunderstandings that frequently accompanied Jesus' speeches. The figurative language and metaphors employed by the Master are misunderstood or grossly interpreted by his interlocutors. This allows Jesus to explain his thought more thoroughly and thereby explain his doctrine.

Jesus speaks of a "living water" which the Samaritan woman understands only as natural water. But Jesus was referring to his divine revelation and to the Holy Spirit, and later the Christian community would understand it in a sacramental context, namely the water of baptism which initiates into Jesus' teaching and confers the Holy Spirit. This leads us to appreciate another characteristic of the Johannine style.

The Evangelist frequently intends the reader to see several layers of meaning in the same narrative or in the same metaphor. So, for example, Jesus had primarily intended his metaphor of "living water" to mean his doctrine and the Holy Spirit for his immediate interlocutor, which the latter necessarily misunderstood given her religious background and ways of thinking. This same metaphor, however, carries a deeper meaning that would be discovered only by the believing Christian community that handles Christ's message in its prayers and catechesis. Thus the Church could see the sacrament of baptism in the "living water" of Christ's discourse to the woman. Biblical theologians would speak later on of *sensus litteralis* and *sensus plenior* to explain a case like this one of Johannine two-fold meaning underlying some of Christ's words.

#### FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT (March 9)

**First Reading:** David was anointed king.  
1 Sam. 17:7-7, 10-13a)

This story of David's anointing at Bethlehem, told with certain suspense and local color, appears to derive from a prophetic tradition that is unrelated to the subsequent story of David's anointing at Hebron by the men of Judah and then by the elders of Israel. The choice of David in preference to his elder brothers serves to underline the freedom of divine election.

**Second Reading:** Christ gives us light to see his word at Baptism.  
(Eph. 5:8-14)

The pericope brings out the strong contrasts between Christian and pagan life in terms of light and darkness. It includes an ancient Christian hymn used in a baptismal liturgy, singing the praise of the exalted Christ, who awakens men from the sleep of death and brings them to life in a new creative act resembling the very creation of light itself.

**Gospel:** The man born blind sees by washing in the pool which means "sent". (Jn. 9:1-41)

This long pericope, narrating a miracle of the sight given to a blind man and the spiritual blindness of Jesus' adversaries, develops the great theme of Jesus as the light of the world, which John enunciated in his majestic prologue. To make sure that the real message of this miracle will not be lost, Jesus proclaims that he is the light of the world, a light that can cure all blindness.

The sacramental symbolism of this miracle was not lost on the primitive Church, which commonly took it to be a sign of baptism. For his part, John emphasizes the fact of the man being blind from birth. Did he intend a parallel between the sight being given to a man who never possessed it and the light, which is Christ's, being given to men who never had it? Again, John sees significance in the name of the pool in whose waters the man gains his sight, since Jesus is the one sent by the Father to give light.

The use of spittle and its accompanying word "Ephpheta" and the action of anointing have become part of our baptismal liturgy. Tertullian and St. Augustine saw a baptismal reference in addition to the obvious meaning of the man being miraculously healed of his physical blindness. Finally, in the early catacomb art, the healing of the blind man is a symbol of baptism.

A consummate master in tragic irony, the Evangelist describes the ensuing interrogations as a trial scene, highlighting the contrast between the man who was blind but came to sight because of Jesus, and the Pharisees who could see and were brought to blindness because of Jesus. The blind man knows little and yet learns much the Pharisees know everything and can be taught nothing. The trial scene constitutes one of the most brilliant passages in the gospel.

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (March 16)

**First Reading:** God promises a new life and spirit in the new covenant. (Ezek. 37:12-14)

The pericope contains a prophecy aimed at giving the discouraged captives in Babylon a new spirit to rise from their captivity and to lead a new life in Israel where God will restore them. The Christian liturgy sees in this prophesy the promise of a new life and spirit in the new covenant.

**Second Reading:** The life which Christ gives us through faith and baptism will transform us. (Rom. 8:8-11)

The pericope develops the theme on how Jesus Christ has rescued man from enslavement to sin and death and made it possible for him to live according to the Spirit. Dwelling in the regenerated man, the Spirit suffuses his being and directs his conduct, and is his vivifying principle in the eschatological resurrection.

**Gospel:** The raising of Lazarus is a promise that we too shall be raised in Christ's life. (Jn. 11:1-45)

In narrating this miracle, St. John shows that Jesus is the Life by raising Lazarus, just as he proved that Jesus is the Light by giving sight to the man born blind. The miracle is still a sign, for it remains a promise of what Jesus will do when glorified: the natural life given to Lazarus is a pledge of the supernatural life to be given by the glorified Christ.

At the outset, Jesus clearly states the ultimate spiritual value of the miracle: it will lead to his glory, i.e., his own death and all its glorious implication. The Johannine irony suffuses the whole pericope. Because he gave life to his friend, Jesus' enemies decide on his death; but then his death is the pledge of resurrection and eternal life of all who believe in him.

Jesus delays going to Bethany after receiving news of Lazarus' illness, not because he makes light of this illness or of the sisters' report, but to forestall all doubt about the resurrection he was determined to perform. The physical death and raising up of Lazarus was a fact no one could question, not even the Sanhedrin, which later on that score decided to do away with Jesus.

When finally Jesus' group reaches Bethany, they find Lazarus dead and buried. Martha's words to Jesus implied both a tender reproach and a petition possible in one who was on friendly terms with the Lord. Jesus' answer is taken by Martha simply as a conventional reference to the final resurrection; hence he had to affirm clearly that the power to resurrect is found only in himself, and all mankind (subject as it is to death) can find relief from it by believing in him.

The actual performance of the miracle clearly proves the truth of the above statement of Jesus. At the sound of his voice, the dead man emerges from his tomb still wrapped in burial clothes. There was no delaying on the part of the creature, no matter what impediments held it back, to obey the peremptory command of the Creator. "And at once he who had been dead came forth..."

## PALM SUNDAY (March 23)

**First Reading:** The servant of God faces his enemies for the sake of all men. (Is. 50:4-7)

The pericope contains the so-called Third Servant Song attributed to Deutero-Isaiah. Resigned to the persecutions and darkness that surround him, the Suffering Servant recognizes God's word as the source of salvation, to which he obediently listens and yearns to speak it to others.

**Second Reading:** Christ accepts his humanity completely by becoming like the worst of criminals. (Phil. 2:6-11)

In his pericope St. Paul holds up before the Philippians Christ's humility and abasement the model of conduct that should be found in their community. Accordingly, he composes (or simply quotes?) a hymnic confession of Christ that briefly but powerfully sketches at once his divine pre-existence and his humanity with all the humiliations and exaltations that came upon it. Hardly can one find elsewhere so lofty realities powerfully expressed in so condensed a language!

**Gospel:** The account of the Lord's Passion and Death.  
(Mt. 26:14-17 27:66)

The Passion Narrative was the first part of the Gospel tradition to acquire a fixed structure; hence it has been rightly said that Gospel-writing began as a passion story with the other parts subsequently added as an introduction.

The amount of space given by the four Evangelists to the Passion story as compared to the rest of their books shows the place this narrative has in the early apostolic Church. The earliest proclamation about Jesus centered on the story of his death and resurrection. It was the essence of the "Good News" proclaimed to a despairing world.

According to all four Gospels, Jesus taught that he would suffer and die. He had predicted this to his disciples several times. He emphasized that his suffering was in accordance with the will of the Father and at the same time he himself freely chose to suffer and die on mankind's behalf.

The words spoken by Jesus at the institution of the Eucharist plainly teach the sacrificial character of his death. He gave his

body to be broken for men and his blood to be poured out for their eternal salvation. Through his death eternal blessing would issue for all, and through forgiveness of sin by his blood a new relationship between God and men would be established.

The Passion Narrative is the climax in all the four Gospels. No part of the life of Jesus is related in such detail and with such close agreement in the sources. Matthew's outline resembles that found in Mark, but he has expanded it with certain narratives he found in special sources of his own.

The more significant of them are the following: the refusal of Jesus to permit the use of force in resisting his arrest at Gethshemani; the story of Judas' change of heart and his tragic death; the episode of Pilate's wife; Pilate's symbolic action in washing his hands; the apocalyptic presentation of the universal effect of Jesus's death and resurrection; the narratives involving the guard placed at Jesus' tomb; the earthquake and appearance of the angel; the appearance of the glorified Christ in Galilee. Peculiar only to Matthew's account, these sections permit us to appreciate the particular theological insights of the first Evangelist into the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

### **EASTER** **(March 30)**

**First Reading:** Peter tells of his experience with the risen Lord.  
(Acts 10:34, 37-43)

The pericope contains Peter's discourse in a classic presentation of the Good News to the gentiles. It follows the pattern of other speeches of Peter in Acts and of Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. By producing such pattern of sermon several times, did Luke intend to show what Christian preaching is and ought to be?

**Second Reading:** Christ is our Easter; we are risen with him.  
(Col. 3:1-4)

The pericope, in its original setting, intends to contrast the "things that are above" with the "things that are on earth" understood to mean Christ's victorious presence and lordship over and against material religious practices such as the Colossians were burdening themselves with unnecessarily. But the liturgy has taken over this pericope and applies to it a paschal meaning that makes it an appropriate reading for the Easter.

**Gospel:** The First Witnesses of the resurrection.  
(Jn. 20:1-9)

For the truth of Christ's resurrection, the apostolic Church offers its most fundamental and essential witness. The resurrection constitutes the title to its claim to be the instrument of God's salvation in the world. With its acceptance or rejection goes the very survival of the Church. "If Christ has not risen," Paul had already said, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

To be sure, none of the Evangelists describes the actual resurrection itself, for it was witnessed by no one. However, they witness to the fact of the resurrection by testimony to the empty tomb on Easter morning and the appearances of the Risen Christ to his disciples. The present pericope refers to the testimony of the empty tomb.

The four Evangelists are in substantial agreement concerning the time when the tomb was first found to be empty, before dawn on Sunday morning. Setting out for the tomb at such time, Mary Magdalene found it empty, and suspecting robbery, hastened to inform Peter and John.

Racing to the tomb, John, who arrived there first, waited for Peter. Both entered, one after the other. Both noticed the strange position of the small linen bonds used to wrap the Savior's body and of the separate piece for the head. The cloths had preserved the contours of the Lord's body which passed through them leaving them where they were. The empty burial cloths offered thus a visual evidence of the resurrection. Peter and John the first witnesses of the empty tomb, by this same token, were sure that Christ had risen. Their testimony will be corroborated further by visual appearances to them and to others of the Risen Christ.

# **HOMILIES**

By

**Regino Cortes, O.P.**

**Msgr. Mario Baltazar, O.P. \***

**February 2: 4th Sunday of the year**

## **THE HAPPY POOR**

**THEME:** The happy are those who are poor in spirit and humble.

**OUR CONDITION.** We have grown up with the idea that money really is what makes the world go round. This is of course taken in a metaphorical sense. But in a factual sense it is still money which enables an individual to go around the world. Many think that it is still wags of bills which fill up one's stomach, cash in the bank which dictates security for tomorrow, the stock market which has become the gauge of a happy life. Poverty has become a social problem, the poor a social menace, the not-haves the community's headache.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** In the last analysis, however, the real poor in spirit has been commended by our Lord as the happiest persons of the future, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. He preferred to live poor, chose a poor couple to be his parents here on earth, took his first disciples from the poor class of society, praised the poor more often in his teachings. In contrast he sometimes used strong words against the rich, that it would be easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle rather than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. In one of his parables he made Lazarus the poor man end up rejoicing in the bosom of Abraham while the rich man was punished in the underworld.

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\* Fr. Cortes prepared the homilies for February; Msgr. Baltazar those for March.

**OUR RESPONSE.** What the poor do not realize is the special love our Lord has for them. The real poor are sincere people, humble, hard-working, nearer to nature which they toll with the sweat of their brow. A fisherman who catches a school of fish, a farmer who harvests a good crop has a greater experience of happiness than a rich tycoon who might have hit the stock market or made double profit in his industrial investment. Happiness and joy is an internal, personal experience which does not depend on artificial trappings like money or gold in the bank.

**February 9: 5th Sunday of the year**

### **PUBLICIZE YOUR GOOD WORKS**

**THEME:** Men will be drawn to praise God when they see us doing good works. Mt. 5, 13-16.

**OUR CONDITION.** Just for curiosity, try listing down the news headlines of the days newspaper into two columns. On one column list all the good news and on another column all the bad news. Most often you will find out that the bad news outbalance the good news. Is this the picture of the real world situation? Are there more bad news in our midst today than good news?

We hope not and our hope is based on the fact that most good news are not given much publicity. They lack that element of sensationalism which newspapers look for to boost their lucrative purpose.

**GOOD NEWS.** Yet our Lord has told us to let our light shine before men, to let others see our good works that they may praise our Father in heaven. This is not against His admonition on one occasion not to let our left hand know what our right is doing which was an admonition against pride. We let others see our good works not to praise us but to praise God. He himself worked miracles not for his self-esteem but for others and for the glory of his Father. He multiplied the bread for thousands of men in the desert but refused to turn the stone into bread at the instigation of Satan. He vehemently rejected the idea of jumping down from the pinnacle of the temple to show his power but willingly walked over the waters to calm down the fears of his apostles during a storm. Before raising Lazarus back to life he prayed to the Father: "Father, I thank you for hearing my prayer. I knew indeed that you always hear me, but I speak for the sake of all these who stand around me, so that they may believe it was you who sent me. (Jn. XI, 41-42). He prayed not for himself but for the sake of others.

**OUR RESPONSE.** The modern media of communication, like newspaper, radio, television, movies, etc. is a most fertile area for Christian evangelization. It is not enough to evangelize people it seems, it is much more imperative also to evangelize human institutions. Undoubtedly it is a gigantic task but we, all the disciples of Christ who should continue the work of the christianization of the world in all spheres, should not shrink from it.

**February 16: 1st Sunday of Lent**

### **THE THREE WORLD'S GREATEST TEMPTATION**

**THEME:** Christ himself suffered temptation as man. Mt. 4:1-11.

**OUR CONDITION.** There are three things which according to common judgment the world needs. Food to feed the hungry millions, scientific and technological advancement, and peace. These are all valuable things but they have become booby-traps. Food has become synonymous to material prosperity without spiritual growth, scientific progress regardless of moral repercussions, and peace without the Christian formula.

We cannot keep our eyes closed to the plight of millions of people in need of food. We have also to recognize the valuable contribution of science and technology which has permeated all our life spheres. After the most bitter experience brought about by two world wars the world has tried to hold on even to the most tenuous formula for peace.

**THE GOOD NEWS.** The gospel of today, however, reminds us, having Christ for its living model, how to deal with temptations of this sort. There is a close parallelism between the temptations which beset mankind today and the three temptations of our Lord. His first temptation was food but our Lord countered it by saying that "not by bread alone does man live but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." He was invited by the evil one to show His power by jumping from the pinnacle of the temple but such show of power without any reason or utility would be only tempting God, thus his answer: "you shall not tempt the Lord your God." Lastly there was a temptation of false peace. Satan would give Christ the whole world, whose redemption was the object of His coming, if He will adore the evil one. He doesn't have to suffer anymore nor die an ignominious death on the Cross to save the world. The world is given to Him in a silver platter. But then it would be like saving the world without Christ, giving peace to the world without Him as the Prince of Peace. This last temptation

was conquered with the firm retort and command: "You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone."

**OUR RESPONSE.** The world situation of hunger is not caused by lack of food production. It is caused by man's inhumanity to man who failed to be penetrated by the word of God. Affluent nations prefer to dump food into the ocean to check oversupply rather than give them to poor hungry nations. Science and technology probing the unknown most often tempt God by asserting its independence from the Creator tampering even with moral laws. The peace that the world has so far known is peace characterized only by the absence of Christ is not only a peace without war but a peace when universal love would reign in the hearts of men. This peace can only be achieved in a world not catering to the whims of Satan and his minions but to the practice of universal love preached by Christ.

**February 23: 2nd Sunday of Lent**

## **OUR OWN MINI TRANSFIGURATIONS**

**THEME:** The Apostles see a bit of Christ's glory.

**OUR CONDITION.** The reality of the future state is an accepted fact of human existence. Catholic theology teaches that the faithful will rise again with a glorious body, bathe in brilliance and splendor. It further teaches the reality of the beatific vision, that "face to face" rapport with God. St. Paul has expressed the glory of the things to come, "things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him," (I Cor. 2:9).

Another certain thing is the persistence of our identity. It is not going to vanish as a drop of water disappears in the ocean. It is I who will enjoy the beatific vision. My identity will not be immersed in the ocean of the Godhead that my awareness of happiness will not be anymore felt personally by me. Furthermore this "face to face" rapport with God will not be only static or passive, but something dynamic and active. This is one great difference between the Yoga system and Christian mysticism. In Christian mysticism no loss of identity is incurred while this loss of identity seems to be the objective of yoga: that the more a person becomes immersed in the Godhead the more blessed he would be. Christian mysticism is also dynamic which consists in continuous operations of man's higher faculties: the intellect and the will experiencing God in his glory.

**GOOD NEWS.** Three apostles, Peter, James, and John, had the singular privileged of seeing Christ's glorious body here on earth during the Transfiguration. This event happened according to the gospel narrative after the first prophecy of the passion. Two other personages appeared with Him in this manifestation of glory: Moses, representing the Law, and Eliah representing the Prophets. This glorious tableau bears glaring testimony to the personality of Christ as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets.

**OUR RESPONSE.** We are taught to discover Christ among the needy, the poor, the persecuted, the downtrodden. This would not be exactly a glamorous discovery, but we are assured by the eyes of faith that Christ is in them as He told us in the gospel, that serving the least fortunate of our brethren is the same as serving Him. Coupled with faith is the hope that having seen and served Christ among the unfortunate we will someday see His glory unveiled in all its brilliance.

### **THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT (March 2)**

**THEME:** Our status as baptized Christians teaches us how to solve the tensions between life in the world and eternal life.

**OUR HUMAN CONDITION:** Man who is supposed to dominate nature and imprint on it his image of order and balance, has date proved his inability to do just such thing. In effect, he seems to be good rather at disrupting the existing order and balance in nature. He still has a long way to imitate (!) nature in its tranquil prosecution of right order and tempered balance in his multitudinous activities.

There was a time not very long ago when the subject of sex was treated in whispered tones (to the detriment of enlightened knowledge regarding it). Now it is broadcast to the four winds with almost everyone unabashedly pontificating on the topic (to the detriment of correct knowledge of it). Also not long ago priests complained (with satisfaction nonetheless) that Christians confessed too often and about unnecessary matter today the same complain (with dissatisfaction this time) that Christians confess too seldom as if sin has finally been wiped out of the earth. Time was when the Christian laity was upbraided for being too passive in working alongside the clergy; now the same laity is looked at with an amount of alarm for what is regarded their aggressiveness and independent-mindedness. At the root of all this and similar situations that provoke contradictory reactions in others, lies the in-

ability of man to strike the correct balance between the tensions which constitute the warf and woof of his existence.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** To liberate man from his *gaucherie*, God's word is proclaimed to him. The "Good News" is all the more necessary for him inasmuch as man's tragic knack for taking opposite extremes could seriously compromise his eternal salvation. Who will teach him not to be so unrealistically "spiritual" that he forgets his earthly duties, nor become so "mundane" that he neglects his spirit?

The Samaritan woman was at once unrealistic about her attachment to the Garizim prayer-place and to her fifth man. She could go from one extreme to the other, from religion to mundanity, be mistaken in both. Jesus, in the Gospel reading, offer to her the "gift of God" that would put her soul in a peaceful and right state.

In the first reading, the wandering Israelites lacked in the necessary water; but by quarreling with Moses regarding the material water, they risked losing the "spiritual" water of God's wisdom and love which is more necessary for the integral life of man. It was indispensable for them not to be thoroughly upset by one problem as to create a bigger one on that account. This is why we have great need of that kind of peace, which the second reading speaks about, that distressing troubles cannot upset so that we could comply with our other irreplaceable duties.

**OUR RESPONSE:** If only we recognize the "gift of God", and the great need we have for it, we would be truly liberated from the *gaucheries* that make of us modern Samaritans or wandering Israelites. There would be no shrieking at one another and mutual efforts at pasting uncharitable labels of anti- and pro-clerical, conservative and progressive, reactionary and liberal, sexist and angelist and all that sort of hostility and division that is plaguing humankind and christendom.

We need to be reminded frequently of our status as baptized Christians, i.e., men who have received the sacrament of baptism, in which spiritual and earthly elements are harmoniously blended and employed, to produce a new creature after the image of the God of peace, unity and wisdom. Sin had put the elements that constitute the created universe at enmity with one another; baptism and grace have reconciled them with one another. If Christians meditated more frequently on the requirements of their baptism, then we would not be wandering aimlessly anymore in a "desert" but would have reached the "promised land."

**FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT**  
**(March 9)**

**THEME:** We need Christ's light to avoid becoming blind leaders of the blind, or getting more blind ourselves.

**OUR CONDITION:** We are a building civilization; we pride ourselves with the tile and recognition of architects of this and that; we talk grandly of antion-building, body-building, image-building, community-building and so on. We build roads, bridges, reservoirs, and fortunes. The more romantic -or hopeless- among us even build castles in the air.

Real or presumed architects that all men are, they are engaged in building the "city of God" and the "city of man." What is reproachable concerning this is not that men are ranged against one another by choosing to build either one "city" or the the other, nor that they try to build the two together, but that they mix up their means in trying to build the "city of God" and/or the "city of man."

In other words, we have nothing but pity for the man who tries attaining a supernatural goal through purely natural means, or strives after a natural ideal by purely supernatural ways. He is like a carpenter who does not seem to know when to use a hammer or a saw.

Although none of us would like to be compared to the bewildered carpenter, yet so many of us are unconsciously behaving as such. There is a need to interrogate ourselves repeatedly: are we not mixing up our tools in our building efforts? In the common effort of nation-building, do we not unnecessarily try to influence others with our pet political ideas by putting on the pontifical robes and dictating our "human" creeds? Or in the common effort at church community-building, don't we rely on "hammer, chisel and saw" more than on prayer and self-abnegation?

**THE GOOD NEWS:** God is a wise builder, and he wants us to follow his lead. To the man who was physically blind, he restores physical sight by employing physical means also (spittle, words, washing); but to give him the light of faith, he did it with the grace of the Holy Spirit and revelation.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, were no wise builders. They intended to build God's kingdom (a noble aim indeed) through intrigue, power, and human traditions. They would not countenance Jesus' different ways and method. They would conquer heaven not through divine favor and mercy but through their own efforts and means. They have set up standards for themselves, and since

they discarded God's they were left to their own devices. They ended up by becoming more blind.

In the first reading, David became king not so much by the anointing of men than that of God who chose him in preference to his elder brothers. David was uncomplicated and successful as king for as long as he tried running his theocratic kingdom through the ways shown out to him by God. But when he allowed his ambitions and passions to guide him then it was that he started running into real troubles.

In the second reading, we are once more reminded not to get mixed up with our instruments. As light dispels darkness and darkness does not co-exist with light, so it is impossible to mix together the Christian and pagan ways of life and outlook.

**OUR RESPONSE:** At one time or another we are thrust into positions of leaders and guides. The Christian vocation is itself a challenge to exercise spiritual leadership and to serve as moral guides. This is a great privilege, but it could turn into a great tragedy — that is when we act as blind guides for those we are trying to guide.

But when are we blind guides? When we refuse the light of Christ. Of course we don't do this as clearly and as impudently as the Pharisees who refused the light of Christ. But we have a way of deceiving ourselves, of persuading ourselves that we can clearly see when the contrary is true. We are adept at getting our tools mixed up. We must be humble enough to plead to Jesus to cure us of the spiritual blindness that stalks our every way.

### FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT (March 16)

**THEME:** Jesus alone can remove all horror from death and of death.

**OUR CONDITION:** Death holds a special horror for modern man. Instinctively he avoids it as one would avoid a snake. Some people feel a clammy chill going up and down their spine when seeing a snake; that's how we feel when we look at death, or rather, when death looks at us.

Strange the ways people react to death. Some think of escaping death by inflicting it upon others; in modern military parlance it is termed pre-emptive attack. Others ignore it, or pretend it does not concern them, until all pretences prove useless: such is

implied in those modern phenomena of body-cult, agelessness cult, youth-cult, health-cult that abound everywhere.

Many also pay lip-service to death as when hearing of plane-crashes, train collisions, earthquake victims, terror-bombings, they heave a passing sigh, or at most, experience a little shudder at the thought that such things could also happen to them.

But the most significant proof of man's instinctive horror to death is his practice of painting dead corpses with cosmetics to simulate life, but all the same must hide them from his view so as not to witness the horrors of ravaging decomposition.

For modern unbelieving man, death is the ultimae evil, the greatest absurdity, the plainest nonsense. No human philosophy, no conquest of technology, no pride of science and progress could take away nor even assuage the shock, helplessness and despair that man feels before the spectre of death.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** But humanity need not despair nor be horrified because of death. This has lost its sting when it tried to involve in its icy hands the Author of life. Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live." Man can now conquer death — through Christ. The man of faith has overcome death once and for all; the resurrection of Lazarus, which the Gospel reading relates today, is the sign and pledge of such victory.

There is an imperiousness in the action of Jesus that shows his utter power over death, brooking no delay nor opposition from this terrorist of mankind. Brushing aside the understandable anxiety of the sister of the deceased, who laid already four days in the tomb, Jesus shouts a command for the dead to come out. And out came Lazarus, alive and fumbling in his nortuary bands. Death, that held undisputed sway over men, at long last met its master and conqueror. To him and to all his followers it must henceforth now in abject obeisance.

Not only has Christ rescued his followers from death's dorrondous chamber but also has freed them from enslavement to sin, which after all is the real culprit. The second reading reminds us that we received from Christ the power to live according to the Spirit, even more, to live with the Spirit who in the last day will raise our dead bodies that he had been inhabiting as his temple.

The first reading serves to reinforce in us this Christian conviction of Jesus' and his followers' victory over death. The new life Ezechiel predicted for the exiles to enjoy upon their return to Israel stands for the promise of resurrection that Jesus gave to those who believed in him.

**MAN'S RESPONSE:** Despite Jesus' assurance of his absolute power over death, we still exhibit behavioral patterns of Martha's nervous objections. She believed in the power of Jesus over death; but could he still do something for one who has been dead for four days? Wouldn't it require an extra effort on his part? And would he succeed? Of course she didn't formulate her hesitations in so many words. But her reactions described how utterly the power of death had made its impression upon the spirit of men that even such solemn statements of Jesus could not shake off right away.

We cling convulsively to ebbing life. We get delirious at the sight of loved ones slowly succumbing to death. How pathetic was the action of a certain father, reported recently by a local newspaper, hugging tightly his dying son in a mistaken belief that by doing so he could prevent death from claiming the boy. He well typifies many of us. Understandably so, because of our attachment to life and to our loved ones. Jesus has come to save our feelings and promised to put an end to our continual sorrows. "If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live."

### PALM SUNDAY (March 23)

**THEME:** The real triumph over suffering is to suffer — for love.

**OUR CONDITION:** One of the paradoxes of our present civilization is in its handling of the question of pain. It tries to escape pain, to abolish it; but in so doing it invites more pain, it intensifies its experience of the same.

Modern man's phobia towards suffering ranges from the tragically comic to the positively disastrous. You only have to keep your eyes and ears open to what goes on around you to be convinced of this. With the proliferation of advertisements for pain-killers, pain-relievers, painless education, painless travel, painless abortion to remove the pain of embarrassment, you would think that the world is on the verge of an era where there will be no more suffering nor sorrow. Thanks to science and technology are we not on the threshold of an Eutopia?

But paradoxically, man's neurasthenic effort to avoid pain gets him into other kinds of suffering, perhaps graver, with or without his knowledge. It is a vicious circle; it is sufficient to lead one into despair. Man takes aspirin to ease a head-ache, but he develops an allergy of the respiratory system. He spares himself the fatigue of walking by means of a chauffeured ride to his office, but he gets prone to heart attacks.

As what happens to individuals so it goes in societies and nations. You tackle the problem of inflation here, but recession rears its ugly head there. You placate one irate country, but you incur the anger of many others. You stimulate your industries but you pollute your environment.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Christ teaches us how to handle the problem of suffering. He does not resort to abstractions but undergoes suffering himself. He makes it clear that to triumph over suffering one does not escape from it but accept patiently the inescapable. He who loses his life will find it.

The Gospel reading affords us an insight into the mystery of suffering. Christianity does not make a fetish out of suffering, as the world falsely accuses it, but makes a calm appraisal of its reality and discovers the redeeming feature in it.

Peter, before the outpouring on him of the Spirit, chided Jesus for taking the road of suffering and was roundly upbraided by the same for thinking after the manner of unredeemed men; but after receiving the Spirit, the apostle held it a privilege to suffer indignities for the sake of Jesus.

These considerations are anathema to the ears of modern man. But this is the only way to free oneself of the vicious circle mentioned above. The second reading lays down no other procedure to acquire liberation from sorrow except through suffering itself. The divine kenosis by Jesus has blazed the trail. It is a prerequisite so that justice and mercy may embrace. Christian asceticism has its foundation on it. The grain must die so that it could live again.

The Suffering Servant of the first reading made no effort to parry the vicious attacks of his enemies. Amazingly, he says he is untouched by those indignities, unaffected by the tortures. Not because he was unfeeling to them or anaesthetized to pain; he meant to say that he didn't buckle under in the face of persecutions. He could meet them with a brave heart and flinty courage because God came to his help.

**OUR RESPONSE:** Penitence and sacrifice have become archaic words to many men today, including Christians. But they are about the few remaining lifesavers that will help us keep afloat in the tempestuous sea that is the world. They are the few sound prescriptions to keep one's sanity in this topsy-turvy universe.

The cross has not always been a palatable medicine: it was a stumbling-block for the Jews and a foolishness for the Greeks. But for those who have believed, it is God's power and wisdom.

We need to rub our eyes from time to time. The cross is not an attractive object to look at; it risks getting lost from our view, what with the kaladeiscope of earthly goods titillating our attention. Christianity without the cross is no Christianity at all. To travel this life without Christ is a giddy travel: it leads nowhere, and certainly not to true happiness.

**EASTER SUNDAY**  
**(March 30)**

**THEME:** Those who are Christ's will also rise with him.

**OUR CONDITION:** It is amazing what man has achieved in these modern times. Let us not begrudge him our admiration and respect. The universe was given to his dominion; he has been exercising this with ever dizzying success and subjugation. Sometimes, however, it appears that the euphoria of dominion and achievement has gotten into his head.

Our generation has witnessed man's conquest of macro- and micro-cosmos. Space is slowly unraveling its secrets to him as his probing machines fly through hitherto uncharted courses. The mysteries of biology are unfolding before him as he doggedly applies his tools of observation and experimentation to questions till now unheard-of and unimagined. It is in this field especially that, whether through malice or not, he has stirred a hornet's nest by indulging in controversial experimentations.

For all his achievements (and pretensions) man has not succeeded in producing one living cell from inorganic matter, much less perform a resurrection. To be sure, there have been attempts to do just that, with the intention perhaps of throwing cold water on the Christian dogma of the resurrection of Christ.

But in general, the modern unbelieving man brushes aside all discussion of resurrection as old wives' tale, in much the same way as the Athenians, though attentive at first, gave Paul the cold shoulder when he started to expound on the risen Christ. Death is a flat reality for modern unredeemed man; the subject of resurrection is beyond his understanding, or rather, beneath his dignity to waste time discussing.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** If resurrection is impossible or unthinkable, then man is still dead in sin. But what is worse, the logical conclusion to make is that this universe is absurd, plain nonsense,

because all its beauty, its promise, its achievements lead only to death, to nothingness. What cold comfort one can derive from such consideration!

Fortunately, it is not so. Resurrection is possible. It has been done! It will be done also for the rest of us. Fortunately also, God has not chosen science-men to witness the fact of resurrection. They would not be able to verify it with their microscope and probing instruments. How often such tools and procedures have prevented these meticulous people from seeing more than there is yet to see!

The first reading mentions the witnesses to the fact of resurrection whom God has chosen beforehand. Their deposition is jealously guarded and lovingly accepted by the Church, which she considers as her most fundamental and essential witness to the truth of Christ's resurrection.

The Gospel reading traces the growth of belief in the Easter dogma by the premier witnesses of the Church: from the empty tomb to the discarded mortuary bands to the visual appearances of the risen Lord. It is a testimony that can stand the test of all captious objections and questionings.

The second reading reminds us that Jesus not only has survived death but exercises also a victorious lordship over everything that is on earth, as a consequence of which his followers will share in his resurrection and glory.

**OUR RESPONSE:** God has placed in man a thirst for immortality and achievement. At the same time he has indicated the ultimate source where man could slake his thirst. The latter has time and again sought elsewhere for this source, heeding more the other voices than that of God's. The result was that his thirst for immortality and fulfilment became more tormenting.

So he feverishly engages in tapping every possible source (except the true one) that could give him permanence and satisfaction in this life. He teaches himself or allows others to teach him strange doctrines, techniques and procedures wherewith he might chance upon the much desired-for fountain of happiness. In the meanwhile, he carefully avoids the Way, the Truth, and the Life because it requires him to reach out from outside himself. He prefers to remain entombed in his familiar grounds and become his own principle and measure.

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In the course he has chosen to set upon, he meets with partial success or flat failure. Immortality and fulfilment elude his frantic grasps. The darkness of his preferred tomb surrounds him, instead, with its despair-producing opacity.

There is only one way out of his predicament. It will shake him in his profoundest being, and will jolt him from his self-induced lethargy of satisfaction in himself. But it will lead him out into the fresh air. This is when he can make himself exclaim with all conviction: "Christ has risen; he is alive. I will live for him as he lives for me!"

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