

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

MARIALIS CULTUS

Paul VI

TO THE BISHOPS OF ASIA

AFP CHAPLAINS

THE CASE FOR AQUINAS

Time Magazine

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF VOCATIONS

THE MYSTERY OF MARY

Regino Cortes, O.P.

APPEAL FROM CAMARINES SUR

BRIEFLY SAID

Mary Modernized

Reporting on *Marialis Cultus*, Pope Paul's exhortation on devotion to Mary, an international news magazine said:

Roman Catholics have always honored Mary as virgin, wife and mother. But last week, Pope Paul VI urged his flock to adopt a more contemporary image of the Madonna — as a “liberating” woman. “Far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others,” the Pope wrote in a 17,000-word exhortation to his brother bishops, Mary was actually “a woman of strength who experienced poverty and suffering, flight and exile.” Still, Pope Paul refrained from endorsing the women's liberation movement. His only advice, in fact, was to recommend a return to family recitation of the rosary.

Newsweek, April 1, 1974, p. 49.

One cannot help but suspect that the writer of such a paragraph underrates or even ridicules the papal document. But even if we put the question of subjective evaluation aside, it is a gross falsification of facts to say that the Pope's “only advice, in fact, was to recommend a return to family recitation of the rosary.”

On the contrary, even just limiting ourselves for the moment to the issue of women's liberation, the Pope takes into account the following changes in the modern world:

“In the home, woman's equality and co-responsibility with man in the running of the family are being **justly** recognized by laws and the evolution of customs.

In the sphere of politics women have in many countries gained a position in public life equal to that of men.

In the social field women are at work in a whole **range** of different employments, getting further away every **day** from the restricted surroundings of the home.

* For the Table of Contents, see the last page of this issue.

In the cultural field new possibilities are opening up for women in scientific research and intellectual activities. (*Marialis Cultus* n. 34, in this issue of the Boletín, p. 322)

The point is that the Pope, far from condemning such situations, exhorts "theologians and those responsible for the local Christian communities and the faithful themselves" to revise devotion to the Mother of the Lord so as to appeal, among others, to the modern woman.

His concrete advice in this regard is that modern devotion should portray Mary as a woman who participated in the decision-making power of God in an "event of world importance" — the Incarnation; as a woman free to make her own choice of state; as a woman who championed the humble and the oppressed without fear of powerful people in privileged positions; as a woman who remained strong in the face of poverty, suffering, flight and exile. (See *Marialis Cultus*, n. 37).

It is quite clear that the Pope is among "those who wish to support, with the Gospel spirit, the liberating energies of man and of society." Only a small-minded person will fail to see that in this text, "man" is not the male sex but the human genus, woman included.

Further on, for more concrete advice, the Pope urges the implementation of the Second Vatican Council's stand against "the exaggeration of content and form which even falsifies doctrine" in marian devotion; against "smallmindedness which obscures the figure and mission of Mary"; against "vain credulity, which substitutes reliance on merely external practices for serious commitment"; against "sterile and ephemeral sentimentality so alien to the spirit of the Gospel that demands persevering and practical action" (*Marialis Cultus* n. 38).

It should be clear, however, that in the exhortation, the Pope's main concern — since he is Pope and not a politician or anthropologist — is not women's liberation but christian renewal. He has taken the trouble to write a 17,000-word exhortation on Mary because "devotion to the Blessed Virgin, subordinated to worship of the divine Saviour, and in connection with it, has a great pastoral effectiveness and constitutes a force for renewing Christian living" (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 57).

It is in this context that we should see the Pope's insistence in recommending the praying of the Rosary: it has "intrinsic effective-

ness for promoting Christian life and apostolic commitment" (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 42).

We note with joy that one of the documents quoted by the Pope is a letter of his predecessor, Pope Pius XII, to the then Archbishop of Manila, Michael J. O'Doherty, on July 31, 1946, (*) on the occasion of the Third Centenary of La Naval de Manila. In this letter, known as *Philippinas Insulas*, the Rosary is called the "compendium of the entire Gospel."

Just like the Gospels, the substance of the Rosary need not be modernized. What needs to be done is to bring out the "clearly Christological orientation" even in the litany-like succession of Hail Mary's (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 46). The Pope has also "felt with greater urgency the need to point out once more the importance of . . . the element of contemplation. Without this the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation is in danger of becoming a mechanical repetition" (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 47). Moreover, it is of paramount importance to distinguish the liturgy's role of "commemorating" the mystery of Christ and the Rosary's role of "contemplating" the same: one should not take the place of the other.

Pope Paul VI's apostolic exhortation is a well balanced work which is both respectful of wholesome tradition and open to the legitimate requests of the people of our time. He clearly sets forth the values of marian devotion in the revised liturgy and in such solid extra-liturgical exercises of piety as the Angelus and the Rosary. Yet he does not hesitate to exhort his flock that for the sake of the Christian renewal of the modern world, marian devotees should not hesitate to let Mary go modern.

IN THIS ISSUE

Marialis Cultus, the papal exhortation on devotion to Mary, takes pride of place — and most of our space — in this two-in-one issue of the Boletín. Hopefully, the subtitles we introduced in the text will facilitate its reading. Moreover, we added a long list of

* Published in the Boletín Eclesiástico, Vol. XX, 1946, pp. 315-318 (Latin); 319-322 (English)

study questions which can also serve as a guide to the contents of the document. Questions suitable for group discussions are clearly indicated.

From Mary we turn to Thomas Aquinas, whose relevance to modern thought is the topic of Pope Paul's address to the International Congress celebrated in honor of the 7th centenary of the great theologian's death. We also feature *The Case for Aquinas*, taken from *Time* magazine.

For young people and the not-so-young involved in their formation we offer some paragraphs taken from a papal homily. Then we want our readers to know what thoughts the Pope shared with Asian Bishops gathered recently in Taipei.

Collated news items on the topic of *Vocations* may serve as jumping board for a reflection which, we hope, will be fruitful not only for those directly involved in priestly and religious recruitment, but for all who wish to sustain the grace of their own vocation.

Our Bible Study series brings us to the Covenant at Mt. Sinai, constitution of the People of God. Selected events and thoughts that forge the history of this people today, are spotlighted in our Here and There section, which is now enhanced with a collection of *breviter dicta*.

We have received encouragement from our readers. We are grateful and reciprocate by trying our best to make the present issue, like the previous ones, helpful in our common task of pastoral renewal.

APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION

Marialis Cultus

OF HIS HOLINESS PAUL VI

TO ALL BISHOPS
IN PEACE AND COMMUNION
WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE

FOR THE RIGHT ORDERING
AND
DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTION
TO THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

INTRODUCTION*

DIVISION OF THE TREATISE OCCASION AND PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

VENERABLE BROTHERS: HEALTH AND THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING

From the moment when we were called to the See of Peter, we have constantly striven to enhance devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, not only with the intention of interpreting the sentiments of the Church and our own personal inclination but also because, as is well known, this devotion forms a very noble part of the whole sphere of that sacred worship in which there intermingle the highest expressions of wisdom and of religion¹ and which is therefore the primary task of the People of God.

Improvement of Divine Worship

Precisely with a view to this task we have always favoured and encouraged the great work of liturgical reform promoted by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and it has certainly come about not without a particular design of divine Providence that the first conciliar document which together with the venerable Fathers we approved and signed in *Spiritu Sancto* was the Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The purpose of this document was precisely to restore and enhance the liturgy and to make more fruitful the participation of the faithful in the sacred mysteries². From that time onwards, many acts of our Pontificate have been directed towards the improvement of divine worship, as is demonstrated by the fact that we have promulgated in these recent years numerous books of the Roman Rite, restored according to the principles and norms of the same Council. For this we profoundly thank the Lord, the giver of

* Subtitles in italics and study questions at the end, have been supplied by the Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas.

¹ Cf. Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones* IV, 3, 6-10: CSEL 19, p. 279.

² Cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 1-3, 11, 21, 48: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 97-98, 102-103, 105-106, 113.

all good things, and we are grateful to the episcopal conferences and individual bishops who in various ways have collaborated with us in the preparation of these books.

We contemplate with joy and gratitude the work so far accomplished and the first positive results of the liturgical renewal, destined as they are to increase as this renewal comes to be understood in its basic purposes and correctly applied. At the same time we do not cease with vigilant solicitude to concern ourself with whatever can give orderly fulfilment to the renewal of the worship with which the Church in spirit and truth (cf. Jn 4:24) adores the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, "venerates with special love Mary the most holy Mother of God"³ and honours with religious devotion the memory of the martyrs and the other saints.

An Indication of Genuine Piety

The development, desired by us, of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is an indication of the Church's genuine piety. This devotion fits—as we have indicated above—into the only worship that is rightly called "Christian", because it takes its origin and effectiveness from Christ, finds its complete expression in Christ, and leads through Christ in the Spirit to the Father. In the sphere of worship this devotion necessarily reflects God's redemptive plan, in which a special form of veneration is appropriate to the singular place which Mary occupies in that plan⁴. Indeed every authentic development of Christian worship is necessarily followed by a fitting increase of veneration for the Mother of the Lord. Moreover, the history of piety shows how "the various forms of devotion towards the Mother of God that the Church has approved within the limits of wholesome and orthodox doctrine"⁵ have developed in harmonious subordination to the worship of Christ, and have gravitated towards this worship as to their natural and necessary point of reference. The same is happening in our own time. The Church's reflection today on the mystery of Christ and on her own nature has led her to find at the root of the former and as a culmination of the latter the same figure of a Woman: the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ and the Mother of the Church. And the increased knowledge of Mary's mission has become joyful veneration of her and adoring respect for the wise plan

³ II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 103: AAS 56 (1964), p. 125.

⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 66: AAS 57 (1965), p. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*

of God, who has placed within his Family (the Church), as in every home, the figure of a Woman, who in a hidden manner and in a spirit of service watches over that Family "and carefully looks after it until the glorious day of the Lord"⁶.

Modern Contribution

In our time, the changes that have occurred in social behaviour, people's sensibilities, manners of expression in art and letters and in the forms of social communication have also influenced the manifestations of religious sentiment. Certain practices of piety that not long ago seemed suitable for expressing the religious sentiment of individuals and of Christian communities seem today inadequate or unsuitable because they are linked with social and cultural patterns of the past. On the other hand, in many places people are seeking new ways of expressing the unchangeable relationship of creatures with their Creator, of children with their Father. In some people this may cause temporary confusion. But anyone who with trust in God reflects upon these phenomena discovers that many tendencies of modern piety (for example, the interiorization of religious sentiment) are meant to play their part in the development of Christian piety in general and devotion to the Blessed Virgin in particular. Thus our own time, faithfully attentive to tradition and to the progress of theology and the sciences, will make its contribution of praise to her whom, according to her own prophetic words, all generations will call blessed (cf. Lk 1:48).

Themes

We therefore judge it in keeping with our apostolic service, venerable Brothers, to deal, in a sort of dialogue, with a number of themes connected with the place that the Blessed Virgin occupies in the Church's worship. These themes have already been partly touched upon by the Second Vatican Council⁷ and also by ourselves,⁸ but it is useful to return to them in order to remove doubts and, especially, to help the development of that devotion to the Blessed Virgin which in the Church is motivated by the Word of God and practised in the Spirit of Christ.

⁶ Votive Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, Preface.

⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 66-67: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 65-66; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 103: AAS 56 (1964), p. 125.

⁸ Apostolic Exhortation, *Signum Magnum*: AAS 59 (1967), pp. 465-475.

We therefore wish to dwell upon a number of questions concerning the relationship between the sacred liturgy and devotion to the Blessed Virgin (I), to offer considerations and directives suitable for favouring the development of that devotion (II) and finally to put forward a number of reflections intended to encourage the restoration, in a dynamic and more informed manner, of the recitation of the Rosary, the practice of which was so strongly recommended by our predecessors and is so widely diffused among the Christian people (III).

Part One

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE LITURGY

1. As we prepare to discuss the place which the Blessed Virgin Mary occupies in Christian worship, we must first turn our attention to the sacred liturgy. In addition to its rich doctrinal content, the liturgy has an incomparable pastoral effectiveness and a recognized exemplary value for the other forms of worship. We would have liked to take into consideration the various liturgies of the East and the West, but for the purpose of this document we shall dwell almost exclusively on the books of the Roman Rite. In fact, in accordance with the practical norms issued by the Second Vatican Council,⁹ it is this Rite alone which has been the object of profound renewal. This is true also in regard to expressions of veneration for Mary. This Rite therefore deserves to be carefully considered and evaluated.

Section I

The Blessed Virgin in the Revised Roman Liturgy

2. The reform of the Roman liturgy presupposed a careful restoration of its **General Calendar**. This Calendar is arranged in such a way as to give fitting prominence to the celebration on appropriate days of the work of salvation. It distributes throughout the year the whole mystery of Christ, from the Incarnation to the expectation of his return in glory,¹⁰ and thus makes it possible in a more organic and closely-knit fashion to include the commemoration of Christ's Mother in the annual cycle of the mysteries of her Son.

⁹ Cf. II Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 3: AAS 56 (1954), p. 125.

¹⁰ Cf. II Vatican Council *ibid.*, 102: AAS 56 (1954), p. 125.

During Advent

3. For example, during Advent there are many liturgical references to Mary besides the Solemnity of 8 December, which is a joint celebration of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, of the basic preparation (cf. Is 11: 1, 10) for the coming of the Saviour and of the happy beginning of the Church without spot or wrinkle¹¹. Such liturgical references are found especially on the days from 17 to 24 December, and more particularly on the Sunday before Christmas, which recalls the ancient prophecies concerning the Virgin Mother and the Messiah¹² and includes readings from the Gospel concerning the imminent birth of Christ and his Precursor¹³.

4. In this way the faithful, living in the liturgy the spirit of Advent, by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mother awaited her Son,¹⁴ are invited to take her as a model and to prepare themselves to meet the Saviour who is to come. They must be "vigilant in prayer and joyful in . . . praise"¹⁵. We would also remark that the Advent liturgy, by linking the awaiting of the Messiah and the admirable commemoration of his Mother, presents a happy balance in worship. This balance can be taken as a norm for preventing any tendency (as has happened at times in certain forms of popular piety) to separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference—Christ. It also ensures that this season, as liturgy experts have noted, should be considered as a time particularly suited to devotion to the Mother of the Lord. This is an orientation that we confirm and which we hope to see accepted and followed everywhere.

¹¹ Cf. Roman Missal restored by Decree of the Sacred Ecumenical II Vatican Council, promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI typical edition, MCMLXX, 8 December, Preface.

¹² Roman Missal, restored by Decree of the Sacred Ecumenical II Vatican Council promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI. *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, typical edition MCMLXIX. p. 8, First Reading (Year A: Is. 7:10-14: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive"; Year B: 2 Sam. 7:1-15; 8b-11, 16: "The throne of David shall be established for ever before the face of the Lord"; Year C: Mic. 5:2-5a [Heb. 1-4a]: "Out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel").

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 8, Gospel (Year A: Mt. 1:18-24: "Jesus is born of Mary who was espoused to Joseph, the son of David"; Year B: Lk. 1:26-38: "You are to conceive and bear a son"; Year C: Lk. 1:39-45: "Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother of my Lord?").

¹⁴ Cf. Roman Missal, Advent Preface, II.

¹⁵ Roman Missal, *ibid.*

Christmas Season

5. The Christmas Season is a prolonged commemoration of the divine, virginal and salvific Motherhood of her whose "inviolate virginity brought the Saviour into the world"¹⁶. In fact, on the Solemnity of the Birth of Christ the Church both adores the Saviour and venerates his glorious Mother. On the Epiphany, when she celebrates the universal call to salvation, the Church contemplates the Blessed Virgin, the true Seat of Wisdom and true Mother of the King, who presents to the Wise Men for their adoration the Redeemer of all peoples (cf. Mt 2:11). On the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (the Sunday within the octave of Christmas) the Church meditates with profound reverence upon the holy life led in the house at Nazareth by Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, Mary his Mother, and Joseph the just man (cf. Mt 1:19).

In the revised ordering of the Christmas period it seems to us that the attention of all should be directed towards the restored Solemnity of Mary the Holy Mother of God. This celebration, placed on 1 January in conformity with the ancient indication of the liturgy of the City of Rome, is meant to commemorate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation. It is meant also to exalt the singular dignity which this mystery brings to the "holy Mother... through whom we were found worthy to receive the Author of Life"¹⁷. It is likewise a fitting occasion for renewing adoration to the newborn Prince of Peace, for listening once more to the glad tidings of the angels (cf. Lk 2:14), and for imploring from God, through the Queen of Peace, the supreme gift of peace. It is for this reason that, in the happy concurrence of the Octave of Christmas and the first day of the year, we have instituted the World Day of Peace, an occasion that is gaining increasing support and already bringing forth fruits of peace in the hearts of many.

March 25 and August 15

6. To the two Solemnities already mentioned (the Immaculate Conception and the Divine Motherhood) should be added the ancient and venerable celebrations of 25 March and 15 August.

For the solemnity of the Incarnation of the Word in the Roman Calendar the ancient title—the Annunciation of the Lord—has been

¹⁶ Roman Missal, Eucharistic Prayer I, *Communicantes* for Christmas and its octave.

¹⁷ Roman Missal, 1 January, Entry antiphon and Collect.

deliberately restored, but the feast was and is a joint one of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin: of the Word, who becomes "Son of Mary" (Mk 6:3), and of the Virgin, who becomes Mother of God. With regard to Christ, the East and the West, in the inexhaustible riches of their liturgies, celebrate this Solemnity as the commemoration of the salvific 'fiat' of the Incarnate Word, who, entering the world, said: "God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will" (cf. Heb 10:7; Ps 39:8-9). They commemorate it as the beginning of the redemption and of the indissoluble and wedded union of the divine nature with human nature in the one Person of the Word. With regard to Mary, these liturgies celebrate it as a feast of the new Eve, the obedient and faithful virgin, who with her generous 'fiat' (cf. LK 1:38) became through the working of the Spirit the Mother of God, but also the true Mother of the living, and, by receiving into her womb the one Mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:5), became the true Ark of the Covenant and true Temple of God. These liturgies celebrate it as a culminating moment in the salvific dialogue between God and man, and as a commemoration of the Blessed Virgin's free consent and cooperation in the plan of redemption.

The Solemnity of 15 August celebrates the glorious Assumption of Mary into heaven. It is a feast of her destiny of fullness and blessedness, of the glorification of her immaculate soul and of her virginal body, of her perfect configuration to the Risen Christ; a feast that sets before the eyes of the Church and of all mankind the image and the consoling proof of the fulfilment of their final hope, namely, that this full glorification is the destiny of all those whom Christ has made his brothers, having "flesh and blood in common with them" (Heb 2:14; cf. Gal 4:4). The Solemnity of the Assumption is prolonged in the celebration of the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which occurs seven days later. On this occasion we contemplate her who, seated beside the King of Ages, shines forth as Queen and intercedes as Mother¹⁸. These four Solemnities, therefore, mark with the highest liturgical rank the main dogmatic truths concerning the Handmaid of the Lord.

Other Feasts

7. After the Solemnities just mentioned particular consideration must be given to those celebrations that commemorate salvific events in which the Blessed Virgin was closely associated with her Son.

¹⁸ Cf. Roman Missal, 22 August, Collect.

Such are the feasts of the Nativity of Our Lady (8 September), "the hope of the entire world and the dawn of salvation",¹⁹ and the Visitation (31 May), in which the liturgy recalls the "Blessed Virgin Mary carrying her Son within her",²⁰ and visiting Elizabeth to offer charitable assistance and to proclaim the mercy of God the Saviour²¹. Then there is the commemoration of Our Lady of Sorrows (15 September), a fitting occasion for re-living a decisive moment in the history of salvation and for venerating, together with the Son "lifted up on the Cross, his suffering Mother"²².

The Feast of 2 February, which has been given back its ancient name, the Presentation of the Lord, should also be considered as a joint commemoration of the Son and of the Mother, if we are fully to appreciate its rich content. It is the celebration of a mystery with which the Blessed Virgin was intimately associated as the Mother of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh, as the one who performs a mission belonging to ancient Israel, and as the model for the new People of God, which is ever being tested in its faith and hope by suffering and persecution (cf. Lk 2:21-35).

Popular Feasts

8. The restored Roman Calendar gives particular prominence to the celebrations listed above, but it also includes other kinds of commemorations connected with local devotions and which have acquired a wider popularity and interest (e.g. 11 February, Our Lady of Lourdes; 5 August, the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint Mary Major). Then there are others, originally celebrated by particular religious families but which today, by reason of the popularity they have gained, can truly be considered ecclesial (e.g. 16 July, Our Lady of Mount Carmel; 7 October, Our Lady of the Rosary). There are still others which, apart from their apocryphal content, present lofty and exemplary values and carry on venerable traditions having their origin especially in the East (e.g. the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin, celebrated on the Saturday following the second Sunday after Pentecost).

Local Feasts. Saturday Mass

9. Nor must one forget that the General Roman Calendar does not include all celebrations in honour of the Blessed Virgin. Rather,

¹⁹ Roman Missal, 8 September, Prayer after Communion.

²⁰ Roman Missal, 31 May, Collect.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, Collect and Prayer over the gifts.

²² Cf. Roman Missal, 15 September, Collect.

it is for individual Calendars to include, with fidelity to liturgical norms but with sincere endorsement, the Marian feasts proper to the different local churches. Lastly, it should be noted that frequent commemorations of the Blessed Virgin are possible through the use of the Saturday Masses of Our Lady. This is an ancient and simple commemoration and one that is made very adaptable and varied by the flexibility of the modern Calendar and the number of formulas provided by the Missal.

Marian Aspects and Themes of the Missal

10. In this Apostolic Exhortation we do not intend to examine the whole content of the new Roman Missal. But by reason of the work of evaluation that we have undertaken to carry out in regard to the revised books of the Roman Rite,²³ we would like to mention some of the aspects and themes of the Missal. In the first place, we are pleased to note how the Eucharistic Prayers of the Missal, in admirable harmony with the Eastern liturgies,²⁴ contain a significant commemoration of the Blessed Virgin. For example, the ancient Roman Canon, which commemorates the Mother of the Lord in terms full of doctrine and devotional inspiration: "In union with the whole Church we honour Mary, the ever-Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ our Lord and God". In a similar way the recent Eucharistic Prayer III expresses with intense supplication the desire of those praying to share with the Mother the inheritance of sons: "May he make us an everlasting gift to you (the Father) and enable us to share in the inheritance of your saints, with Mary, the Virgin Mother of God". This daily commemoration, by reason of its place at the heart of the divine Sacrifice, should be considered a particularly expressive form of the veneration that the Church pays to the "Blessed of the Most High" (cf. Lk 1:28).

11. As we examine the texts of the revised Missal we see how the great Marian themes of the Roman prayerbook have been accepted in perfect doctrinal continuity with the past. Thus for example we have the themes of Mary's Immaculate Conception and fullness of grace, the divine Motherhood, the unblemished and fruitful Virginity, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, Mary's cooperation in the

²³ Cf. 1, p. 15.

²⁴ From the many anaphoras cf. the following which are held in special honour by the Eastern rites: *Anaphora Marci Evangelistae: Prex Eucharistica*, ed. A. Hanggi-I. Phal. Fribourg, Editions Universitaires, 1968, p. 107; *Anaphora Iacobi fratris Domini graeca*, *ibid.*, p. 257; *Anaphora Ioannis Chrysostomi*, *ibid.*, p. 229.

work of her Son, her exemplary sanctity, merciful intercession, Assumption into heaven, maternal Queenship and many other themes. We also see how other themes, in a certain sense new ones, have been introduced in equally perfect harmony with the theological developments of the present day. Thus for example we have the theme of Mary and the Church, which has been inserted into the texts of the Missal in a variety of aspects, a variety that matches the many and varied relations that exist between the Mother of Christ and the Church. For example, in the celebration of the Immaculate Conception such texts recognize the beginning of the Church, the spotless Bride of Christ²⁵. In the Assumption they recognize the beginning that has already been made and the image of what, for the whole Church, must still come to pass²⁶. In the mystery of Mary's Motherhood they confess that she is the Mother of the Head and of the Members—the holy Mother of God and therefore the provident Mother of the Church²⁷.

When the liturgy turns its gaze either to the primitive Church or to the Church of our own days it always finds Mary. In the primitive Church she is seen praying with the Apostles;²⁸ in our own day she is actively present, and the Church desires to live the mystery of Christ with her: "Grant that your Church which with Mary shared Christ's Passion may be worthy to share also in his Resurrection"²⁹. She is also seen represented as a voice of praise in unison with which the Church wishes to give glory to God: "...with her (Mary) may we always praise you"³⁰. And since the liturgy is worship that requires a way of living consistent with it, it asks that devotion to the Blessed Virgin should become a concrete and deeply-felt love for the Church, as is wonderfully expressed in the prayer after Communion in the Mass of 15 September: "...that as we recall the sufferings shared by the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may with the Church fulfill in ourselves what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ".

²⁵ Cf. Missal, 8 December, Preface.

²⁶ Cf. Roman Missal, 15 August, Preface.

²⁷ Cf. Roman Missal, 1 January, Prayer after Communion.

²⁸ Cf. Roman Missal, Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 6, Paschaltide, Collect.

²⁹ Roman Missal, 15 September, Collect.

³⁰ Roman Missal, 31 May. Collect. On the same lines is the Preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary II: We do well . . . in celebrating the memory of the Virgin Mary . . . to glorify your love for us in the words of her song of thanksgiving."

Mary in the Lectionary

12. The Lectionary is one of the books of the Roman Rite that has greatly benefited from the postconciliar reform, by reason both of its added texts and of the intrinsic value of these texts, which contain the ever living and efficacious Word of God (cf. Heb 4:12). The rich collection of biblical texts has made it possible to arrange the whole history of salvation in an orderly three-year cycle and to set forth more completely the mystery of Christ. The logical consequence has been that the Lectionary contains a larger number of Old and New Testament readings concerning the Blessed Virgin. This numerical increase has not however been based on random choice: only those readings have been accepted which in different ways and degrees can be considered Marian, either from the evidence of their content or from the results of careful exegesis, supported by the teachings of the Magisterium or by solid tradition. It is also right to observe that these readings occur not only on feasts of the Blessed Virgin but are read on many other occasions, for example on certain Sundays during the liturgical year,³¹ in the celebration of rites that deeply concern the Christian's sacramental life and the choices confronting him,³² as also in the joyful or sad experiences of his life on earth³³.

Mary in the Liturgy of the Hours

13. The Liturgy of the Hours, the revised book of the Office, also contains outstanding examples of devotion to the Mother of the Lord. These are to be found in the hymns—which include several masterpieces of universal literature, such as Dante's sublime prayer to the Blessed Virgin,³⁴—and in the antiphons that complete

³¹ Cf. Lectionary, III Sunday of Advent (Year C: Zeph 3:14-18a); IV Sunday of Advent (cf. above footnote 12); Sunday within the octave of Christmas (Year A; Mt. 2:13-15; 19-23; Year B; Lk. 2:22-40; Year C: Lk. 2:41-52); II Sunday after Christmas (Jn. 1:1-18); VII Sunday after Easter Vigil (Gospel, 7, Jn. 1:1-5; 9-14; 16-18); Nuptial Mass (Gospel, 7, Sunday of the Year (Year B: Gen. 3:9-15); XIV Sunday of the Year (Year B: Mk. 6:1-6).

³² Cf. Lectionary, the catechumenate and baptism of adults: the Lord's Prayer (Second Reading, 2 Gal. 4:4-7); Christian initiation outside the Easter Vigil (Gospel, 7, Jn. 1:1-5; 9-14; 16-18); Nuptial Mass (Gospel, 7, Jn. 2:1-11); Consecration of Virgins and religious profession (First Reading 7, Is. 61:9-11; Gospel, 6, Mk. 3:31-35; Lk. 1:26-38 [cf. *Ordo Consecrationis Virginum*, 130; *Ordo professionis religiosae*, Pars altera, 145]).

³³ Cf. Lectionary, For refugees and exiles (Gospel, 1, Mt. 2:13-15; 19-23); In thanksgiving (First Reading, 4, Zeph 3:14-15).

³⁴ Cf. *La Divina Commedia*, Paradiso XXXIII, 1-9, cf. Liturgy of the Hours, remembrance of Our Lady on Saturdays, Office of Reading, Hymn.

the daily Office. To these lyrical invocations there has been added the well-known prayer *Sub tuum praesidium*, venerable for its antiquity and admirable for its content. Other examples occur in the prayers of intercession at Lauds and Vespers, prayers which frequently express trusting recourse to the Mother of mercy. Finally there are selections from the vast treasury of writings on Our Lady composed by authors of the first Christian centuries, of the Middle Ages and of modern times.

Mary in the Other Liturgical Books

14. The commemoration of the Blessed Virgin occurs often in the Missal, the Lectionary and the Liturgy of the Hours—the hinges of the liturgical prayer of the Roman Rite. In the other revised liturgical books also expressions of love and suppliant veneration addressed to the Theotokos are not lacking. Thus the Church invokes her, the Mother of grace, before immersing candidates in the saving waters of baptism³⁵; the Church invokes her intercession for mothers who, full of gratitude for the gift of motherhood, come to church to express their joy³⁶ the Church holds her up as a model to those who follow Christ by embracing the religious life³⁷ or who receive the Consecration of Virgins³⁸. For these people the Church asks Mary's motherly assistance³⁹. The Church prays fervently to Mary on behalf of her children who have come to the hour of their death⁴⁰. The Church asks Mary's intercession for those who have closed their eyes to the light of this world and appeared before Christ, the eternal Light⁴¹; and the Church, through Mary's prayers, invokes comfort upon those who in sorrow mourn with faith the departure of their loved ones⁴².

Comforting Observation

15. The examination of the revised liturgical books leads us to the comforting observation that the postconciliar renewal has, as was

³⁵ *Ordo baptismi parvulorum*, 48; *Ordo initiationis christiana adultorum*, 214.

³⁶ Cf. *Rituale Romanum*, Tit. VII, cap. III, *De benedictione mulieris post partum*.

³⁷ Cf. *Ordo professionis religiosae*, Pars Prior, 57 and 67.

³⁸ Cf. *Ordo consecrationis virginum*, 16.

³⁹ Cf. *Ordo professionis religiosae*, Pars Prior 62 and 142; Pars Altera, 67 and 158; *Ordo consecrationis virginum*, 18 and 20.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Ordo unctionis infirmarum eorumque pastoralis curae*, 143, 146, 147, 150.

⁴¹ Cf. Roman Missal, Masses for the Dead, For dead brothers and sisters, relations and benefactors. Collect.

⁴² Cf. *Ordo exsequiarum*, 226.

previously desired by the liturgical movement, properly considered the Blessed Virgin in the mystery of Christ, and, in harmony with tradition, has recognized the singular place that belongs to her in Christian worship as the holy Mother of God and the worthy Associate of the Redeemer.

It could not have been otherwise. If one studies the history of Christian worship, in fact, one notes that both in the East and in the West the highest and purest expressions of devotion to the Blessed Virgin have sprung from the liturgy or have been incorporated into it.

We wish to emphasize the fact that the veneration which the universal Church today accords to blessed Mary is a derivation from and an extension and unceasing increase of the devotion that the Church of every age has paid to her, with careful attention to truth and with an ever watchful nobility of expression. From perennial tradition kept alive by reason of the uninterrupted presence of the Spirit and continual attention to the Word, the Church of our time draws motives, arguments and incentives for the veneration that she pays to the Blessed Virgin. And the liturgy, which receives approval and strength from the Magisterium, is a most lofty expression and an evident proof of this living tradition.

Section II

The Blessed Virgin as the Model of the Church in Divine Worship

16. In accordance with some of the guidelines of the Council's teaching on Mary and the Church, we now wish to examine more closely a particular aspect of the relationship between Mary and the liturgy, namely, Mary as a model of the spiritual attitude with which the Church celebrates and lives the divine mysteries. That the Blessed Virgin is an exemplar in this field derives from the fact that she is recognized as a most excellent exemplar of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ⁴³, that is, of that interior disposition with which the Church, the beloved spouse, closely associated with her Lord, invokes Christ and through him worships the eternal Father.⁴⁴

⁴³ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 63: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

⁴⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 7: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 100:101.

Attentive Virgin

17. Mary is the **attentive Virgin**, who receives the word of God with faith, that faith which in her case was the gateway and path to divine Motherhood, for, as Saint Augustine realized, "Blessed Mary by believing conceived him (Jesus) whom believing she brought forth"⁴⁵. In fact, when she received from the angel the answer to her doubt (cf. Lk 1:34-37), "full of faith, and conceiving Christ in her mind before conceiving him in her womb, she said, 'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me' (Lk 1:38)"⁴⁶. It was faith that was for her the cause of blessedness and certainty in the fulfillment of the promise: "Blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled (Lk 1:45). Similarly, it was faith with which she, who played a part in the Incarnation and was a unique witness to it, thinking back on the events of the infancy of Christ, meditated upon these events in her heart (cf. Lk 2:19, 51). The Church also acts in this way, especially in the liturgy, when with faith she listens, accepts, proclaims and venerates the word of God, distributes it to the faithful as the bread of life⁴⁷ and in the light of that word examines the signs of the times and interprets and lives the events of history.

Virgin in Prayer

18. Mary is also the **Virgin in prayer**. She appears as such in the visit to the Mother of the Precursor, when she pours out her soul in expressions glorifying God, and expressions of humility, faith and hope. This prayer is the Magnificat (cf. Lk 1:46-55), Mary's prayer par excellence, the song of the messianic times in which there mingles the joy of the ancient and the new Israel. As Saint Irenaeus seems to suggest, it is in Mary's canticle that there was heard once more the rejoicing of Abraham who foresaw the Messiah (cf. Jn 8:56)⁴⁸ and there rang out in prophetic anticipation the voice of the Church: "In her exultation Mary prophetically declared in the name of the Church: 'My soul proclaims the glory of the Lord ...'"⁴⁹. And in fact Mary's hymn has spread far and wide and has become the prayer of the whole Church in all ages.

⁴⁵ *Sermo* 215, 4: PL 38, 1074.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, 21: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 827-828.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Adversus Haereses* IV, 7, 1: PG 7, 1, 990-991; S Ch. 100, t. II, pp. 454-458.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Adversus Haereses* III, 10, 2: PG 7, 1, 873; S. Ch. 34, p. 164.

At Cana, Mary appears once more as the Virgin in prayer: when she tactfully told her Son of a temporal need, she also obtained an effect of grace, namely, that Jesus, in working the first of his "signs", confirmed his disciples' faith in him (cf. Jn 2:1-12).

Likewise, the last description of Mary's life presents her as praying. The Apostles "joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14). We have here the prayerful presence of Mary in the early Church and in the Church throughout all ages, for, having been assumed into heaven, she has not abandoned her mission of intercession and salvation⁵⁰. The title Virgin in prayer also fits the Church, which day by day presents to the Father the needs of her children, praises the Lord unceasingly and intercedes for the salvation of the world"⁵¹.

Virgin-Mother

19. Mary is also the **Virgin-Mother** — she who "believing and obeying . . . brought forth on earth the Father's Son. This she did, not knowing man but overshadowed by the Holy Spirit"⁵². This was a miraculous Motherhood, set up by God as the type and exemplar of the fruitfulness of the Virgin-Church, which "becomes herself a mother . . . For by her preaching and by baptism she brings forth to a new and immortal life children who are conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of God"⁵³. The ancient Fathers rightly taught that the Church prolongs in the sacrament of Baptism the virginal Motherhood of Mary. Among such references we like to recall that of our illustrious predecessor, Saint Leo the Great, who in a Christmas homily says: "The origin which (Christ) took in the womb of the Virgin he has given to the baptismal font: he has given to water what he had given to his Mother; the power of the Most High and the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1:55), which was responsible for Mary's bringing forth the Saviour, has the same effect, so that water may regenerate the believer"⁵⁴. If we wished to go to

⁵⁰ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, **Lumen Gentium**, 62: AAS 57 (1965), p. 63.

⁵¹ II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, **Sacrosanctum Concilium**, 83: AAS 56 (1964), p. 121.

⁵² II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, **Lumen Gentium**, 63: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 64: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

⁵⁴ **Tractatus XXV (In Nativitate Domini)**, 5: CCL 138, p. 123; **S. Ch.** 22 bis., p. 132; cf. also **Tractatus XXIX (In Nativitate Domini)** 1: CCL *ibid.*, p. 147; **S. Ch. ibid.**, p. 178; **Tractatus LXIII (De Passione Domini)** 6: CCL *ibid.*, p. 386; **S. Ch.** 74, p. 82.

liturgical sources, we could quote the beautiful *Illatio* of the Mozarabic liturgy: "The former (Mary) carried Life in her womb; the latter (the Church) bears Life in the waters of baptism. In Mary's members Christ was formed; in the waters of the Church Christ is put on"⁵⁵.

Virgin Presenting Offerings

20. Mary is, finally, the *Virgin presenting offerings*. In the episode of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (cf. Lk 2:22-35), the Church, guided by the Spirit, has detected, over and above the fulfilment of the laws regarding the offering of the firstborn (cf. 13:11-16) and the purification of the Mother (cf. Lev 12: 6-8), a mystery of salvation related to the history of salvation. That is, she has noted the continuity of the fundamental offering that the Incarnate Word made to the Father when he entered the world (cf. Heb 15:5-7). The Church has seen the universal nature of salvation proclaimed for Simeon, greeting in the Child the light to enlighten the peoples and the glory of the people Israel (cf. Lk 2:32), recognized in him the Messiah, the Saviour of all. The Church has understood the prophetic reference to the Passion of Christ: the fact that Simeon's words, which linked in one prophecy the Son as "the sign of contradiction" (Lk 2:34) and the Mother, whose soul would be pierced by a sword (cf. Lk 2:35), came true on Calvary. A mystery of salvation, therefore, that in its various aspects orients the episode of the Presentation in the Temple to the salvific event of the Cross. But the Church herself, in particular from the Middle Ages onwards, has detected in the heart of the Virgin taking her Son to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (cf. Lk 2:22) a desire to make an offering, a desire that exceeds the ordinary meaning of the rite. A witness to this intuition is found in the loving prayer of Saint Bernard: "Offer your Son, holy Virgin, and present to the Lord the blessed fruit of your womb. Offer for the reconciliation of us all the holy Victim which is pleasing to God"⁵⁶.

This union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption⁵⁷ reaches its climax on Calvary, where Christ "offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God" (Heb 9:14) and where Mary stood by the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25), "suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself with a maternal heart to his sacrifice,

⁵⁵ M. Ferotin, *Le "Liber Mozarabicus Sacramentorum,"* col. 56.

⁵⁶ *In Purificatione B. Mariae, Sermo III, 2: PL 183, 370; Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq-H. Rochais, vol. IV, Rome 1966, p. 342.

⁵⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 57: AAS 57 (1965), p. 61.

and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth"⁵⁸ and also was offering to the Eternal Father⁵⁹. To perpetuate down the centuries the Sacrifice, the Cross, the divine Saviour instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and entrusted it to his Spouse the Church⁶⁰, which, especially on Sundays, calls the faithful together to celebrate the Passover of the Lord until he comes again⁶¹. This the Church does in union with the saints in heaven and in particular with the Blessed Virgin⁶², whose burning charity and unshakeable faith she imitates.

Mary, Example and Teacher for Individual Christians

21. Mary is not only an example for the whole Church in the exercise of divine worship but is also, clearly, a teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians. The faithful at a very early date began to look to Mary and to imitate her in making their worship a commitment of their lives. As early as the fourth century, Saint Ambrose, speaking to the people, expressed the hope that each of them would have the spirit of Mary in order to glorify God: "May the heart of Mary be in each Christian to proclaim the greatness of the Lord; may her spirit be in everyone to exult in God"⁶³. But Mary is above all the example of that worship that consists in making one's life an offering to God. This is an ancient and ever new doctrine that each individual can hear again by heeding the Church's teaching, but also by heeding the very voice of the Virgin as she, anticipating in herself the wonderful petition of the Lord's Prayer — "Your will be done (Mt 6:10) — replied to God's messenger: "I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me" (Lk 1:38). And Mary's "yes" is for all Christians a lesson and example of obedience to the will of the Father, which is the way and means of one's own sanctification.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 58: AAS 57 (1965), p. 61.

⁵⁹ Cf. Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis*: AAS 35 (1943), p. 247.

⁶⁰ Cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 47: AAS 56 (1964) p. 113.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 102, 106: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 125, 126.

⁶² "... deign to remember all who have been pleasing to you throughout the ages the holy Fathers, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles . . . and the holy and glorious Mother of God and all the saints . . . may they remember our misery and poverty, and together with us may they offer you this great and unbloody sacrifice": *Anaphora Iacobi fratris Domini syriaca*: *Præx Eucharistica*, ed. A. Hänggi-I. Pahl, Fribourg, *Editions Universitaires*, 1968, p. 274.

⁶³ *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, 11 26: CSEL 32, IV, p. 55; S. Ch. 45, pp. 83-84.

Attitudes of Devotion

22. It is also important to note how the Church expresses in various effective attitudes of devotion the many relationships that bind her to Mary: in profound veneration, when she reflects on the singular dignity of the Virgin who, through the action of the Holy Spirit, has become Mother of the Incarnate Word; in burning love, when she considers the spiritual Motherhood of Mary towards all members of the Mystical Body; in trusting invocation, when she experiences the intercession of her Advocate and Helper⁶⁴; in loving service, when she sees in the humble Handmaid of the Lord the Queen of mercy and the Mother of grace; in zealous imitation, when she contemplates the holiness and virtues of her who is "full of grace" (Lk 1:28); in profound wonder, when she sees in her, "as in a faultless model, that which she herself wholly desires and hopes to be"⁶⁵; in attentive study, when she recognizes in the Associate of the Redeemer, who already shares fully in the fruits of the Paschal Mystery, the prophetic fulfillment of her own future, until the day on which, when she has been purified of every spot and wrinkle (cf. Eph 5:27), she will become like a bride arrayed for the bridegroom, Jesus Christ (cf. Rev 21:2).

Foster Marian Cult

23. Therefore, venerable Brothers, as we consider the piety that the liturgical tradition of the universal Church and the renewed Roman Rite expresses towards the holy Mother of God, and as we remember that the liturgy through its pre-eminent value as worship constitutes the golden norm for Christian piety, and finally as we observe how the Church when she celebrates the sacred mysteries assumes an attitude of faith and love similar to that of the Virgin, we realize the rightness of the exhortation that the Second Vatican Council addresses to all the children of the Church, namely "that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin be generously fostered"⁶⁶. This is an exhortation that we would like to see accepted everywhere without reservation and put into zealous practice.

⁶⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 62: AAS 57 (1965), p. 63.

⁶⁵ II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 103: AAS 56 (1964), p. 125.

⁶⁶ II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 67: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 65-66.

Part Two

THE RENEWAL OF DEVOTION TO MARY

24. The Second Vatican Council also exhorts us to promote other forms of piety side by side with liturgical worship, especially those recommended by the Magisterium⁶⁷. However, as is well known, the piety of the faithful and their veneration of the Mother of God has taken on many forms according to circumstances of time and place, the different sensibilities of peoples and their different cultural traditions. Hence it is that the forms in which this devotion is expressed, being subject to the ravages of time, show the need for a renewal that will permit them to substitute elements that are transient, to emphasize the elements that are ever new and to incorporate the doctrinal data obtained from theological reflection and the proposals of the Church's Magisterium. This shows the need for episcopal conferences, local churches, religious families and communities of the faithful to promote a genuine creative activity and at the same time to proceed to a careful revision of expressions and exercises of piety directed towards the Blessed Virgin. We would like this revision to be respectful of wholesome tradition and open to the legitimate requests of the people of our time. It seems fitting therefore, venerable Brothers, to put forward some principles for action in this field.

Section I

Trinitarian, Christological and Ecclesial Aspects of
Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

25. In the first place it is supremely fitting that exercises of piety directed towards the Virgin Mary should clearly express the Trinitarian and Christological note that is intrinsic and essential to them. Christian worship in fact is of itself worship offered to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, or, as the liturgy puts it, to the Father through Christ in the Spirit. From this point of view worship is rightly extended, though in a substantially different way, first and foremost and in a special manner, to the Mother of the Lord and then to the saints, in whom the Church proclaims the Paschal Mystery, for they have suffered with Christ and have been

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*

glorified with him⁶⁸. In the Virgin Mary everything is relative to Christ and dependent upon him. It was with a view to Christ that God the Father from all eternity chose her to be the all-holy Mother and adorned her with gifts of the Spirit granted to no one else. Certainly genuine Christian piety has never failed to highlight the indissoluble link and essential relationship of the Virgin to the Divine Saviour⁶⁹. Yet it seems to us particularly in conformity with the spiritual orientation of our time, which is dominated and absorbed by the "question of Christ"⁷⁰, that in the expressions of devotion to the Virgin the Christological aspect should have particular prominence. It likewise seems to us fitting that these expressions of devotion should reflect God's plan, which laid down "with one single decree the origin of Mary and the Incarnation of the divine Wisdom"⁷¹. This will without doubt contribute to making piety towards the Mother of Jesus more solid, and to making it an effective instrument for attaining to full "knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself" (Eph 4:13). It will also contribute to increasing the worship due to Christ himself, since, according to the perennial mind of the Church authoritatively repeated in our own day⁷², "what is given to the Handmaid is referred to the Lord: thus what is given to the Mother redounds to the Son; ... and thus what is given as humble tribute to the Queen becomes honour rendered to the King"⁷³.

The Holy Spirit and Mary

26. It seems to us useful to add to this mention of the Christological orientation of devotion to the Blessed Virgin a reminder of the fittingness of giving prominence in this devotion to one of the essential facts of the faith; the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. Theological reflection and the liturgy have in fact noted how the sanctifying

⁶⁸ Cf. II Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*, 104: AAS 56 (1964), pp. 125-126.

⁶⁹ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 66: AAS 57 (1965), p. 65.

⁷⁰ Cf. Paul VI, Talk of 24 April 1970, in the church of Our Lady of Bonaria in Cagliari: AAS 62 (1970), p. 300.

⁷¹ Pius IX, Apostolic Letter *Ineffabilis Deus*: *Pii IX Pontificis Maximi Acta*, I, 1, Rome 1854, p. 599. Cf. also V. Sardi, *La solenne definizione del dogma dell'Immacolato concepimento di Maria Santissima. Atti e documenti*, Rome 1904-1905, vol. II, p. 302.

⁷² Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 66: AAS 57 (1965), p. 65.

⁷³ S. Ildephonsus, *De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae*, chapter XII: PL 96, 108.

intervention of the Spirit in the Virgin of Nazareth was a culminating moment of the Spirit's action in the history of salvation. Thus, for example, some Fathers and writers of the Church attributed to the work of the Spirit the original holiness of Mary, who was as it were "fashioned by the Holy Spirit into a kind of new substance and new creature"⁷⁴. Reflecting on the Gospel texts — "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you with his shadow" (Lk 1:35) and "(Mary) was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. . . She has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit" (Mt 1:18, 20) — they saw in the Spirit's intervention an action that consecrated and made fruitful Mary's virginity⁷⁵ and transformed her into the "Abode of the King" or "Bridal Chamber of the Word"⁷⁶, the "Temple" or "Tabernacle of the Lord"⁷⁷, the "Ark of the Covenant" or "the Ark of Holiness"⁷⁸, titles rich in biblical echoes. Examining more deeply still the mystery of the Incarnation, they saw in the mysterious relationship between the Spirit and Mary an aspect redolent of marriage, poetically portrayed by Prudentius: "The unwed Virgin espoused the Spirit"⁷⁹, and they called her the "Temple of the Holy Spirit"⁸⁰, an expression that emphasizes the sacred character of the

⁷⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 56: AAS 57 (1965), p. 60 and the authors mentioned in note 176 of the document.

⁷⁵ Cf. St. Ambrose, *De Spiritu Sancto* II, 37-38; CSEL 79 pp. 100-101; Cassian, *De incarnatione Domini* II, chapter II: CSEL 17, pp. 247-249; St. Bede, *Homilia* I, 3: CCL 122, p. 18 and p. 20.

⁷⁶ Cf. St. Ambrose, *De institutione virginis*, chapter XII, 79: PL 16, (ed. 1880), 339; *Epistula* 30, 3 and *Epistula* 42, 7: *ibid.*, 1107 and 1175; *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* X, 132; S. Ch. 52, p. 200; S. Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* I, 1 and *Oratio* V, 3: PG 65, 681 and 720; St. Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio* XXXIX, 3: PG 85, 433; St. Andrew of Crete, *Oratio* IV: PG 97, 868; St. Germanus of Constantinople, *Oratio* III, 15: PG 98, 305.

⁷⁷ Cf. St. Jerome, *Adversus Iovinianum* I, 33: PL 23, 267; St. Ambrose, *Epistula* 63, 33: PL 16 (ed. 1880), 1249; *De institutione virginis*, chapter XVII, 105: *ibid.*, 346; *De Spiritu Sancto* III, 79-80: CSEL 79, pp. 182-183; Sedulius, Hymn "A solis ortus cardine", verses 131-14 CSEL 10, p. 164; *Hymnus Acathistos*, Str. 23; ed. I. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, I, p. 261; St. Proclus of Constantinople, *Oratio* I, 3: PG 65, 648; *Oratio* II, 6: *ibid.*, 700; St. Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio* IV, In Nativitatem B. Mariae: PG 97, 868; St. John Damascene, *Oratio* IV, 10: PG 96, 677.

⁷⁸ Cf. Severus of Antioch. *Homilia* 57; PO 8, pp. 357-358; Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Homilia de sancta Maria Deipara*; PG 93, 1464; Chrysippus of Jerusalem, *Oratio in sanctam Mariam Deiparam*, 2 PO 19, p. 338; St. Andrew of Crete, *Oratio* V; PG 97, 896; St. John Damascene, *Oratio* VI, 6: PG 96, 972.

⁷⁹ *Liber Apotheosis*, verses 571-572: CCL 126, p. 97.

⁸⁰ Cf. S. Isidore, *De ortu et obitu Patrum*, chapter LXVII III: PL 83, 148; St. Ildephonsus, *De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae*, chapter X: PL 96, 95; St. Bernard, In Assumptione B. Virginis Mariae: *Sermo* IV, 4: PL 183, 428; In Nativitate B. Virginis Mariae: *ibid.*, 442; St. Peter

Virgin, now the permanent dwelling of the Spirit of God. Delving deeply into the doctrine of the Paraclete, they saw that from him as from a spring there flowed forth the fullness of grace (cf. Lk 1:28) and the abundance of gifts that adorned her. Thus they attributed to the Spirit the faith, hope and charity that animated the Virgin's heart, the strength that sustained her acceptance of the will of God, and the vigour that upheld her in her suffering at the foot of the Cross⁸¹. In Mary's prophetic canticle (cf. Lk 1:46-55) they saw a special working of the Spirit who had spoken through the mouths of the Prophets⁸². Considering, finally, the presence of the Mother of Jesus in the Upper Room, where the Spirit came down upon the infant Church (cf. Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4), they enriched with new developments the ancient theme of Mary and the Church⁸³. Above all they had recourse to the Virgin's intercession in order to obtain from the Spirit the capacity for engendering Christ in their own soul, as is attested to by Saint Ildephonsus in a prayer of supplication, amazing in its doctrine and prayerful power: "I beg you, holy Virgin, that I may have Jesus from the Holy Spirit, by whom you brought Jesus forth. May my soul receive Jesus through the Holy Spirit by whom your flesh conceived Jesus . . . May I love Jesus in the Holy Spirit in whom you adore Jesus as Lord and gaze upon him as your Son"⁸⁴.

27. It is sometimes said that many spiritual writings today do not sufficiently reflect the whole doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. It is the task of specialists to verify and weigh the truth of this assertion, but it is our task to exhort everyone, especially those in the pastoral ministry and also theologians, to meditate more deeply on the work-

Damien, *Carmina sacra et preces II, Oratio ad Deum Filium*: PL 145, 921; *Antiphon "Beata Dei Genetrix Maria"*: *Corpus antiphonarium officii*, ed. R. J. Hesbert, Rome 1970, vol IV, n. 6314, p. 80.

⁸¹ Cf. Paulus Diaconus, *Homilia I, In Assumptione B. Mariae Virginis*: PL 95, 1567; *De Assumptione sanctae Mariae Virginis*: Paschasio Radherio trib., 31, 42, 57, 83, ed. A. Ripberger, in "Spicilegium Friburgense", 9, 1962, pp. 72, 76, 84, 96-97; Eadmer of Canterbury, *De excellentia Virginis Mariae*, chapters IV-V: PL 159, 562-567; St. Bernard, *In laudibus Virginis Matris*, *Homilia IV*, 3; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. J. Leclercq-H. Rochais, IV, Rome 1966, pp. 49-50.

⁸² Cf. Origen, *In Lucam Homilia VII*, 3: PG 13, 1817; S. Ch. 87, p. 156; St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentarius in Aggaeum prophetam*, chapter XIX: PG 71, 7060; St. Ambrose, *De fide IV* 9, 113-114: CSEL 78, pp. 197-198; *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam II*, 23 and 27-28: CSEL 32, IV, pp. 53-54, 55-56; Severianus Gabalensis, *In mundi creationem, Oratio VI*, 10: PG 56 497-498; Antipater of Bostra, *Homilia in Sanctissimae Deiparae Annuntiationem*, 16: PG 85, 1785.

⁸³ Cf. Eadmer of Canterbury, *De excellentia Virginis Matre*, *Homilia VII*: PL 188, 1337; S. Ch. 72, p. 184.

⁸⁴ *De virginitate perpetua sanctae Mariae*, chapter XII: PL 96, 106.

ing of the Holy Spirit in the history of salvation, and to ensure that Christian spiritual writings give due prominence to his life-giving action. Such as study will bring out in particular the hidden relationship between the Spirit of God and the Virgin of Nazareth, and show the influence they exert on the Church. From a more profound meditation on the truths of the faith will flow a more vital piety.

Mary's Place in the Church

28. It is also necessary that exercises of piety with which the faithful honour the Mother of the Lord should clearly show the place she occupies in the Church: "the highest place and the closest to us after Christ"⁸⁵. The liturgical buildings of Byzantine rite, both in the architectural structure itself and in the use of images, show clearly Mary's place in the Church. On the central door of the iconostasis there is a representation of the Annunciation and in the apse an image of the glorious Theotokos. In this way one perceives how through the assent of the humble Handmaid of the Lord mankind begins its return to God and sees in the glory of the all-holy Virgin the goal towards which it is journeying. The symbolism by which a church building demonstrates Mary's place in the mystery of the Church is full of significance and gives grounds for hoping that the different forms of devotion to the Blessed Virgin may everywhere be open to ecclesial perspective.

The faithful will be able to appreciate more easily Mary's mission in the mystery of the Church and her pre-eminent place in the Communion of Saints if attention is drawn to the Second Vatican Council's references to the fundamental concepts of the nature of the Church as the Family of God, the People of God, the Kingdom of God and the Mystical Body of Christ⁸⁶. This will also bring the faithful to a deeper realization of the brotherhood which unites all of them as sons and daughters of the Virgin "who with a mother's love has cooperated in their rebirth and spiritual formation"⁸⁷, and as sons and daughters of the Church, since "we are born from the Church's

⁸⁵ II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 54: AAS 57 (1965), p. 59, Cf. Paulus VI, *Allocutio ad Patres Conciliares habita, altera exacta Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi Sessione*, 4, December 1963: AAS 56 (1964), p. 37.

⁸⁶ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 6, 7-8, 9-11: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 8-9, 9-12, 12-21.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 63: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

womb, we are nurtured by the Church's milk, we are given life by the Church's Spirit"⁸⁸. They will also realize that both the Church and Mary collaborate to give birth to the Mystical Body of Christ since "both of them are the Mother of Christ, but neither brings forth the whole (body) independently of the other"⁸⁹. Similarly the faithful will appreciate more clearly that the action of the Church in the world can be likened to an extension of Mary's concern. The active love she showed at Nazareth, in the house of Elizabeth, at Cana and on Golgotha — all salvific episodes having vast ecclesial importance — finds its extension in the Church's maternal concern that all men should come to knowledge of the truth (cf. 1 Tim 2:4), in the Church's concern for people in lowly circumstances and for the poor and weak, and in her constant commitment to peace and social harmony, as well as in her untiring efforts to ensure that all men will share in the salvation which was merited for them by Christ's death. Thus love for the Church will become love for Mary, and vice versa, since the one cannot exist without the other, as Saint Chromatius of Aquileia observed with keen discernment: "The Church was united . . . in the Upper Room with Mary the Mother of Jesus and with his brethren. The Church therefore cannot be referred to as such unless it includes Mary the Mother of our Lord, together with his brethren"⁹⁰. In conclusion, therefore, we repeat that devotion to the Blessed Virgin must explicitly show its intrinsic and ecclesiological content; thus it will be enabled to revise its forms and texts in a fitting way.

Section II

Four Guidelines for Devotion to the Blessed Virgin: Biblical, Liturgical, Ecumenical and Anthropological

29. The above considerations spring from an examination of the Virgin Mary's relationship with God — the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit — and with Church. Following the path traced by conciliar teaching⁹¹, we wish to add some further guidelines from Scripture, liturgy, ecumenism and anthropology. These are to be borne in mind in any revision of exercises of piety or in the creation of new ones, in order to emphasize and accentuate the bond which unites

⁸⁸ St. Cyprian, *De Catholicae Ecclesiae unitate*, 5: CSEL 3, p. 214.

⁸⁹ Isaac de Stella, *Sermo LI, In Assumptione B. Mariae*: PL 194, 1863.

⁹⁰ *Sermo XXX, I*: S. Ch. 164, p. 134.

⁹¹ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 66-69: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 65-67.

us to her who is the Mother of Christ and our Mother in the Communion of Saints.

Biblical Imprint in Worship

30. Today it is recognized as a general need of Christian piety that every form of worship should have a biblical imprint. The progress made in biblical studies, the increasing dissemination of the Sacred Scriptures, and above all the example of tradition and the interior action of the Holy Spirit are tending to cause the modern Christian to use the Bible ever increasingly as the basic prayerbook and to draw from it genuine inspiration and unsurpassable examples. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin cannot be exempt from this general orientation of Christian piety⁹²; indeed it should draw inspiration in a special way from this orientation in order to gain new vigour and sure help. In its wonderful presentation of God's plan for man's salvation, the Bible is replete with the mystery of the Saviour, and from Genesis to the Book of Revelation also contains clear references to her who was the Mother and Associate of the Saviour. We would not however wish this biblical imprint to be merely a diligent use of texts and symbols skilfully selected from the Sacred Scriptures. More than this is necessary. What is needed is that texts of prayers and chants should draw their inspiration and their wording from the Bible, and above all that devotion to the Virgin should be imbued with the great themes of the Christian message. This will ensure that, as they venerate the Seat of Wisdom, the faithful in their turn will be enlightened by the divine word, and be inspired to live their lives in accordance with the precepts of Incarnate Wisdom.

*Liturgical Harmonization
Not Suppression nor Merger*

31. We have already spoken of the veneration which the Church gives to the Mother of God in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. However, speaking of the other forms of devotion and of the criteria on which they should be based we wish to recall the norm laid down in the Constitution **Sacrosanctum Concilium**. This document, while wholeheartedly approving of the practices of piety of the Christian people, goes on to say: "... it is necessary however that such devotions with consideration for the liturgical seasons should be so arranged as

⁹² Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, **Dei Verbum**, 25: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 829-830.

to be in harmony with the sacred liturgy. They should somehow derive their inspiration from it, and because of its pre-eminence they should orient the Christian people towards it"⁹³. Although this is a wise and clear rule, its application is not an easy matter, especially in regard to Marian devotions, which are so varied in their formal expressions. What is needed on the part of the leaders of the local communities is effort, pastoral sensitivity and perseverance, while the faithful on their part must show a willingness to accept guidelines and ideas drawn from the true nature of Christian worship; this sometimes makes it necessary to change long-standing customs wherein the real nature of this Christian worship has become somewhat obscured.

In this context we wish to mention two attitudes which in pastoral practice could nullify the norm of the Second Vatican Council. In the first place there are certain persons concerned with the care of souls who scorn, *a priori*, devotions of piety which, in their correct forms, have been recommended by the Magisterium, who leave them aside and in this way create a vacuum which they do not fill. They forget that the Council has said that devotions of piety should harmonize with the liturgy, not be suppressed. Secondly there are those who, without wholesome liturgical and pastoral criteria, mix practices of piety and liturgical acts in hybrid celebrations. It sometimes happens that novenas or similar practices of piety are inserted into the very celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. This creates the danger that the Lord's Memorial Rite, instead of being the culmination of the meeting of the Christian community, becomes the occasion, as it were, for devotional practices. For those who act in this way we wish to recall the rule laid down by the Council prescribing that exercises of piety should be harmonized with the liturgy, not merged into it. Wise pastoral action should on the one hand point out and emphasize the proper nature of the liturgical acts, while on the other hand it should enhance the value of practices of piety, in order to adapt them to the needs of individual communities in the Church and to make them valuable aids to the liturgy.

Ecumenical Aspect

32. Because of its ecclesial character devotion to the Blessed Virgin reflects the preoccupations of the Church herself. Among these especially in our day is her anxiety for the re-establishment of Christian unity. In this way devotion to the Mother of the Lord is in accord

⁹³ *Op. cit.*, 13: AAS 56 (1964), p. 103.

with the deep desires and aims of the ecumenical movement, that is, it acquires an ecumenical aspect. This is so for a number of reasons.

In the first place, in venerating with particular love the glorious Theotokos and in acclaiming her as the "Hope of Christians"⁹⁴, Catholics unite themselves with their brethren of the Orthodox Churches, in which devotion to the Blessed Virgin finds its expression in a beautiful lyricism and in solid doctrine. Catholics are also united with Anglicans, whose classical theologians have already drawn attention to the sound scriptural basis for devotion to the Mother of our Lord, while those of the present day increasingly underline the importance of Mary's place in the Christian life. Praising God with the very words of the Virgin (cf. Lk 1:46-55), they are united too with their brethren in the Churches of the Reform, where love for the Sacred Scriptures flourishes.

For Catholics, devotion to the Mother of Christ and Mother of Christians is also a natural and frequent opportunity for seeking her intercession with her Son in order to obtain the union of all the baptized within a single People of God⁹⁵. Yet again, the ecumenical aspect of Marian devotion is shown in the Catholic Church's desire that, without in any way detracting from the unique character of this devotion⁹⁶, every care should be taken to avoid any exaggeration which could mislead other Christian brethren about the true doctrine of the Catholic Church⁹⁷. Similarly, the Church desires that any manifestation of cult which is opposed to correct Catholic practice should be eliminated.

Finally, since it is natural that in true devotion to the Blessed Virgin "the Son should be duly known, loved and glorified... when the Mother is honoured"⁹⁸, such devotion is an approach to Christ, the source and centre of ecclesiastical communion, in which all who openly confess that he is God and Lord, Saviour and sole Mediator

⁹⁴ Cf. *Officium magni canonis paracletici Magnum Orologion*, Athens 1963 p. 558; *passim* in liturgical canons and prayers: cf. Sophronius Eustradiadou, *Theotokarion*, Chennevieres-sur-Marne 1931, pp. 9. 19.

⁹⁵ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 69: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 66-67.

⁹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 66: AAS 57 (1965), p. 65; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 103: AAS 56 (1964), p. 125.

⁹⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 67: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 65-66.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 66: AAS 57 (1963), p. 65.

(cf. 1 Tim 2:5), are called to be one, with one another, with Christ and with the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit⁹⁹.

May Differences Be Reconciled

33. We realize that there exist important differences between the thought of many of our brethren in other Churches and ecclesial communities and the Catholic doctrine on "Mary's role in the work of salvation"¹⁰⁰. In consequence there are likewise differences of opinion on the devotion which should be shown to her. Nevertheless, since it is the same power of the Most High which overshadowed the Virgin of Nazareth (cf. Lk 1:35) and which today is at work within the ecumenical movement and making it fruitful, we wish to express our confidence that devotion to the humble Handmaid of the Lord, in whom the Almighty has done great things (cf. Lk 1:49), will become, even if only slowly, not an obstacle but a path and a rallying-point for the union of all who believe in Christ. We are glad to see that in fact a better understanding of Mary's place in the mystery of Christ and of the Church on the part also of our separated brethren is smoothing the path to union. Just as at Cana the Blessed Virgin's intervention resulted in Christ's performing his first miracle (cf. Jn 2:1-12), so today her intercession can help to bring to realization the time when the disciples of Christ will again find full communion in faith. This hope of ours is strengthened by a remark of our predecessor Leo XIII, who wrote that the cause of Christian unity "properly pertains to the role of Mary's spiritual Motherhood. For Mary did not and cannot engender those who belong to Christ, except in one faith and one love: for 'Is Christ divided?' (1 Cor 1:13). We must all live together the life of Christ, so that in one and the same body 'we may bear fruit for God' (Rom 7:4)"¹⁰¹.

Anthropological Developments

34. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin must also pay close attention to certain findings of the human sciences. This will help to eliminate one of the causes of the difficulties experienced in devotion to the Mother of the Lord, namely, the discrepancy existing between some aspects of this devotion and modern anthropological

⁹⁹ Cf. Paul VI, Address in the Vatican Basilica to the Fathers of the Council, 21 November 1964: AAS 56 (1964), p. 1017.

¹⁰⁰ II Vatican Council Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 20: AAS 57 (1965), p. 105.

¹⁰¹ Encyclical Letter, *Adiutricem Populi*: ASS 28 (1895-1896), p. 135.

discoveries and the profound changes which have occurred in the psycho-sociological field in which modern man lives and works. The picture of the Blessed Virgin presented in a certain type of devotional literature cannot easily be reconciled with today's life style, especially the way women live today. In the home, woman's equality and co-responsibility with man in the running of the family are being justly recognized by laws and the evolution of customs. In the sphere of politics women have in many countries gained a position in public life equal to that of men. In the social field women are at work in a whole range of different employments, getting further away every day from the restricted surroundings of the home. In the cultural field new possibilities are opening up for women in scientific research and intellectual activities.

In consequence of these phenomena some people are becoming disenchanted with devotion to the Blessed Virgin and finding it difficult to take as an example Mary of Nazareth because the horizons of her life, so they say, seem rather restricted in comparison with the vast spheres of activity open to mankind today. In this regard we exhort theologians, those responsible for the local Christian communities and the faithful themselves to examine these difficulties with due care. At the same time we wish to take the opportunity of offering our own contribution to their solution by making a few observations.

What is Past and What is Permanent

35. First, the Virgin Mary has always been proposed to the faithful by the Church as an example to be imitated not precisely in the type of life she led, and much less for the socio-cultural background in which she lived and which today scarcely exists anywhere. She is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God (cf. Lk 1:38), because she heard the word of God and acted on it and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions. She is worthy of imitation because she was the first and the most perfect of Christ's disciples. All of this has a permanent and universal exemplary value.

Adaptable to All Situations

36. Secondly, we would like to point out that the difficulties alluded to above are closely related to certain aspects of the image

of Mary found in popular writings. They are not connected with the Gospel image of Mary nor with the doctrinal data which have been made explicit through a slow and conscientious process of drawing from Revelation. It should be considered quite normal for succeeding generations of Christians in differing socio-cultural contexts to have expressed their sentiments about the Mother of Jesus in a way and manner which reflected their own age. In contemplating Mary and her mission these different generations of Christians, looking on her as the New Woman and perfect Christian, found in her as a Virgin, Wife and Mother the outstanding type of womanhood and the pre-eminent exemplar of life lived in accordance with the Gospels and summing up the most characteristic situations in the life of a woman. When the Church considers the long history of Marian devotion she rejoices at the continuity of the element of cult which it shows, but she does not bind herself to any particular expression of an individual cultural epoch or to the particular anthropological ideas underlying such expressions. The Church understands that certain outward religious expressions, while perfectly valid in themselves, may be less suitable to men and women of different ages and cultures.

The Modern Woman and Mary

37. Finally, we wish to point out that our own time, no less than former times, is called upon to verify its knowledge of reality with the word of God, and, keeping to the matter at present under consideration, to compare its anthropological ideas and the problems springing therefrom with the figure of the Virgin Mary as presented by the Gospel. The reading of the divine Scriptures, carried out under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with the discoveries of the human sciences and the different situations in the world today being taken into account, will help us to see how Mary can be considered a mirror of the expectations of the men and women of our time. Thus, the modern woman, anxious to participate with decision-making power in the affairs of the community, will contemplate with intimate joy Mary who, taken into dialogue with God, gives her active and responsible consent,¹⁰² not to the solution of a contingent problem, but to that "event of world importance", as the Incarnation of the Word has been rightly called¹⁰³. The modern woman will appreciate that Mary's choice of the state of virginity, which in God's plan prepared her for the mystery of the Incarnation, was not a re-

¹⁰² Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 56: AAS 57 (1965), p. 60.

¹⁰³ Cf. St. Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo CXLIII*: PL 52, 583.

jection of any of the values of the married state but a courageous choice which she made in order to consecrate herself totally to the love of God. The modern woman will note with pleasant surprise that Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others; on the contrary, she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes the powerful people of this world from their privileged positions (cf. Lk 1:51-53). The modern woman will recognize in Mary, who "stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord",¹⁰⁴ a woman of strength, who experienced poverty and suffering, flight and exile (cf. Mt 2:13-23). These are situations that cannot escape the attention of those who wish to support, with the gospel spirit, the liberating energies of man and of society. And Mary will appear not as a mother exclusively concerned with her own divine Son but rather as a woman whose action helped to strengthen the apostolic community's faith in Christ (cf. Jn 2:1-12) and whose maternal role was extended and became universal on Calvary¹⁰⁵. These are but examples, but examples which show clearly that the figure of the Blessed Virgin does not disillusion any of the profound expectations of the men and women of our time but offers them the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord: the disciple who builds up the earthly and temporal city while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city, the disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy; but above all, the disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people's hearts.

Incorrect Attitudes of Piety

38. Having offered these directives, which are intended to favour the harmonious development of devotion to the Mother of the Lord, we consider it opportune to draw attention to certain attitudes of piety which are incorrect. The Second Vatican Council has already authoritatively denounced both the exaggeration of content and form which even falsifies doctrine and likewise the small-mindedness which obscures the figure and mission of Mary. The Council has also denounced certain devotional deviations, such as vain credulity, which substitutes reliance on merely external practices for serious commit-

¹⁰⁴ II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 55: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 59-60.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution, *Signum Magnum*, I: AAS 59 (1967), pp. 467-468; Roman Missal, 15 September, Prayer over the gifts.

ment. Another deviation is sterile and ephemeral sentimentality, so alien to the spirit of the Gospel that demands persevering and practical action¹⁰⁶. We reaffirm the Council's reprobation of such attitudes and practices. They are not in harmony with the Catholic faith and therefore they must have no place in Catholic worship. Careful defense against these errors and deviations will render devotion to the Blessed Virgin more vigorous and more authentic. It will make this devotion solidly based, with the consequence that study of the sources of Revelation and attention to the documents of the Magisterium will prevail over the exaggerated search for novelties or extraordinary phenomena. It will ensure that this devotion is objective in its historical setting, and for this reason everything that is obviously legendary or false must be eliminated. It will ensure that this devotion matches its doctrinal content—hence the necessity of avoiding a one-sided presentation of the figure of Mary, which by overstressing one element compromises the overall picture given by the Gospel. It will make this devotion clear in its motivation; hence every unworthy self-interest is to be carefully banned from the area of what is sacred.

Glorify and Obey God

39. Finally, insofar as it may be necessary we would like to repeat that the ultimate purpose of devotion to the Blessed Virgin is to glorify God and to lead Christians to commit themselves to a life which is in absolute conformity with his will. When the children of the Church unite their voices with the voice of the unknown woman in the Gospel and glorify the Mother of Jesus by saying to him: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you sucked" (Lk 11:27), they will be led to ponder the divine Master's serious reply: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Lk 11:28). While it is true that this reply is in itself lively praise of Mary, as various Fathers of the Church interpreted it¹⁰⁷ and the Second Vatican Council has confirmed,¹⁰⁸ it is also an admonition to us to live our lives in accordance with God's commandments. It is also an echo of other words of the Saviour: "Not

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 67: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 65-66.

¹⁰⁷ St. Augustine, In *Johannis Evangelium*, Tractatus X, 3; CCL 36, pp. 101-102; *Epistula* 243, Ad Laetum, 9; CSEL 57, pp. 575-576; St. Bede, In *Lucae Evangelium expositio*, IV, XI, 28; CCL 120, p. 237; *Homilia* I, 4; CCL 122, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 58: AAS 57 (1965), p. 61.

every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 7:21), and again: "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (Jn 15:14).

PART THREE

OBSERVATIONS ON TWO EXERCISES OF PIETY: THE ANGELUS AND THE ROSARY

40. We have indicated a number of principles which can help to give fresh vigor to devotion to the Mother of the Lord. It is now up to episcopal conferences, to those in charge of local communities and to the various religious congregations prudently to revise practices and to encourage the creative impulse of those who through genuine religious inspiration or pastoral sensitivity wish to establish new forms of piety. For different reasons we nevertheless feel it is opportune to consider here two practices which are widespread in the West and with which this Apostolic See has concerned itself on various occasions: the Angelus and the Rosary.

The Angelus

41. What we have to say about the Angelus is meant to be only a simple but earnest exhortation to continue its traditional recitation wherever and whenever possible. The Angelus does not need to be revised, because of its simple structure, its biblical character, its historical origin which links it to the prayer for peace and safety, and its quasi-liturgical rhythm which sanctifies different moments during the day, and because it reminds us of the Paschal Mystery, in which recalling the Incarnation of the Son of God we pray that we may be led "through his Passion and Cross to the glory of his Resurrection"¹⁰⁹. These factors ensure that the Angelus despite the passing of centuries retains an unaltered value and an intact freshness. It is true that certain customs traditionally linked with the recitation of the Angelus have disappeared or can continue only with difficulty in modern life. But these are marginal elements. The value of contemplation on the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, of the

¹⁰⁹ Roman Missal, IV Sunday of Advent, Collect. Similarly the Collect of 25 March, which may be used in place of the previous one in the recitation of the Angelus.

greeting to the Virgin, and of recourse to her merciful intercession remains unchanged. And despite the changed conditions of the times, for the majority of people there remain unaltered the characteristic periods of the day—morning, noon and evening—which mark the periods of their activity and constitute an invitation to pause in prayer.

The Rosary

42. We wish now, venerable Brothers, to dwell for a moment on the renewal of the pious practice which has been called "the compendium of the entire Gospel"¹¹⁰: the Rosary. To this our predecessors have devoted close attention and care. On many occasions they have recommended its frequent recitation, encouraged its diffusion, explained its nature, recognized its suitability for fostering contemplative prayer—prayer of both praise and petition—and recalled its intrinsic effectiveness for promoting Christian life and apostolic commitment.

We too, from the first General Audience of our Pontificate on 13 July 1963, have shown our great esteem for the pious practice of the Rosary¹¹¹. Since that time we have underlined its value on many different occasions, some ordinary, some grave. Thus, at a moment of anguish and uncertainty we published the Letter **Christi Matri** (15 September 1966), in order to obtain prayers to Our Lady of the Rosary, to implore from God the supreme benefit of peace¹¹². We renewed this appeal in our Apostolic Exhortation **Recurrens Mensis October** (7 October 1969), in which we also commemorated the fourth centenary of the Apostolic Letter **Consueverunt Romani Pontifices** of our predecessor Saint Pius V, who in that document explained and in a certain sense established the traditional form of the Rosary¹¹³.

Congresses and Research

43. Our assiduous and affectionate interest in the Rosary has led us to follow very attentively the numerous meetings which in recent years have been devoted to the pastoral role of the Rosary in the modern world, meetings arranged by associations and individuals

¹¹⁰ Pius XII, Letter to the Archbishop of Manila, "**Philippinas Insulas**": AAS 38 (1946), p. 419.

¹¹¹ Discourse to the participants in the III Dominican International Rosary Congress: **Insegnamenti di Paolo VI**, 1, (1963) pp. 463-464.

¹¹² In AAS 58 (1966), pp. 745-749.

¹¹³ In AAS 61 (1969), pp. 649-654.

profoundly attached to the Rosary and attended by bishops, priests, religious and lay people of proven experience and recognized ecclesial awareness. Among these people special mention should be made of the sons of Saint Dominic, by tradition the guardians and promoters of this very salutary practice. Parallel with such meetings has been the research work of historians, work aimed not at defining in a sort of archaeological fashion the primitive form of the Rosary but at uncovering the original inspiration and driving force behind it and its essential structure. The fundamental characteristics of the Rosary, its essential elements and their mutual relationship have all emerged more clearly from these congresses and from the research carried out.

A Gospel Prayer

44. Thus, for instance, the Gospel inspiration of the Rosary has appeared more clearly: the Rosary draws from the Gospel the presentation of the mysteries and its main formulas. As it moves from the Angel's joyful greeting and the Virgin's pious assent, the Rosary takes its inspiration from the Gospel to suggest the attitude with which the faithful should recite it. In the harmonious succession of Hail Mary's the Rosary puts before us once more a fundamental mystery of the Gospel—the Incarnation of the Word, contemplated at the decisive moment of the Annunciation to Mary. The Rosary is thus a Gospel prayer, as pastors and scholars like to define it, more today perhaps than in the past.

Orderly and Gradual

45. It has also been more easily seen how the orderly and gradual unfolding of the Rosary reflects the very way in which the Word of God, mercifully entering into human affairs, brought about the Redemption. The Rosary considers in harmonious succession the principal salvific events accomplished in Christ, from his virginal conception and the mysteries of his childhood to the culminating moments of the Passover—the blessed Passion and the glorious Resurrection—and to the effects of this on the infant Church on the day of Pentecost, and on the Virgin Mary when at the end of her earthly life she was assumed body and soul into her heavenly home. It has also been observed that the division of the mysteries of the Rosary into three parts not only adheres strictly to the chronological order of the facts but above all reflects the plan of the original proclamation of the faith and sets forth once more the mystery of Christ in

the very way in which it is seen by Saint Paul in the celebrated "hymn" of the Letter to the Philippians—kenosis, death and exaltation (2:6-11).

Christological Orientation

46. As a Gospel prayer, centered on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, the Rosary is therefore a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation. Its most characteristic element, in fact, the litany-like succession of Hail Mary's becomes in itself an unceasing praise of Christ, who is the ultimate object both of the Angel's announcement and of the greeting of the Mother of John the Baptist: "Blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Lk 1:42). We would go further and say that the succession of Hail Mary's constitutes the warp on which is woven the contemplation of the mysteries. The Jesus that each Hail Mary recalls is the same Jesus whom the succession of the mysteries proposes to us—now as the Son of God, now as the son of the Virgin—at his birth in a stable at Bethlehem, at his presentation by his Mother in the Temple, as a youth full of zeal for his Father's affairs, as the Redeemer in agony in the garden, scourged and crowned with thorns, carrying the Cross and dying on Calvary; risen from the dead and ascended to the glory of the Father to send forth the gift of the Spirit. As is well known, at one time there was a custom, still preserved in certain places of adding to the name of Jesus in each Hail Mary a reference to the mystery being contemplated. And this was done precisely in order to help contemplation and to make the mind and the voice act in unison.

Contemplation

47. There has also been felt with greater urgency the need to point out once more the importance of a further essential element in the Rosary, in addition to the value of the elements of praise and petition, namely the element of contemplation. Without this the Rosary is a body without a soul and its recitation is in danger of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas and of going counter to the warning of Christ: "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are unfolded.

The Liturgy and the Rosary

48. Finally, as a result of modern reflection the relationships between the liturgy and the Rosary have been more clearly understood. On the one hand it has been emphasized that the Rosary is as it were a branch sprung from the ancient trunk of the Christian liturgy, the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin whereby the humble were associated in the Church's hymn of praise and universal intercession. On the other hand it has been noted that this development occurred at a time—the last period of the Middle Ages—when the liturgical spirit was in decline and the faithful were turning from the liturgy towards a devotion to Christ's humanity and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, a devotion favouring a certain external sentiment of piety. Not many years ago some people began to express the desire to see the Rosary included among the rites of the liturgy, while other people, anxious to avoid repetition of former pastoral mistakes, unjustifiably disregarded the Rosary. Today the problem can easily be solved in the light of the principles of the Constitution *Sacro-sanctum Concilium*. Liturgical celebrations and the pious practice of the Rosary must be neither set in opposition to one another nor considered as being identical¹¹⁴. The more an expression of prayer preserves its own true nature and individual characteristics the more fruitful it becomes. Once the pre-eminent value of liturgical rites has been reaffirmed it will not be difficult to appreciate the fact that the Rosary is a practice of piety which easily harmonizes with the liturgy. In fact, like the liturgy, it is of a community nature. draws its inspiration from Sacred Scripture and is oriented towards the mystery of Christ. The commemoration in the liturgy and the contemplative remembrance proper to the Rosary, although existing on essentially different planes of reality, have as their object the same salvific events wrought by Christ. The former presents anew, under the veil of signs and operative in a hidden way, the great mysteries of our redemption. The latter, by means of devout contemplation, recalls these same mysteries to the mind of the person praying and stimulates the will to draw from them the norms of living. Once this substantial difference has been established, it is not difficult to understand that the Rosary is an exercise of piety that draws its motivating force from the liturgy and leads naturally back to it, if practised in conformity with its original inspiration. It does not however become part of the liturgy. In fact meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary, by familiarizing the hearts and minds of the faithful

¹¹⁴ Cf. 13: AAS 56 (1964), p. 103.

with the mysteries of Christ, can be an excellent preparation for the celebration of those same mysteries in the liturgical action and can also become a continuing echo thereof. However, it is a mistake to recite the Rosary during the celebration of the liturgy, though unfortunately this practice still persists here and there.

Organic Elements of the Rosary

49. The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, according to the tradition accepted by our predecessor Saint Pius V and authoritatively taught by him, consists of various elements disposed in an organic fashion:

a) Contemplation in communion with Mary, of a series of **mysteries of salvation**, wisely distributed into three cycles. These mysteries express the joy of the messianic times, the salvific suffering of Christ and the glory of the Risen Lord which fills the Church. This contemplation by its very nature encourages practical reflection and provides stimulating norms for living.

b) The Lord's Prayer, or **Our Father**, which by reason of its immense value is at the basis of Christian prayer and ennobles that prayer in its various expressions.

c) The litany-like succession of the **Hail Mary**, which is made up of the Angel's greeting to the Virgin (cf. Lk 1:28) and of Elizabeth's greeting (cf. Lk 1:42), followed by the ecclesial supplication **Holy Mary**. The continued series of **Hail Mary's** is the special characteristic of the Rosary, and their number, in the full and typical number of one hundred and fifty, presents a certain analogy with the Psalter and is an element that goes back to the very origin of the exercise of piety. But this number, divided, according to a well-tried custom, into decades attached to the individual mysteries, is distributed in the three cycles already mentioned, thus giving rise to the Rosary of fifty **Hail Mary's** as we know it. This latter has entered into use as the normal measure of the pious exercise and as such has been adopted by popular piety and approved by papal authority, which also enriched it with numerous indulgences.

d) The doxology **Glory be to the Father** which, in conformity with an orientation common to Christian piety, concludes the prayer with the glorifying of God who is one and three, from whom, through whom and in whom all things have their being (cf. Rom 11:36).

Richness and Variety

50. These are the elements of the Rosary. Each has its own particular character which, wisely understood and appreciated, should be reflected in the recitation in order that the Rosary may express all its richness and variety. Thus the recitation will be grave and suppliant during the Lord's Prayer, lyrical and full of praise during the tranquil succession of Hail Mary's, contemplative in the recollected meditation on the mysteries and full of adoration during the doxology. This applies to all the ways in which the Rosary is usually recited: privately, in intimate recollection with the Lord; in community, in the family or in groups of the faithful gathered together to ensure the special presence of the Lord (cf. Mt 18:20); or publicly, in assemblies to which the ecclesial community is invited.

Modern Rosary

51. In recent times certain exercises of piety have been created which take their inspiration from the Rosary. Among such exercises we wish to draw attention to and recommend those which insert into the ordinary celebration of the Word of God some elements of the Rosary, such as meditation on the mysteries and litany-like repetition of the angel's greeting to Mary. In this way these elements gain in importance, since they are found in the context of Bible readings, illustrated with a homily, accompanied by silent pauses and emphasized with song. We are happy to know that such practices have helped to promote a more complete understanding of the spiritual riches of the Rosary itself and have served to restore esteem for its recitation among youth associations and movements.

Family Rosary

52. We now desire, as a continuation of the thought of our predecessors, to recommend strongly the recitation of the family Rosary. The Second Vatican Council has pointed out how the family, the primary and vital cell of society, "shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer they offer to God"¹¹⁵. The Christian family is thus seen to be a domestic Church¹¹⁶ if its members, each according

¹¹⁵ Decree on the Lay Apostolate, *Apostolicum Actuositatem*, 11: AAS 58 (1966), p. 848.

¹¹⁶ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 11: AAS 57 (1965), p. 16.

to his proper place and tasks, all together promote justice, practise works of mercy, devote themselves to helping their brethren, take part in the apostolate of the wider local community and play their part in its liturgical worship¹¹⁷. This will be all the more true if together they offer up prayers to God. If this element of common prayer were missing, the family would lack its very character as a domestic Church. Thus there must logically follow a concrete effort to re-instate communal prayer in family life if there is to be a restoration of the theological concept of the family as the domestic Church.

Next to the Liturgy of the Hours

53. In accordance with the directives of the Council, the **Institutio Generalis de Liturgia Horarum** rightly numbers the family among the groups in which the Divine Office can suitably be celebrated in community: "It is fitting . that the family, as a domestic sanctuary of the Church, should not only offer prayers to God in common, but also, according to circumstances, should recite parts of the Liturgy of the Hours, in order to be more intimately linked with the Church"¹¹⁸. No avenue should be left unexplored to ensure that this clear and practical recommendation finds within Christian families growing and joyful acceptance.

54. But there is no doubt that, after the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours, the high point which family prayer can reach, the Rosary should be considered as one of the best and most efficacious prayers in common that the Christian family is invited to recite. We like to think, and sincerely hope, that when the family gathering becomes a time of prayer the Rosary is a frequent and favoured manner of praying. We are well aware that the changed conditions of life today do not make family gatherings easy, and that even when such a gathering is possible many circumstances make it difficult to turn it into an occasion of prayer. There is no doubt of the difficulty. But it is characteristic of the Christian in his manner of life not to give in to circumstances but to overcome them, not to succumb but to make an effort. Families which want to live in full measure the vocation and spirituality proper to the Christian family must therefore devote all their energies to overcoming the pressures that hinder family gatherings and prayer in common.

¹¹⁷ Cf. II Vatican Council, Decree on the Lay Apostolate, **Apostolicum Actuositatem**, 11: AAS 58 (1966), p. 848.

¹¹⁸ **Op. cit.**, 27.

Avoid One-sided Propagation

55. In concluding these observations, which give proof of the concern and esteem which the Apostolic See has for the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, we desire at the same time to recommend that this very worthy devotion should not be propagated in a way that is too one-sided or exclusive. The Rosary is an excellent prayer, but the faithful should feel serenely free in its regard. They should be drawn to its calm recitation by its intrinsic appeal.

Conclusion**THEOLOGICAL AND PASTORAL VALUE OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN**

56. Venerable Brothers, as we come to the end of this our Apostolic Exhortation we wish to sum up and emphasize the theological value of devotion to the Blessed Virgin and to recall briefly its pastoral effectiveness for renewing the Christian way of life.

THEOLOGICAL VALUE

The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an intrinsic element of Christian worship. The honour which the Church has always and everywhere shown to the Mother of the Lord, from the blessing with which Elizabeth greeted Mary (cf. Lk 1:42-45) right up to the expressions of praise and petition used today, is a very strong witness to the Church's norm of prayer and an invitation to become more deeply conscious of her norm of faith. And the converse is likewise true. The Church's norm of faith requires that her norm of prayer should everywhere blossom forth with regard to the Mother of Christ. Such devotion to the Blessed Virgin is firmly rooted in the revealed Word and has solid dogmatic foundations. It is based on the singular dignity of Mary, "Mother of the Son of God, and therefore beloved daughter of the Father and Temple of the Holy Spirit — Mary, who, because of this extraordinary grace, is far greater than any other creature on earth or in heaven"¹¹⁹. This devotion takes into account the part she played at decisive moments in the history of the salvation which her Son accomplished, and her holiness,

¹¹⁹ II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 53: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 58-59.

already full at her Immaculate Conception yet increasing all the time as she obeyed the will of the Father and accepted the path of suffering (cf. Lk 2:34-35; 2:41-52; Jn 19:25-27), growing constantly in faith, hope and charity. Devotion to Mary recalls too her mission and the special position she holds within the People of God, of which she is the pre-eminent member, a shining example and the loving Mother; it recalls her unceasing and efficacious intercession which, although she is assumed into heaven, draws her close to those who ask her help, including those who do not realize that they are her children. It recalls Mary's glory which ennobles the whole of mankind, as the outstanding phrase of Dante recalls: "You have so ennobled human nature that its very Creator did not disdain to share in it"¹²⁰. Mary in fact is one of our race, a true daughter of Eve — though free of that mother's sin — and truly our sister, who as a poor and humble woman fully shared our lot.

We would add further that devotion to the Blessed Virgin finds its ultimate justification in the unfathomable and free will of God who, being eternal and divine charity (cf. 1 Jn 4:7-8, 16), accomplishes all things according to a loving design. He loved her and did great things for her (cf. Lk 1:49). He loved her for his own sake, and he loved her for our sake too; he gave her to himself and he gave her also to us.

PASTORAL EFFECTIVENESS

57. Christ is the only way to the Father (cf. Jn 14:11), and the ultimate example to whom the disciple must conform his own conduct (cf. Jn 13:15), to the extent of sharing Christ's sentiments (cf. Phil 2:5), living his life and possessing his Spirit (cf. Gal 2:20; Rom 8:10-11). The Church has always taught this and nothing in pastoral activity should obscure this doctrine. But the Church, taught by the Holy Spirit and benefitting from centuries of experience, recognizes that devotion to the Blessed Virgin, subordinated to worship of the divine Saviour and in connection with it, also has a great pastoral effectiveness and constitutes a force for renewing Christian living. It is easy to see the reason for this effectiveness. Mary's many-sided mission to the People of God is a supernatural reality which operates and bears fruit within the body of the Church. One finds cause for joy in considering the different aspects of this mission, and seeing how each of these aspects with its individual effectiveness is directed towards the same end, namely, producing in the children the spiritual

characteristics of the Firstborn Son. The Virgin's maternal intercession, her exemplary holiness and the divine grace which is in her become for the human race a reason for divine hope.

Mary's Role as Mother

The Blessed Virgin's role as Mother leads the People of God to turn with filial confidence to her who is ever ready to listen with a mother's affection and efficacious assistance¹²¹. Thus the People of God have learned to call on her as the Consoler of the Afflicted, the Health of the Sick, the Refuge of Sinners, that they may find comfort in tribulation, relief in sickness and liberating strength in guilt. For she, who is free from sin, leads her children to combat sin with energy and resoluteness¹²². This liberation from sin and evil (cf. Mt 6:13) — it must be repeated — is the necessary premise for any renewal of Christian living.

Mary's Exemplary Holiness

The Blessed Virgin's exemplary holiness encourages the faithful to "raise their eyes to Mary who shines forth before the whole community of the elect as a model of the virtues"¹²³. It is a question of solid, evangelical virtues: faith and the docile acceptance of the Word of God (cf. Lk 1:26-58; 1:45; 11:27-28; Jn 2:5); generous obedience (cf. Lk 1:58); genuine humility (cf. Lk 1:48); solicitous charity (cf. Lk 1:39-56); profound wisdom (cf. Lk 1:29, 34; 2:19, 33, 51); worship of God manifested in alacrity in the fulfilment of religious duties (cf. Lk 2:21-41), in gratitude for gifts received (cf. Lk 46-49), in her offering in the Temple (cf. Lk 2:22-24) and in her prayer in the midst of the apostolic community (cf. Acts 1:12-14); her fortitude in exile (cf. Mt 2:13-23) and in suffering (cf. Lk 2:34-35; 2:49; Jn 19:25); her poverty reflecting dignity and trust in God (cf. Lk 1:48; 2:24); her attentive care for her Son, from his humble birth to the ignominy of the Cross (cf. Lk 2:1-7; Jn 19:25-27); her delicate forethought (cf. Jn 2:1-11); her virginal purity (cf. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38); her strong and chaste married love. These virtues of the Mother will also adorn her children who steadfastly study her example in order to reflect it in their own lives. And this progress in virtue will appear as the conse-

¹²⁰ *La Divina Commedia, Paradiso XXXIII*, 4-6.

¹²¹ Cf. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 60-63: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 62-64.

¹²² Cf. *ibid.*, 65: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 64-65.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 65: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

quence and the already mature fruit of that pastoral zeal which springs from devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Opportunity for Growing in Divine Grace

Devotion to the mother of the Lord becomes for the faithful an opportunity for growing in divine grace, and this is the ultimate aim of all pastoral activity. For it is impossible to honour her who is "full of grace" (Lk 1:28) without thereby honouring in oneself the state of grace, which is friendship with God, communion with him and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is this divine grace which takes possession of the whole man and conforms him to the image of the Son of God (cf. Rom 8:29; Col. 1:18). The Catholic Church, endowed with centuries of experience, recognizes in devotion to the Blessed Virgin a powerful aid for man as he strives for fulfilment. Mary, the New Woman, stands at the side of Christ, the New Man, within whose mystery the mystery of man¹²⁴ alone finds true light; she is given to us as a pledge and guarantee that God's Plan in Christ for the salvation of the whole man has already achieved realization in a creature: in her. Contemplated in the episodes of the Gospels and in the reality which she already possesses in the City of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary offers a calm vision and a reassuring word to modern man, torn as he often is between anguish and hope, defeated by the sense of his own limitations and assailed by limitless aspirations, troubled in his mind and divided in his heart, uncertain before the riddle of death, oppressed by loneliness while yearning for fellowship, a prey to boredom and disgust. She shows forth the victory of hope over anguish of fellowship over solitude, of peace over anxiety, of joy and beauty over boredom and disgust, of eternal visions over earthly ones, of life over death.

Do Whatever He Tells You

Let the very words that she spoke to the servants at the marriage feast of Cana, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5), be a seal on our Exhortation and a further reason in favour of the pastoral value of devotion to the Blessed Virgin as a means of leading men to Christ. Those words, which at first sight were limited to the desire to remedy an embarrassment at the feast, are seen in the context of Saint John's Gospel to re-echo the words used by the people of Israel to give

¹²⁴ Cf. II Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1042-1044.

approval to the Covenant at Sinai (cf. Ex 19:8; 24-3, 7; Dt 5:27) and to renew their commitments (cf. Jos 24:24; Esd 10:12; Neh 5:12). And they are words which harmonize wonderfully with those spoken by the Father at the theophany on Mount Tabor: "Listen to him" (Mt. 17:5).

EPILOGUE

58. Venerable Brothers, we have dealt at length with an integral element of Christian worship: devotion to the Mother of the Lord. This has been called for by the nature of the subject, one which in these recent years has been the object of study and revision and at times the cause of some perplexity. We are consoled to think that the work done by this Apostolic See and by yourselves in order to carry out the norms of the Council — particularly the liturgical reform — is a stepping-stone to an ever more lively and adoring worship of God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and to an increase of the Christian life of the faithful. We are filled with confidence when we note that the renewed Roman Liturgy, also taken as a whole, is a splendid illustration of the Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin. We are upheld by the hope that the directives issued in order to render this devotion ever more pure and vigorous will be applied with sincerity. We rejoice that the Lord has given us the opportunity of putting forward some points for reflection in order to renew and confirm esteem for the practice of the Rosary. Comfort, confidence, hope and joy are the sentiments which we wish to transform into fervent praise and thanksgiving to the Lord as we unite our voice with that of the Blessed Virgin in accordance with the prayer of the Roman Liturgy¹²⁵.

Dear Brothers, while we express the hope that, thanks to your generous commitment, there will be among the clergy and among the people entrusted to your care a salutary increase of devotion to Mary with undoubted profit for the Church and for society, we cordially impart our special Apostolic Blessing to yourselves and to all the faithful people to whom you devote your pastoral zeal.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's on the second day of February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, in the year 1974, the eleventh of our Pontificate.

PAULUS PP. VI

¹²⁵ Cf. Roman Missal, 31 May, Collect.

STUDY QUESTIONS

(THIS CAN ALSO SERVE AS A SUMMARY OF THE DOCUMENT)

INTRODUCTION

1. After reading the first introductory paragraph of **Marialis Cultus** a reader makes the following statement: Devotion to Mary is a very noble part of the primary task of the People of God. — Is he right or wrong?
2. Pope Paul made the following statement and gave reasons for them: (a) Devotion to Mary fits into the only worship that is rightly called "Christian"; (b) Devotion to Mary reflects God's redemptive plan. — What are the reasons?
3. Are modern changes helpful or harmful to marian devotion?

PART ONE (NN. 1-23)

(Part One is about Liturgical Devotion to Mary)

4. Why did the Pope first turn to the sacred liturgy in his discussion of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary?
— (Three reasons). — See **Marialis Cultus** (MC) n. 1.

Section I (nn. 2-15)

(Section I considers "the piety that the liturgical tradition of the universal Church and the renewed Roman Rite expresses towards the holy Mother of God" and reminds us "that the liturgy through its pre-eminent value as worship constitutes the golden norm for Christian piety." See n. 23).

5. "The Advent liturgy, by linking the awaiting of the Messiah and the admirable commemoration of his Mother, presents a happy balance in worship." — What two practical consequences does the Pope draw from this "happy balance"? — See MC n. 4.

6. "The Christmas Season is a prolonged commemoration of the divine, virginal and salvific Motherhood of Mary." — Explain this statement. — See MC n. 5.
7. What are the themes of the celebration of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, on January 1? — See MC n. 5.
8. What are the four Solemnities that "mark with the highest liturgical rank the main dogmatic truths concerning the Handmaid of the Lord"? — See MC n. 6,
9. Give examples to support the following statement: "The theme of Mary and the Church has been inserted into the texts of the Missal in a variety of aspects, a variety that matches the many and varied relations that exist between the Mother of Christ and the Church." — See MC n. 11.
10. Give examples to support the following two statements: "The commemoration of the Blessed Virgin occurs often in the Missal, the Lectionary and the Liturgy of the Hours — the hinges of the liturgical prayer of the Roman Rite. In the other revised liturgical books also expressions of love and suppliant veneration addressed to the Theotokos are not lacking." — See MC n. 14.

Section II (nn. 16-23)

(Section II invites us to "observe how the Church when she celebrates the sacred mysteries assumes an attitude of faith and love similar to that of the Virgin." See n. 23).

11. Explain and illustrate the following statement: Mary is the exemplar of the Church when with faith she **listens, accepts, proclaims** and **venerates** the word of God, **distributes** it to the faithful and in its **light** examines the signs of the times. — See MC n. 17.
12. The title "Virgin in prayer" fits both Mary and the Church. — Explain. — See MC n. 18.
13. The Motherhood of Mary has been set up by God as the type and exemplar of the fruitfulness of the Virgin-Church. — Explain. — See MC n. 19.
14. The Church offers the Eucharistic sacrifice in union with Mary who (a) offered the Incarnate Word at the time of his Presentation in the Temple, and (b) united herself to the sacrifice of her Son in Calvary. — Explain. — See MC n. 20.
15. Give examples of how the Church expresses the following attitudes towards Mary: (a) profound veneration, (b) burning love,

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- (c) trusting invocation, (d) loving service, (e) zealous imitation, (f) profound wonder, and (g) attentive study.— See MC n. 22.

PART TWO (NN. 24-39)

(Part Two is about extra-liturgical forms of devotion to Mary, in general, and how they can be renewed).

16. Fill in the blanks of the following statement and discuss: **A threefold effort is required for the renewal of marian devotion, namely, to substitute ———, to emphasize ———, and to incorporate ———.** — See MC n. 24.
17. Fill in the blanks of the following statement and discuss: **In practice, to work for the renewal of marian devotion means (a) to promote ———, and (b) to proceed to ———.** — See MC n. 24.
18. Fill in the blanks of the following statement and discuss: **Pope Paul wants the revision of expressions and exercises of piety directed towards the Blessed Virgin (a) to be respectful of ———, and (b) open to ———.** — See MC n. 24.

Section I (nn. 25-28)

(Section I of Part Two puts forward, for the renewal of marian devotion, some principles drawn from an examination of the Virgin Mary's relationship with God—the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit—and with the Church. See n. 29).

19. Christian worship is of itself worship offered "to the Father through Christ in the Spirit". It is extended, though in a substantially different way, **FIRST AND FOREMOST AND IN A SPECIAL MANNER**, to the Mother of the Lord and then to the saints. — In what way is devotion to Mary "substantially different" from the worship of God, yet is an "extension" of this worship? — See MC n. 25.
20. Expressions of devotion to the Virgin (a) should give particular prominence to the Christological aspect, and (b) should reflect God's plan. — If these guidelines are followed, what are the expected results? — (Three answers). — See MC n. 25.
21. Discuss how the following considerations contribute both to devotion to Mary and the worship of the Holy Spirit:
(a) The original holiness of Mary was the work of the Holy Spirit:

- (b) The Holy Spirit consecrated and made fruitful Mary's virginity.
 - (c) The mysterious relationship between the Spirit and Mary has an aspect redolent of marriage.
 - (d) Mary is the "Temple of the Holy Spirit".
 - (e) The Paraclete is the spring from which flowed Mary's fulness of grace and abundance of gifts.
 - (f) The Spirit spoke through Mary in her prophetic canticle (Magnificat, Luke 1:46-55).
 - (g) Mary was present in the Upper Room when the Spirit came down on the Infant Church.
 - (h) Through the Virgin's intercession we obtain from the Spirit the capacity of engendering Christ in our own soul. — See MC n. 26.
22. The statements below refer to the intrinsic and ecclesiological content of devotion to Mary. (I) Explain them. (II) Show how they can be used as guiding thoughts in the renewal of marian devotion.
- (a) "The liturgical buildings of Byzantine rite, both in the architectural structure itself and in the use of images show clearly Mary's place in the Church."
 - (b) We share a brotherhood by which we are sons and daughters both of Mary and of the Church.
 - (c) The action of the Church in the world can be likened to an extension of Mary's concern for the good of others.
 - (d) Love for the Church cannot exist without love for Mary. — See MC n. 28.

Section II (nn. 29-39)

(Section II of Part Two adds to the previous guidelines for the renewal of marian devotion, some guidelines from Scripture, Liturgy, Ecumenism and Anthropology.)

23. To have a biblical imprint, marian devotion:

- (a) should diligently use texts and symbols skilfully selected from the Sacred Scriptures;
- (b) should have prayers and chants that draw their inspiration and wording from the Bible;

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(c) should be imbued with the great themes of the Christian message.

Which of these characteristics is most needed? — See MC n. 30.

24. For marian (extra-liturgical) devotion to conform with the norm laid down in the Constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium" regarding relation to the Liturgy, the following are needed:

(a) on the part of the leaders of the local communities: (1) effort, (2) pastoral sensitivity, and (3) perseverance in applying the norm;

(b) on the part of the faithful: a willingness to accept guidelines and ideas drawn from the true nature of Christian worship.

How are long-standing customs affected by these requirements?

— See MC n. 31.

25. What are the two excessive attitudes that could nullify the norm of the Second Vatican Council regarding exercises of piety outside the liturgy? — See MC n. 31.

26. What is the properly balanced attitude to be sought by wise pastoral action regarding the relationship of the Liturgy and exercises of piety? — See MC n. 31.

27. In marian devotion what are the common grounds:

(a) among Catholics and Orthodox Churches? (Two answers).

(b) among Catholics and Anglicans? (Two distinctions).

(c) among Catholics and Churches of the Reform? (One answer).

— See MC n. 32.

28. The ecumenical aspects of Catholic marian devotion are manifested:

(a) by seeking Mary's intercession for the unity of Christians;

(b) by the care to avoid any exaggeration (in teaching) which could mislead other Christians about the true doctrine of the Catholic Church;

(c) by the effort to eliminate manifestations of cult which are opposed to correct Catholic practice;

(d) by the aim of approaching Christ, the source and centre of ecclesiastical communion.

Discuss each point briefly. — See MC n. 32.

29. Explain the following statement: "The picture of the Blessed Virgin presented in a certain type of devotional literature cannot

easily be reconciled with today's life style, especially the way women live today." — See MC n. 34 & n. 36.

30. The following aspects of Mary's life have a permanent and universal exemplary value:

- (a) she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God;
 - (b) she heard the word of God and acted on it;
 - (c) charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions;
 - (d) she was the first and the most perfect of Christ's disciples.
- Relate each point to modern situations. — See MC n. 35 & n. 37.

31. Discuss each of the following points, which are connected with the movement for "women's liberation". Mary is a fitting exemplar:

- (a) for the modern woman anxious to participate with decision-making power in the affairs of the community;
- (b) for the modern woman who wants to make a courageous choice to consecrate herself totally to the love of God, setting aside the married state;
- (c) for the modern woman who champions the humble and the oppressed without fear of powerful people in privileged positions;
- (d) for the modern woman who has to be strong when experiencing poverty, suffering, flight and exile. — See MC n. 37.

32. Explain the following statement: Mary's maternal role is not exclusively concerned with her own Son, but has a social dimension. — See MC n. 37.

33. Discuss each of the following points.
Mary is the exemplar of:

- (a) the modern disciple of the Lord who builds the earthly and temporal city while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city;
- (b) the modern disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy;
- (c) the modern disciple who is the active witness of that love which builds up Christ in people's hearts. — See MC n. 37.

34. What attitudes should we develop to counteract the following incorrect attitudes of piety?
- (a) exaggeration of content and form which even falsifies doctrine;
 - (b) small-mindedness;
 - (c) vain credulity;
 - (d) sterile and ephemeral sentimentality. — See MC n. 38.
35. What is the ultimate purpose of devotion to the Blessed Virgin? — See MC n. 39.

PART THREE (NN. 40-55)

(Part Three is about the Angelus and the Rosary)

36. The Angelus does not need to be revised. — Give five reasons. — See MC n. 41.
37. In what way is the Rosary “a Gospel prayer”? — See MC n. 44.
38. What is praiseworthy in the orderly and gradual succession of the “mysteries of the Rosary” and their division into three sets? — See MC n. 45.
39. What are the two christological aspects that can be seen in the litany—like succession of Hail Mary’s in the Rosary? — See MC n. 46.
40. How important is the element of **contemplation** in the Rosary? — See MC n. 47.
41. What two opposite excesses have been expressed regarding the relationship of the Rosary and the Liturgy? — See MC n. 48.
42. Give three reasons why “the Rosary is a practice of piety which easily harmonizes with the liturgy”. — See MC n. 48.
43. The Rosary may be prayed as a preparation for Mass and also as its continuing echo. But it is a mistake to pray the Rosary during Mass. — Explain. — See MC n. 48.
44. What are the elements of the Rosary as authoritatively taught by St. Pius V? — See MC n. 49.
45. Are modern imitations of the Rosary allowed? — See MC n. 51.
46. How does the Pope tie up the practice of the Family Rosary with the concept of the family as the “domestic Church”? — See MC n. 52.

47. **What does the Pope say about the difficulty of modern families to pray together? — See MC n. 54.**
48. **Is there any obligation to pray the Rosary? — See MC n. 55.**

CONCLUSION (NN. 56-57)

(The Conclusion sums up and emphasizes the **theological value** of devotion to the Blessed Virgin and recalls briefly its **pastoral effectiveness** for renewing the Christian way of life).

49. **"The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an intrinsic element of Christian worship."** In this connection it may be asked: What is the connection between the Church's devotion to Mary and:

- (a) the Church's norm of prayer?
- (b) the Church's norm of faith? — See MC n. 56.

50. The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin, as an intrinsic element of Christian worship, has the following characteristics (rooted in revelation and founded on dogma):

- (a) it is based on the singular dignity of Mary;
- (b) it takes into account:
 - 1) Mary's salvific role
 - 2) Mary's holiness;
- (c) it recalls:
 - 1) Mary's mission and position in the People of God
 - 2) Mary's unceasing and efficacious intercession
 - 3) Mary's glory which ennobles the whole of mankind;
- (d) it finds its ultimate justification in the will (love) of God.

Discuss each point. — See MC n. 56.

51. **What conditions are needed so that devotion to the Blessed Virgin would not obscure the Church's doctrine about Christ as the only way to the Father and the ultimate example of Christians? — (Two answers). — See MC n. 57.**
52. The three main aspects of Mary's mission to the People of God are:
- (a) her role as Mother;
 - (b) her exemplary holiness;

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- (c) the divine grace which is in her and which calls forth the life of grace in others.

Show how these aspects of Mary's mission are effective in achieving the same end, namely, that of producing in us the spiritual characteristics of the Firstborn Son. — See MC n. 57.

EPILOGUE (N. 58)

53. Why did the Pope write such a lengthy exhortation?

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

The questions most appropriate for group discussion have been printed in bold letters, namely, questions number 3, 16, 17, 18, 24, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 41, 43, 47, 51 and 53.

—oOo—

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS RELEVANT TODAY

On Saturday, April 20, during the course of the International Congress to mark the 7th centenary of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas, Paul VI went to the Angelicum University, Rome, where he delivered an address to the assembled participants. The address is published herewith, but without the introductory part. Subtitles supplied by BEF.

We praise and encourage the interest that you have for Saint Thomas, which we think will be of great value in your intellectual pursuits and not without its usefulness for you yourselves, as you strive earnestly for the conquest of that highest Wisdom which is identified with true life.

ART OF THINKING WELL. — Nevertheless we do not wish to lose the welcome opportunity which is offered to us here to recall to your students — if not to you yourselves, experts of thought — how useful it can still be today to take one's place in the school of Saint

Thomas, in order to learn above all the art of thinking well (the same is also true of the common value of the other outstanding Scholastic). We limit ourself at this time to posing a question of method, of intellectual pedagogy. Pascal counsels us "to work in order to be able to think well" (cf. *Pensées*, 347). In other words, it is necessary to be attentive to logic. We use the term "logic" in a broad and true sense, that is, the strict and honest use of the intellect in the research of the truth of things and of life.

DEARTH OF AUTHENTIC PHILOSOPHY. — Why this recommendation? Because we fear that the cognitive faculties of the new generation may easily be attracted and tempted to be satisfied by the faculty and abundance of sense and phenomeno-scientific impressions — those outside the human spirit — and of those which are removed from that systematic and careful effort to reach the

higher understanding of both knowledge and being. We fear a dearth of authentic philosophy which is able today to sustain human thought both in coherent and progressive scientific effort, and especially in the formation of the mind for the perceiving of truth as such, and which is capable therefore of giving to the human spirit the width and depth of vision to which it is indeed destined. With a dearth of such philosophy there would be a danger of not attaining that supreme and indeed fundamental and elementary knowledge which can bring the human spirit to the attainment of its true destiny and to the happy and indispensable — even if only inchoative — understanding of God's world. We are however certain that a correct, honest and strict exercise of philosophical thinking predisposes the spirit to accept also that supernatural message of divine light, which is called faith. The Lord says so: "He who does what is true comes to the light" (Jn. 3:221).

MASTER TEACHER. — The School of Saint Thomas can be for us an elementary but providential introduction to that scaling of intellectual philosophical or theological heights which calls with insistence for that respect of the laws of thought — in analysis and in synthesis, in inductive research and in deductive conclusions — which is indispensable for conquering the summits of truth and for preserving the human mind from the empty experience if illusory and often fragile reasoning.

And there is also another reason for this, a reason which is still in the didactic field but which is of considerable importance in the economy of thought. It is to accustom the students (and all of us, when confronted by knowledge, are students) *to reason in virtue of the subjective principles of truth and the objective principles of reality, and not according to formulae which the cult of fashion, often promoted by many external and passing factors, forces on the passive mentality of a given grouping or of a given moment of history.* It seems strange, but this is how it is: Thomas the Master, far from depriving the disciple of his own personal and original, exercise of knowledge and research, rather awakens that *appetitus veritatis* which ensures for thought an ever new fecundity, and for the disciple his own characteristic personality.

ENCOURAGEMENT. — There is much more that could be said about this. But let these simple observations suffice to assure all of you, engaged as you are in Thomistic studies, of our esteem, and to encourage your serious and many-sided work, which will contribute to progress in thinking, especially philosophical thinking, and to the healthy and indispensable nourishing also of religious thinking — faith — which is not opposed to reason but has need of it, for as Saint Thomas says: "To believe is to think with assent" (II-IIae, 2, 1). To all of you our Blessing.

THE TASK OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

The following paragraphs are taken from a homily delivered by the Holy Father on Palm Sunday at St. Peter's Basilica.

Bearing new and victorious witness to Christ, in our time, is the

task of the young generation, the task of the children, the adolescents, the youth! Today it is your task, if tomorrow it is to be the task of the adults.

BE REAL CHRISTIANS. —

Our talk becomes complicated and delicate: how can children and young people be witnesses to Christ? And what we say for the boys of course hold good for the girls — the girls know this. Therefore: how can you be witnesses to Christ? We could sum up the immense and difficult extent of this duty in one word: be Christians, real Christians. You have been baptized. Do you think about this? Do you pray, that is, talk to Christ and to God, our most loving heavenly Father? Are you sincere and good, in his presence? Do you love your families and your schools? Do you do some act of goodness for the person who is suffering? And so on. You know all these things and certainly you do them; and so you bear witness to Christ, if and because you live like Christians.

OVERCOME COWARDICE. — But there is something more to be done. Witness involves some positive act of loyalty to Christ. So listen... We shall suggest to you a short set of steps that lead to witness to Christ. The first step is that of courage for the Christian name (cf. 1 Peter 1:16). Are you ashamed of being Christian, of going to Church? That is the first cowardice to be overcome. We must not be ashamed and run away when showing ourselves to be Christians causes others to despise us, or in some way endangers our reputation or interests (cf. Mt. 14:51).

BE FAITHFUL AND HUMBLE. — The second step to be climbed is this: that of malicious and often unjust criticism of the Church, her institutions, her members. Protest has become fashionable, and it fills the heart with

bitterness and pride; it causes love to dry up. Protest often tends towards attraction to and even solidarity with the enemies of the Church. Be faithful and humble, and you will be strong; and you will be able to bear good and positive witness to your Christian and Catholic belief.

SUPPORT MILITANT ORGANIZATION. — This is the third step: be willing and proud to give your name and your active support to some militant organization in the fields of action, piety or charity. Today, as we know, people no longer want to give militant support to some cause or idea that has religious, Catholic or Christian connections or even that is purely and nobly for the common good. People prefer to stay free and not bound by obligations to an organization. This is not always a good thing. Witness becomes easier and strong if it springs from union, from a shared commitment and collective loyalty. Moreover, we must not inwardly prefer the easy ways of intellectual, spiritual and social indifference. Individualism, isolation and indifference to good causes are not in conformity with the Christian way, especially in what concerns the matter that interests us now, namely witness to Christ the Lord.

THE CHURCH AWAITS. — Dear young people and children, you must know that the Church, and perhaps history itself, now awaits precisely from you a Christian profession that is not denied, not simulated, no indifferent, but one that is frank, reasonable, joyful and also, for our modern world, exemplary and convincing.

TO THE BISHOPS OF ASIA

Pope Paul VI, on the occasion of the first Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), held in Taipei from April 22 to 27, sent a letter of greeting and encouragement. Herewith we publish the letter minus the introductory part. Sub-titles supplied by BEF.

Dear Brothers in Christ, because of the love which we have for the peoples of Asia, because of the importance of Evangelization in your countries, and because of the value which we attach to your discussions, we now take this opportunity to share with you some of our thoughts, and to reiterate some of the things we said when we stood in your midst on Asian soil in 1970.

ASIA IS FERTILE GROUND. — You have the consolation and the inspiration of going forth to sow the seed of Christ's Message in fertile ground. The persuasion of spiritual values, the high degree of ascetical discipline, the family-oriented sense of filial devotion and the thirst for spiritual culture shown by your nation through their different religious—all these things are indisputable pointers to the primacy among your peoples of the things of the spirit.

THE CHURCH MUST MAKE HERSELF NATIVE. — The propagation of the Christian Message must in no way cancel out or lessen these cultural and spiritual values, which constitute a priceless heritage. The Church must make herself in her fullest expression native to your countries, your cultures, your races. Let the seed, which is the word of God, put down

deep roots in the fertile soil of Asia. Let the Church draw nourishment from the genuine values of venerable Asian religious and cultures. Her own contribution to Asia will surely be welcomed by your peoples, who are accustomed by centuries of spiritual formation to recognize and acknowledge what is good in others. Let the Church be seen, therefore, as a community of brethren, distinguished by their love for one another and for all men, imitating their founder who went about doing good (cf. Acts 10:39).

RESPOND TO NEEDS. — It is our earnest and constant prayer that the increasing pace of Evangelization may help to preserve your peoples from the danger of materialism. Let it do so, not by ignoring material needs, but by responding to the hunger for bread, for responsibility, for freedom and for justice. Let Evangelization respond to these needs by demonstrating that practical and all-embracing brotherly solidarity with one another under the common fatherhood of God which typifies our Christian Religion (cf. Message to the Peoples of Asia, 29 November, 1970, AAS LXII, 1971, 35-40).

PEACE. — Finally, we hope and pray that the Evangelization of Asia will give great glory to God in heaven and bring peace on earth, peace of heart, peace within families, peace among nations. Blessed indeed are those who spread the Gospel of peace.

Beloved Brothers, in pledge of our enduring spiritual affection we gladly impart our Apostolic Blessing.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **ONESIMO GORDONCILLO**, presbytero dioecesis Dumaguetsensis, electo Episcopo titulo Gunugitano, atque auxiliari sacri Praesulis Dumaguetsensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui pro munere nostro communis omnium patris fidelibus providemus, attentiores tamen animum in Episcopos conferimus, qui ministerii Nostri praecipue sunt participes. Perlibenter igitur accedendum esse putavimus precibus Venerabilis Fratris Epiphanii Surban Belmonte, Episcopi Dumaguetsensis, petentis ut Auxiliaris sibi assignaretur Episcopus. Quoniamque tu Nobis admodum aptus visus es, dilecte fili, cui huiusmodi munus committeremus, auditis hoc super negotio Venerabilibus Fratribus Nostris S.R.E. Cardinalibus qui Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis sunt praepositi, apostolica Nostra potestate te nominamus Auxiliarem Episcopi, quem diximus, simulque Ecclesiam titulo concedimus **Gunugitanam**, ad praesens vacantem. Habebis scilicet omnia iura et privilegia, officiis atque obligationibus teneberis, quae in Apostolicis Litteris — Ecclesiae Sanctae — describuntur, die sexto mensis Augusti datis, anno millesimo nongentesimo sexagesimo sexto. Maiori autem commodo tuo consulentes, permitimus ut ordinationem a quolibet Episcopo extra urbem Romam accipias, ad normas legum liturgicarum; antea autem tuum erit catholicae fidei professionem facere atque iusiurandum dare fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros, teste quovis Episcopo, formulasque iuxta quas iuraveris, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittere, de more signatas sigilloque impressas. Extremum, dilecte fili, hortamur, ut ad excelsa, cum episcopali ordinatione, elatus et ad praeclariora in dies patranda, uni Christo Jesu plane confidas, qui Ecclesiae suae ministris semper adest, gratiam cum officio donans, vires cum onere largiens. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die decimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri undecimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT
Secretarius Status

EDUARDUS MARTINEZ
Adessor

JOSEPHUS ROSSO, Proton. Apost.
EUGENIUS SEVI, Proton. Apost.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **RICHARDO TANCINCO**, Vicario Capitulari dioecesis Calbayoganae, electo Episcopo eiusdem Ecclesiae, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui divino consilio beatissimo Petro in regimen Ecclesiae successimus, sicut illius principis Apostolorum auctoritatem participamus apud omnes christianas gentes, ita perennem eius amorem erga gregem, quantum maxime possumus, imitari studemus, ad Magistri divini iussa atque optata — cfr. Io. 10, 1 seqq.; 21, 15-17. Resonant enim in animo Nostro verba Petro facta ad lacum Tiberiadis: “Pasce agnos meos . . . pasce oves meas” — I^o 21, 15-17; quae res, secundum Augustini opinionem — Cfr. In Io. verba allata — plane “officium amoris” est. Cum ergo cathedralis Ecclesia **Calbayogana**, in Insulis Philippinis, translato Venerabili fratre Cypriano Urgel Villahermosa ad Sedem Palensem, iam vacaret, benefieri censuimus, si te, dilecte fili, cuius animi laudes atque virtutes haud minimae, ad eam gubernandam destinaremus. Qua propter, consilio petito a Venerabilibus fratribus Nostris, Sacrae Congregationi praepositis pro Episcopis, te Episcopum eius dioecesis nominamus atque renuntiamus, dato nempe regimine omnique administratione cum iuribus et oneribus debitis. Maiori autem comodo tuo studentes, Facultatem tibi facimus, ut extra urbem Roman Episcopus consecrari possis a quem volueris catholico Praesule, ad normam iuris. Attamen in tuae dioecesis possessionem venire non poteris, nisi ante et fidei professionem feceris, et ius iurandum dederis fidelitatis erga nos et hanc beatissimam Petri Cathedram, teste scilicet aliquo Episcopo rectae fidei. Ea vero re acta, formulas secundum quas iuraveris, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittes, a te atque ab eo qui iuranti tibi adfuerit subsignatas. Id etiam monemus, esse tibi has Litteras Nostras tum clero tum populo perlegendas, die festo, in cathedrali templo. Quos omnes capta harum Litterarum occasione hortamur, ut non solum te aequissimo animo excipiant, sed etiam ut mandatis tuis pareant, idque diligentissime, cum hoc non parum ad Ecclesiarum prosperitatem conducat. Ceterum, dilecte fili, si Ecclesia sancta est fermentum et humanae societatis quasi anima, — cfr. Lumen Gent. n. 38 —, id etiam patet, esse Episcopos interiorum huius fermenti virtutem; ex quo sane erue,

qua laude florere oporteat eos, qui et patres, et rectores, et duces populi christiani constituentur. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die octava mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri undecimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT

Secretarius Status

EDUARDUS MARTINEZ

Adsector

EUGENIUS SERVI, Proton. Apost.

JOSEPHUS MASSIMI, Proton. Apost.

MARIANO GAVIOLA

BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND OF THE HOLY SEE
TITULAR BISHOP OF GIRBA AND MILITARY VICAR

D E C R E E

In our desire to fulfill more effectively the sacred office entrusted to us, and in order to provide more fully for the spiritual and temporal welfare of all those we are to serve in the Military Vicariate of the Philippines, after proper consultations and having implored the guidance of the Holy Paraclete, we hereby make the following appointments, and cause the same to be so proclaimed:

- Very Rev. and Colonel Ciriaco E. Escutin**
AFP Chief Chaplain
as Military Pro-Vicar or Delegate
- Very Rev. and Captain John Roberto Pernia**
as Secretary Chancellor
- Very Rev. and Major Ruperto R. Fernandez**
AFP Deputy Chief Chaplain
as Consultor and Notary
- Very Rev. and Lt. Colonel Arsenio B. de Guzman**
The Constabulary Chaplain, as Consultor
- Very Rev. and Lt. Colonel Neopolo P. Arsitio**
The Army Chaplain, as Consultor
- Very Rev. and Lt. Colonel Crispin L. Crisologo**
The Air Force Chaplain, as Consultor
- Very Rev. and Lt. Colonel Juan S. Bautista**
The Navy Chaplain, as Consultor
- Very Rev. and Major Simplicio S. Manigque**
as Pastor of the Military Pro-Cathedral
and Public Relations Officer

Each and all above appointees shall have the rights, duties and privileges as provided for *de facto vel ex contextu* in the decree of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation on the erection of the Military Vicariate in the Republic of the Philippines issued on December 8, 1950, and in the Code of Canon Law, *mutatis mutandis* and/or in their respective credentials.

Given at the Military Vicariate Office, AFP-GHQ, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1974.

+ (Sgd.) MARIANO G. GAVIOLA, D.D.
Titular Bishop of Girba
Military Vicar

THE CASE FOR AQUINAS

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On the feast of St. Nicholas in 1273, Italian Dominican Friar Thomas Aquinas entered a chapel in Naples to say Mass before beginning a day of lecturing and writing. During the Mass, something profound happened to him: some kind of physical or nervous breakdown, perhaps accompanied by an overpowering mystical vision. Afterward, he ceased dictating his theological masterwork, the **Summa Theologiae**. "All that I have written," he explained to concerned friends, "seems to me like straw compared to what has now been revealed to me." He never wrote another line. Three months later—700 years ago last month—he died in a monastery on the way to a church council at Lyon.

He was 49, and the author of more than 40 thick volumes of philosophy and theology so harmonious to Catholic teaching that he became known as "the Angelic Doctor." This year Protestants and Roman Catholics alike are marking the seventh centenary of Thomas' death with a sympathetic reassessment of his writings.

Just two decades ago, St. Thomas Aquinas was the darling of Roman Catholic thought, a man so revered that he was the only philosopher actually named in the church's 1918 code of canon law. The code declared that his "method, doctrine and principles" were to be the foundation of every priest's philosophical and theological training. Brilliant Neo-Thomists like the French philosophers Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson had given Thomism a modern relevance. University of Chicago Philosopher Mortimer (**The Great Books**) Adler considered Aquinas to be one of the foremost molders of Western thought. In many Ramon Catholic colleges, students got heavy doses of Thomism; later philosophical giants like Descartes, Hume and Kant were only mentioned for their errors.

FONT OF TRUTH. Catholic Theologian David Tracy, writing in a recent issue of the **Christian Century**, recalls the period somewhat ruefully: "Has Einstein spoken? Fine, but really — if you look hard and long enough, it's all there in Aquinas. Are you looking for an aesthetic or political theory . . . applicable to the modern situa-

tion? Fine, read Thomas. Do you want an adequate contemporary theology? Master the **Summa Theologiae** and the **Summa Contra Gentiles**." Even before the Second Vatican Council, some progressive Catholic theologians were abandoning the kind of worshipful Thomism Tracy describes. After the council had ushered in a new spirit of intellectual freedom in the 1960s, Thomas' fall into disfavor accelerated. His structured philosophy was criticized as too static, his rationality rejected for lacking the insights of existentialism. This year, at one typical U.S. Catholic seminary — St. Joseph's in Yonkers, N.Y. — only one course specifically offers studies in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

Now a more balanced view of St. Thomas is emerging as a result of the renewed interest in his works during the seventh century. While there is a broadening appreciation of Aquinas' accomplishments, few respected thinkers want him re-elevated to his position as the Roman Catholic font of philosophical and theological truth. German Jesuit Karl Rahner, whose own considerable body of work is a creative blend of Thomism and the thought of such modern thinkers as Kant, Fichte and Heidegger, in fact deplores such obsequious veneration. He points out that "it was not Thomas himself who was rejected, but Thomism as the only legitimate school of theology and philosophy." Rahner and other defenders of Aquinas argue that it was the church's rigid conservatism and generations of slavish and unimaginative imitators that gave Thomism its bad name.

Many of those taking another look at St. Thomas are emphasizing Aquinas' vigorous and comprehensive approach to philosophy rather than his teachings themselves. "Thomas was not a man who believed that one key would open all doors," says Rahner, "but he had infinite patience and tried to find different keys with which to open different doors." Presbyterian Theologian Paul Lehmann sees Thomas as an "astringent" model for seminarians. He was, Lehmann says, "a marvelously gifted and precise theological thinker."

NEW KNOWLEDGE. Like other great figures in history, Thomas rose to prominence by responding to the crises of his day. As Dominican Historian James A. Weisheipl points out in a new book, **Friar Thomas d'Aquino** (Doubleday; \$8.95), Thomas emerged in a time of intellectual and spiritual upheaval, an era of "constant change" not unlike the present one. On one spiritual front, he was caught in a rivalry between the secular clergy and the new reformist "mendicant" orders, the Franciscans and his own Dominicans. On the philosophical level, he was part of an era of huge enthusiasm for new knowledge, particularly the works of Aristotle, which were

then influencing Christian Europe through the commentaries of the Islamic philosopher Averroës (Ibn Rushd) of Córdoba.

The reigning philosophy of Thomas' time was that of the great church father St. Augustine (354-430), whose thought was largely a Christian expansion of the idealism of Plato. The rationalism of Aristotle was thus viewed as a threat; worse yet, Averroës' interpretation of Aristotle seemed to raise contradictions between reason and faith. Thomas conceded that reason could not prove every truth of faith, but insisted that rational thought is compatible with spiritual belief — and devoted his life to proving that contention.

"He was a man of his time," says Jesuit Theologian Avery Dulles. "He re-stated the whole body of Catholic dogma in terms that made sense to a person whose commitment was to Aristotelian philosophy. He showed how a synthesis between dogma and philosophy can be made creatively." Writing in *Commonweal*, Catholic Philosopher Michael Novak confesses awe at the way Thomas' philosophy "holds together the centrifugal tendencies of human experience . . . No thinker has forged a more true-to-life unity between subjectivity and objectivity, between story and reason, between revelation and sense."

Novak and other admirers cite Thomas' present-day usefulness in varying ways. A number of prominent ethicists, for example, find considerable relevance in such concepts as his understanding of moral habits and his conviction that acts must be consistent with the essence of human "being." Along with Aquinas' moral philosophy, Oxford Professor Anthony Kenny cites his work in metaphysics and philosophical theology among the achievements that, "entitle him to rank with Plato and Aristotle, with Descartes and Leibnitz, with Locke and Hume and Kant."

Yet Thomas' defenders point out inevitable weaknesses in his work — poor texts of the Scriptures to work with, for instance, and none of the resources of archaeology or linguistic tools available today. More basically, Evangelical Philosopher Ronald H. Nash, writing in *Christianity Today*, takes issue with Aquinas' concept of epistemology — the nature of knowing truth. "Both Aquinas and Aristotle believed that sensory experience is the basis of all knowledge," Nash contends. Such empiricism paved the way for skeptics like David Hume, who ended up by concluding that the mind could know nothing beyond its own sense impressions. Only a philosophy that posits the presence of "innate ideas" in the mind can avoid such skepticism, argues Nash — but Thomas refused that Platonic concept.

Despite his rejection of Thomas' system of thought, concludes Nash, "I endorse his ideal. Christians ought to be engaged in developing a view of life and the world as a whole, in showing the implications of Christian theism for every area of human knowledge. No one before him and few since him have developed any world view — theistic or secular — as complete as his." Of course, any philosopher who picks up Nash's challenge will have to deal with a world of knowledge much more complex than that of Thomas' day, a world that the Angelic Doctor himself would likely have confronted with nothing less than intellectual glee.

Time Magazine, April 15, 1974, pp. 33-34.

REFLECTION

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF VOCATIONS

As the Catholic world observed Vocations Day on May 5, people were reminded about the problems of vocation to the priestly and religious life today.

STATISTICS

A recently published Vatican report on the Holy See's activities during 1973 said only 3,000 new priests were ordained, 196 fewer than in 1972. Deaths of priests in 1973 totalled 4,025.

The report said there were 343,329 priests around the world — 2,907 less than in 1972. The number of diocesan priests fell by 3,291 to 229,061 although the number belonging to religious orders rose by 384 to 114,268.

There are 191,398 parishes but 39,431 had no resident priests. Of the 79,217 mission stations, only 8,149 had resident priests.

There was one priests to every 64,000 faithful, if the world average is to be considered. It is common belief that one priest per 1,000 faithful is an ideal ratio. It would be alarming if the ratio would be 1 priest per 4,000 Catholics. In the Philippines, there are parishes where the ratio is one priest to 50,000.

LESS DROP OUTS

The same report said that petitions from priests to "drop out" from the ministry in 1973 "showed a slight decline while there was a rise in requests for reinstatement by priests already given dispensations."

This trend has been confirmed by a report coming from New York (U.S.A.) that "Bearings for Re-establishment", an agency set up eight years ago to help former clergy and nuns make transition to secular life, was suspending activities. "The exodus of priests and religious from the active ministry appears to have, tapered off," said Malcolm Pennington, chairman of the Board. "During the past year, for example, individuals contacting "Bearings" had dropped to less than 30 per month from a customary rate of over 100 per month with peaks near 400."

The organization, which has aided more than 5,500 ex-clergymen and nuns enter secular careers since its founding in 1966, at one time had branch offices in eight US cities and several abroad. All of these also have been closed, except for one in London, England.

MEANINGFUL AND SATISFYING

In another development, the head of the World Confederation of Benedictines, Abbot Primate Rembert Weakland, was asked what kind of monastery attracts vocations. He answered: "Any monastery with a clearly defined programme or ideal tends to attract vocations." He added: "The decisive factor with respect to vocations is whether or not a particular monastery, large or small, liberal or conservative, is doing something significant, something alive. People like to be where the action is — even if that action is good contemplation."

The attitudes of priests and religious, he also said, are of prime importance in attracting vocations. "By that I mean priests and religious who attract vocations are contented. They're not suffering through crises both personal and vocational; they know who they are and they know what they're doing."

INTEREST IN PRAYER

He also finds "growing interest in prayer an important element with respect to vocations. Even the most active young people considering vocations stress the growing importance of prayer. In my opinion, we can no longer attract vocations simply with an apostolic, activist ideal."

PERSONALISM

Another man deeply involved in priestly and religious recruitment, Father Edward Baldwin, executive director of the National Centre for Church Vocations (U.S.A.), said that concrete experiences more than abstract ideas or ideals attract young people to vocations today.

"In terms of personalism, many young people come in because they have had a good experience with a priest or sister. This has always been there, but it's much stronger now. Vocation directors are finding more and more that in areas where there are good experiences, recruiting is great. If the experiences are poor, well..."

SPIRITUALITY

The main new factor, Father Baldwin said, is a renewed interest in spirituality among Church vocation candidates. From his own personal experience among seminarians, he notes that "a few years ago it was more action-oriented. You almost had to drag students into the chapel. Their feeling was, 'My action is my prayer.' That may still be true to some extent, but it's not the whole picture. Today candidates for the priesthood and religious life seem to be more led by the Spirit" and seek real prayer experience.

Bible Study

Fourth of a series

ABRAHAM'S OFFSPRING BECOMES THE PEOPLE OF GOD

(The book of Exodus)

by

Bernard J. Le Frois, S.V.D.

At the close of the book of Genesis, Abraham's offspring was still a clan. Suddenly, in the opening pages of Exodus, it is a large group of persons enslaved in bondage. God delivers them, makes them into a people, his own Chosen People, with Moses as leader and organizer. The exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage, culminating in the Covenant with Yahweh, is the first part of the drama of salvation. These are the two great events of Israel's history, and around them her entire subsequent history revolved.

FACT AND FICTION

The facts. To deny the exodus from Egypt of a core of Jacob's descendants and their covenant made with Yahweh, Israel's God, is to overlook the centuries long conviction of Israel herself, which was so embedded in the national consciousness, that nothing could shake it, not even the dire chastisements that Israel underwent in the course of her development. Present-day authors bear this out:* "The events of fundamental importance related by the Old Testament did occur: the escape from bondage, the Sinai Covenant, and so forth. These are historical facts, **or the phenomenon of Israel has no meaning at all**" (B. Ahern, *The Formation of Scripture*, p. 24). "What the Incarnation is to Christianity, the Exodus is to the Old Testament. Without it we cannot understand the history

* Abbreviated references are given in full at the end of the article.

and religion of the Hebrews" (JBC 3,2). "It is not necessary to embark on a lengthy discussion about the historical character of these events. If they are not historical, the subsequent unfolding of Israel's history would be inexplicable. The very fact that it was deemed necessary to attach somehow or other all later accretions to those basic facts goes to prove that they are well grounded in very old and sound traditions" (NCC 175, a).

The literary form in which the events are written. Let us bear in mind that the actual events were not written down at once, but were first transmitted orally for hundreds of years. Oral transmission often embellished the events with details, not in order to falsify, but to let the real events carry greater conviction. The real events were God's interventions, in Israel's eyes. To make these stand out, various devices were used, poetic descriptions, dramatic presentations, the technique of enlarging the numbers to give them not a numerical value but a sign value, and also other literary devices. "The literary form of Exodus has been aptly designated as a religious epic. It contains sound historical facts, facts which form the groundwork of Israelitic religion, but which are frequently embellished with an epic tone. Such a mode of writing served a twofold end: it enhanced the greatness of the God of Israel, and it put in singular relief the people of his choice" (JBC 3,2). "The prophet theologians who shaped the Exodus narratives were interested in history precisely in so far as it revealed the sacred" (Plastaras, *God of Exodus*, 5-6). "The Exodus and the Covenant form the basis of Israel's further history. The faith of Israel preserved the nucleus of the facts and extended and enhanced them in daily life, not least in the ever-repeated religious ceremonies. The memory of exact circumstances grew dim. The historian is compelled to grope in the dark. He is not nearly so certain of the course of events during the Exodus as the film makers of Hollywood, yet much more than they is he conscious of the far-reaching effects of this event upon the faith and history of Israel" (Grollenberg, *Short Atlas*, 74).

"A stirring historical drama unfolds in the book of Exodus. The protagonist is Israel's God, who intervenes on behalf of a helpless band of slaves. The plot, developed through a succession of suspense-filled episodes, is God's contest against the Egyptian Pharaoh, the mightiest emperor of the day. The denouement (outcome) comes when, in the nick of time, Israel's pursuers are swallowed up in the waters of the Red Sea. The leading theme of the drama is the action and triumph of Israel's God. Viewing the Exodus as a historical drama rather than a colorless factual report will help us enter more sympathetically into its spirit. . . . These narratives were written in the confessional language of worship, not in that of scientific prose" (Anderson, *Understanding the OT*, 15-16).

Date and Route of the Exodus. Both these items are open to much discussion, but they are irrelevant for the religious message. Most authors today opt for the middle of the 13th century B.C. (1250) for the Exodus out of Egypt. As to the route followed, no convincing argument has toppled the traditional opinion that the route went southward. Then Mt. Sinai is at the southern base of the peninsula. Some however prefer a northerly route, with the mountain of the covenant in the NW part of the Sinai peninsula. McKenzie (DB "Exodus") discusses both items well. Anderson (pp. 32-37) gives the chronological tables. Concerning the "Red Sea" all authors agree that this is a mistranslation of the Septuagint version. Israel did not cross the Red Sea of today. Yam Sup(h) in Hebrew is a "reed sea", a shallow body of swampy water such as between Bitter Lakes and Lake Timsah, or Lake Timsah and Lake Balah.

The Sources for the Exodus narrative. The threefold source for the accounts given in the book of Exodus have been briefly described in the preceding article. They are the Yahwist (J or Y), the Elohist (E) and the Priestly (P). J. Plastaras in his book, "The God of Exodus", has given an excellent evaluation of the choice of the redactor, why he fused them in each instance in the manner given. His purpose was theological and religious throughout.

DELIVERANCE

1. The Saving Act of Yahweh.

The divine event. In the opening chapters of Exodus, the dramatic presentation intensifies the stages of oppression until conditions become nigh impossible for Israel. This focusses the victory entirely on Yahweh, God of Israel, who intervenes to save Abraham's offspring. Deliverance is seen as a mighty act of salvation. "The Lord God himself saved Israel that day from the power of the mighty Egyptians" (14, 30). **Israel first came to know her God not as Creator but as Savior.** She celebrated her deliverance in private and public prayer, in saga and cultic drama, in prophetic and wisdom literature, generation after generation. This supposes an event which is entirely out of proportion with the circumstances in which helpless Israel found herself, and it was not just an ordinary escape of a band of slaves which her later theologians interpreted in a religious sense, as some authors would have us believe. Israel herself was convinced of Yahweh's special intervention.

The presentation of the sources. We have a constant blending of sources (J, E, P) both in the narratives of the plagues (7-11) and in the actual exodus out of Egypt (13-14). The sacred writer is intent on his religious purpose, but he is not in the least concerned with

the Scholastic definition of "miracle". He could see God's saving hand in storm and whirlwind and any of God's created agents. He employs all his literary devices to show God's wonderful deeds. There is artistic crescendo in the presentation of the plagues: the first four annoy, the next four harm, the ninth terrifies, the tenth breaks down all resistance. The incongruity of all cattle dying in the fifth, but who are there again for the sixth plague, only confirms the fact that the author is blending his sources. He drew on the existing traditions, and conflated them until he reached the sacred number of ten. That mattered little. The lesson was clear: it was Yahweh who brought Pharaoh into submission to let Israel go. It was he who used the phenomena of nature to come to the aid of his people. By the death of Egypt's first-born, Egypt was given to understand that Israel's God is greater than all her gods, else they would have resisted this tragedy and prevented it. Evidently these chapters must be read as a religious account, a theology of events. Details only went to bring home the religious lesson. Again, in ch. 13-14 various traditions have been blended. The more ancient tradition would seem to be given in 14, 21 where a night-long East wind is expressly given as the cause for the marshland to become dry enough for passage. Such a hot wind easily stirs up terrific electric storms which could panic the Egyptians at a given moment. Chapter 15, though a very ancient poem, is already a **poetical description** of the event, and Psalm 78,13 is still more dramatic: "He cleft the sea and brought them through, he made the waters stand still as a mound". Strange to say, many Bible readers overlook the night-long East wind, and emphasize the walls of water standing up like cement on both sides, forgetting that the redactor has fused the early prosaic account (14, 21) with the later poetic and dramatic descriptions.

Typology. Israel's deliverance has always been considered a figure of the Christian's deliverance from mankind's archenemy Satan, through the sole power of Christ the Savior. Man passes through the saving waters of Baptism and is freed from sin's domination. He relies solely on his loving Savior to lead him to the goal. The Exodus is also a blueprint for all mankind to trust in God in every need for help and deliverance. Yahweh is always a saving God, the One who cares.

2. **Moses.**

Person. That Moses lived and led his people out of Egypt is no longer called into doubt today. How much he wrote down of the events is a moot question, for he need not be author of the Pentateuch in that sense. Author can also mean instigator, prime-mover, and in this sense he is the source of these traditions. God

called him to be his prophet and mouthpiece, leader of his people and mediator between Yahweh and Israel, both in the Covenant relations and the giving of the Law.

Childhood account. His childhood account need not be considered history in our sense of the word. The story of the babe found by the king's daughter in a basket in the river is a common theme in antiquity. The religious meaning intended by the writer who inserted it is the conviction that a special divine providence surrounded Moses in his birth and childhood, despite the slave conditions to which Israel was subjected. There is no reason to doubt that he was given an Egyptian education in the best that Egypt offered, and the story of the babe in the basket may have been utilized to give a reason for that education.

Call of Moses. Two accounts are given. The combined Yahwist-Elohist account describes the call of Moses like that of the great prophets (Ex. 3,1 to 4,7). Like the call of Abraham it begins a new stage in salvation history, wherein God reveals himself as Yahweh, the name of Israel's God. In the priestly account (6,2 to 7,13) the call of Moses is given a legal coloring with its stress on genealogy. Aaron's role is there emphasized.

3. The Divine Name.

God revealed himself to Moses as "He who is" or "I AM". It consists of four letters in Hebrew, YHWH. Scholars pronounce it Yahweh today. The King James version popularized the name Jehovah. How does the name Jehovah originate? It came from an interesting combination of two words. When Israel had experienced Yahweh's dire chastisements in the Babylonian exile, she determined to take his commandments seriously. But as often happens, one goes to the other extreme. In order not to pronounce the name of God in vain or irreverently, she decided never to pronounce the holy name, but always to substitute Adonai, which means "The Lord". Vowel signs were added to Hebrew manuscripts only several centuries after Christ, but the scribes who added them placed the vowel signs of Adonai under the letters YHWH, so that the reader would always read Odonai. This was not realized when the King James English version was made in the 17th century and the combination was spelled out Jehovah, exactly the vowels of Adonai and the consonants YHWH. Such a pronunciation as Jehovah was unknown to Israel and never existed in ancient times.

As to the meaning, "Yahweh" comes from the verb "to be" in its hiphil form, meaning "to cause to be". But the use of the name in various contexts seems to call for a fuller meaning, namely "**he who is dynamically present to save.**" The Scholastic philosophical inter-

pretation: "ipsum esse subsistens" or Subsistent Being Itself was entirely foreign to the Semitic mind. Still other authors think that God simply said: I am who I am; you cannot know me.

4. **Passover:** (ch. 12). The sacrificing and eating of the paschal lamb.

- a. **Origin.** Aramic "pascha" (Hebrew pesah) is from the verb to "skip or pass over". Since there is no mention of priest or altar, it is evidently carried out by a group not well organized. It may have been a sacrificial ceremony originally kept by shepherds before departing or passing over to new pasture lands. This would have lent itself to Israel's adopting it to celebrate her final departure from Egyptian bondage. Gradually, deeper theological significance would have been added.
- b. **The rite.** A spotless one-year-old lamb was roasted, eaten with bitter herbs, and its blood sprinkled on the doorposts. Those who partook wore travelling clothes, ready for departure. Many of the details of ch.12 describe later commemorative rites rather than the hasty passover meal held on the night of deliverance.
- c. **Meaning.** The lamb took the place of Israel's firstborn. Its blood was a sign of deliverance (redemption). As is evident from vv. 24-27, it was a meal. Later on, when Israel reached Canaan, it was combined with the feast of unleavened bread or azymes, an agricultural feast celebrated in Canaan at the beginning of the harvest. Since Israel had used unleavened bread on her departure due to haste, she may have adopted this feast and combined it with her passover.
- d. **Typology.** St. Paul in 1 Cor. 5, 9 gives the Christian typology of both: "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed; therefore let us keep feast in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth". He is the true Lamb whose immolation brought us deliverance and redemption. His blood was the great price. And just as Israel annually commemorated the deliverance by re-enacting it and reliving it, the Christian re-enacts and relives the sacrificial death-banquet of the Lord. The Hebrew Seder ritual states: "In every generation it is the duty of man to imagine that he himself has come forth out of Egypt". This sentiment reflects the Christian union with Christ's sacrificial banquet.

5. **Manna:** (ch.16).

- a. **The event.** God sustained the life of his people through the long desert wanderings with manna. Manna becomes the leading symbol of divine providence in Israel's salvation his-

tory. But we miss the point if we discuss whether it was a miracle in the scholastic sense. The ancient Semitic mind did not know our distinctions of natural and supernatural. Israel knew one thing: God sustained her life, which otherwise would not have been possible. That was the main message. Many details added later only intensify that message.

- b **Explanation.** Manna is usually considered to have been the gum of the tamarisk tree, or the product which certain insects bring about by feeding on a plant growing in that part of the world. Certain quantities are even available today, and divine providence could have brought about their increase in various ways. Granted that this is probable, the data given in the Bible seem to demand rather another phenomenon. The people found it in quantities on the ground in the early morning and there is also no mention of trees. A fungus growth such as mushrooms would seem to answer the data more readily. Wind and storm can transplant spores in quantities.
- c **Typology.** The manna has always been a type of the Eucharist, and Jesus himself made the comparison in Jn. 6,49f. The Eucharistic Manna sustains us in the desert of life, and is the free gift of the Father in heaven to his children. when we reach the promised land, it will no longer be our food in that form. The manna ceased to be Israel's food once she entered Canaan.

A COVENANTED COMMUNITY

At Sinai, Yahweh formed Israel into community, to live in her midst and be his chosen People. The Covenant with the Decalogue is the heart of the Old Testament. It is not easy to correlate the various traditions or to discern when the same event is being presented from another tradition a second time. Surely Moses did not climb up and down Sinai in constant back and forth trips between Yahweh and Israel, as one would think from a superficial reading. But through all the literary techniques and dramatic presentation, the central message is strong and clear in its triple import: 1) **Yahweh revealed himself** in word and deed in a special way, 2) he entered into closest relationship with Israel, 3) he gave her moral directives, the decalogue.

1. Yahweh's self-revelation.

Ch. 19 presents this as a communication between Yahweh and Moses (v. 1-9) and as a storm-theophany (16-25). The communication brings out God's loving plan for Israel: he takes the initiative,

and seeks her consent to make her his peculiar possession. "I bore you on eagle wings and brought you here to myself" (v.4). "Though all the earth is mine, you shall be leader to me than all other people" (v.5) "You shall be a kingdom of priests to me, a holy nation" (v.6). Israel freely agrees: "Everything the Lord has said, we will do" (v.8.). The storm-theophany brought home to Israel the awesome holiness of Yahweh, Lord of all creation; though unapproachable in his greatness, yet he longed to enter into familiar relations with Israel, the forlorn and downtrodden offspring of Abraham. And he had great plans for her. Israel must have witnessed that day something extraordinary that it made such a lasting impression on her, for it is recounted down the centuries in all her writings. Yet, some of the details, such as trumpet blasts, can well belong to later cultic re-enacting of the event. Moreover, a storm-theophany is frequently used in Scripture as a symbol of God revealing himself to man (cf. Job. 38).

2. The Sinai Covenant.

A covenant (Hebrew: b'rith) is either one of parity or of suzerainty. Recent studies of ancient discoveries show that the Mosaic covenant was modelled on the Hittite suzerainty pact in vogue at the time. The king makes it with his vassal, and by means of it, the vassal enjoys the protection and security of his suzerain. The vassal in turn is under obligation to obey the commands of his king. This he does out of gratitude for the king's deeds of benevolence. The pact was sealed or ratified by a ceremonial rite.

By means of this well-known institution of that time, Yahweh's close relationship with Israel is depicted. He has delivered Israel from bondage and therefore Israel gives him obedience and gratitude. He promises to make her his favorite, provide a home for her (Dt. 28,1-14) and look out for her well-being. He thereby also fulfills the promises made to the patriarchs, that through their offspring all the nations of the world would be blessed. Israel's mission is messianic. On her part, Israel's stipulations are the keeping of the Law and the Book of the Covenant (21-23). Violation of these would be followed by chastisement. The sign to remind Israel of her covenant with Yahweh was circumcision (Ex-12,44), but also to some extent the Sabbath rest (31,12f).

In ch. 24, the covenant is sealed and ratified by the blood of sacrifice and the sacrificial meal. After the victims were sacrificed, the blood was equally divided. Half was poured out on the altar, and the other half placed in large bowls. Only after the people renew their wholehearted consent to keep their stipulations does Moses sprinkle them with the other half of the blood, saying: "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you."

This ceremony is very meaningful. Since the altar represents Yahweh, the fact that the blood is poured out on both altar and people symbolizes the close union of Yahweh with his people through blood. For the Semite, life was in the blood, and blood symbolized life. Hence the meaning of a living and lifelong union entered into by this pact. It was intended to be dynamic and fruitful, not lifeless, formal and barren. As a climax, the sacrificial meal takes place, which heightens the same meaning (v.11.).

The typology of the Sinai covenant was clearly alluded to by Jesus at the last supper when he said: "This is the Blood of the New Covenant" and gave himself in the sacrificial eucharistic meal. Christ thus explicitly shows the continuing centrality of the covenant in Christianity. It is sealed forever in his blood. By it man becomes one with Christ in a unique fashion, and united with God through Christ.

3. The Ten Commandments (the decalogue) and the Covenant Code: 20; 21-23.

What is to be said about Mosaic authorship of the laws in Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch? Most of them betray an environment that does not fit into Israel's wilderness sojourn, but into her settled life in Canaan, and they must have been legislated long after Moses' death. Yet it is deeply entrenched in the mind and conviction of Israel "that God gave the Law to Moses". How combine and reconcile these two facts?

There are two types of laws in question. First, the absolute or apodictic type, which are very terse and to which no condition is attached. The other type always begins with a condition: If this happens, that will be the consequence. This latter type is found frequently in other law codes in vogue at that time, such as that of Hammurabi. There is no reason why such laws should not have been over and adopted by Israel under divine guidance and inspiration. But the terse apodictic laws such as given in the decalogue are characteristically Israelitic. This would confirm the strong conviction of Israel that God gave the law to Moses. It would be restricted evidently to the decalogue and some basic laws in the Covenant Code. That the Ten Commandments were written on stone by the finger of God (34,12) is highly figurative, and merely points to their divine origin. To depict them as the movies do, written by a stroke of lightning, does not reflect the mind of the Semitic author.

There are two forms of the Ten Commandments, one given in Ex. 20 and the other in Deut. 5. In the original Hebrew text, there is no enumeration of commandments in either form, and that ex-

plains why various religious groups divide them differently. Jews and Protestant (except Lutherans) divide our first commandment into two, reasoning that Ex. 20,2-3 imposes the positive worship of the one God, and vv.4-6 forbids the making of images or idols for the purpose of worship. They then combine the 9th and 10th into one commandment. It should be noted here that not all images were forbidden. God himself commanded Moses to make the bronze serpent (Num 21,8) and in the Temple were various images (1 Kgs.=3 kgs. 7,29). The decalogue became the foundation of morality not only for Israel but for all nations. The decalogue and the Covenant Code are the stipulations by which Israel could manifest her loyalty to the Covenant. Later on the book of Deuteronomy would treat the covenant from the angle of divine love, and would sum up Israel's first commandment as that of love of Yahweh her God. This is the well-known "sh'ma" (Deut. 6,1-6).

4. **Covenant Broken and Renewed:** (ch. 32-34).

Ch. 32 continues where ch.24 left off. Between these are detailed regulations concerning the Tabernacle furnishings. In ch. 32 we have the episode of the golden calf. How it is possible that Israel broke the Covenant so brazenly barely a few weeks after witnessing the gigantic events of deliverance and theophany on Sinai? If this is the message of that chapter, a reason can be found in the fact that Israel was still unformed and uneducated in the religion of Yahweh. More probably, the sacred writer is giving us a recapitulation of various defections of Israel in the course of her history, especially after Jeroboam I had introduced the calf worship (1 Kgs. = 3 Kgs. 12). As you recall, the Pentateuch developed gradually and our present form is a final redaction of the 5th century B.C. Yet, some initial defection of Israel on Sinai could well have taken place. At any rate, the episode of the golden calf testifies to the fact that Israel broke her pact with Yahweh. Authors are not in agreement as to the exact meaning of the calf. The Hebrew text itself (and the Septuagint) understand it as an idol that was worshipped. Acts 7,41 understood it thus. Because of modern research into ancient customs, authors today prefer to see in the calf an image of the invisible Yahweh, for that is the ancient East depicted the Godhead. But this too was forbidden in 20, 23f. Others prefer to consider it merely as a calf-pedestal, acting as a throne for the invisible Yahweh. The danger of idolatry would also make this prohibitive. More probably the people demanded an idol, but Aaron in order to pacify them compromised and made an image of Yahweh. What Israel needed was not a statue to remind her of her God but **deep faith in the all-present and all-holy One**, whom no human mind can represent adequately.

If ch. 32 is the author's literary device of recapitulation, ch. 34 is not the renewal of the covenant as presented, but the Yahwist's account of the Covenant-making, inserted as a background for the religious laws which follow. (Plastaras, 247). At any rate the **religious message is clear**: defection from Yahweh deserves severe chastisements. Yet, he is a merciful and loving God, with whom reconciliation is always possible, if man sincerely repents. The power of one man who is intimate with God, Moses in this case, is striking. Where the crowd fails, one obtained the mercy necessary for all the rest and even a reversal of punishment (33,17).

5. The Presence of Yahweh was manifested in various ways.

The **Shekinah**: a bright cloud and fire over the tabernacle symbolized Yahweh's continued presence, mysterious and spiritual. He is companion, guide and guardian of his people. It is referred to as the "glory" (kaboth) seen over Sinai, and later above the tabernacle (Ex. 40, 34ff). See also Num. 9,15-25 and 14, 14. In post-biblical books this presence is called the Shekinah. St. John see the fullness of God's glory in the Incarnate Divine Word, the final manifestation of God's glory (Jn. 1,14). The **ARK OF THE COVENANT** was also a symbol of Yahweh's presence. It was a chest-shaped object covered with gold within and without, with a pure slab of gold on top forming the mercy-seat (kapporeth). On this mercy seat as his throne, Yahweh let his presence be experienced. There is a certain fluctuation in the theology of the ark, at times it is considered God's footstool, and again his throne. Atonement was received and communications granted from the mercy seat above the Ark. Two cherubim figures acted as throne bearers. The **TABERNACLE** itself was likewise a sign of Yahweh's presence, for it was his dwelling place among his People, and the central worshipping point for all Israel. In Jn. 1,14 the Incarnate Word is literally said to have taken up his dwelling or put his tent among us, for he is Living tabernacle of God. Again, the very person of **MOSES** is seen by Fr. Yves Congar as a sign of God's presence, for he was his prophet and representative (Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, 7-19). Yahweh came to dwell not in a tent but in the heart of man, so the People of God, that is Israel, are themselves a sign of Yahweh's presence, for they were to manifest him and be witness to him to all the nations. Finally God was very present to his People in his **WORD OF REVELATION**, and later the inspired word of Scripture. All these manners of divine presence are strikingly similar to the various presences of Christ, mentioned in the Decree on the Liturgy (no. 7).

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HOMILETICS

I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES

FR. EFREN RIVERA, O.P.

MSGR. MARIO BALTAZAR, O.P.*

Pentecost (June 2)

First Reading: Acts 2:1-11. The Coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. — **Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:36-7:12-13. There is a variety of gifts given by the one Spirit in which we are baptized. — **Gospel Reading:** John 20:19-23. The Spirit is given for the forgiveness of sins.

We can easily see two parts in the Gospel reading for today:

1. Jesus appears to his disciples, filling them with joy (vv. 19-21). He manifests himself to renew the human spirit of his disciples and give them peace.

2. Jesus entrusts his disciples with the mission to continue his own mission entrusted by the Father. It is noteworthy that the theme of mission is common to the four evangelists (Mt. 28, 19; Mk. 16:16; Lc. 24:47). This goes to show how much importance was attached by the primitive Church to the apostolic mission.

Jesus gives to his disciples — and to them alone, since the manifestation of Jesus was limited to his intimate group (see v. 19) — the power to forgive sins. In this way he shows the amplitude of the prerogatives he previously conceded to them (Mt. 16:19; 18-18).

The breath of Jesus symbolizes the Holy Spirit he sends. This is the beginning of the New Creation, comparable to the first (see Gen. 1:2; 2:7; Ez. 37:9; Wis. 15:11).

It was the same Holy Spirit who descended on Jesus at the beginning of his apostolic mission (Mt. 3:16); impelled him to the

* The June Biblical notes and the corresponding homilies were prepared by Fr. Rivera; those for July were prepared by Msgr. Baltazar.

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desert (Mt. 4, 1), directed him constantly during his public life (Lc. 4:14-18; 10:21; Mt. 12:18), and brought about the birth of the Church (Acts 2).

Briefly, the Gospel reading shows how the presence of Jesus renews the human spirit of his disciples with joy and peace, and infuses it with a Creative and Cleansing Spirit impelling them to continue his mission on earth.

Holy Trinity (June 9)

First Reading: Proverbs 8:22-31. Wisdom as creator. — **Second Reading:** Romans 5:1-5. Through Jesus Christ we are at peace with God, whose love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit — **Gospel:** John 16:12-15. The Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus, who has everything the Father has.

Jesus leaves his work incomplete (n. 12) inasmuch as the disciples do not know many essential truths or have not penetrated deeply into his teachings. The Holy Spirit will "compliment" Jesus' work.

The Spirit will reveal to the world the truth about the Father but no one will accept this truth without accepting Jesus (I John 4, 2). Salvation is the work of the entire Trinity.

The truth that will make men free (John 8:32) is nothing else but God's plan for the salvation of mankind enunciated by St. Paul: through faith in Jesus Christ we become righteous and at peace with God, whose love is poured into our hearts by the Spirit which is given to us (Rom 5:1-5). It is the Spirit that works out man's salvation after Jesus has returned to the Father. For this reason he is called the Spirit of Truth.

Corpus Christi (June 16)

First Reading: Genesis 14:18-20. Bread and wine, the sacrifice of Melchisedech. — **Second Reading:** I Corinthians 11:23-26. Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death. — **Gospel:** Luke 9:11b-17. Jesus multiplies bread.

The multiplication of bread is the only miracle narrated by all four evangelists. It must have been deeply engraved in the hearts and minds of the first Christians.

In Matthew and Mark the miracle takes place in a context of "pity" (Mt. 14:16; Mk. 6:34). But surprisingly this is absent in Luke — the "scriba mansuetudinis Christi" — nor is it found in John. Historically, it must have been the true context of the miracle.

If we were to read only the account of the Synoptics, it would seem that the miracle did not create a stir among the people. Only in John do we read of an attempt to make Jesus a king (Jn. 6:15). Most likely, this, was part of the original story.

The Evangelists have preserved the memory of this multiplication of bread mainly because it foreshadowed the Eucharist. The collection of the scraps, aside from being a historical happening, was kept in memory because it indicated that the bread was indeed something special.

Twelfth Sunday of the Year (June 23)

First Reading: Zachariah 12:10-11. They will look on the one whom they have pierced. — **Second Reading:** Galatians 3:26-29. No more distinctions . . . you are one in Christ. — **Gospel:** Luke 9:18-24. Peter's profession of faith. Jesus predicts his passion, and asks followers to take up the cross.

Three parts can be distinguished in the Gospel Reading:

1. Peter's profession of Christ's messiahship (vv. 18-21). The "crowds" have a wrong notion of Jesus' identity. But his disciples had come to know — with some uncertainty — that he was the Messiah. Judging from our way of acting, we may well ask ourselves: with whom can we identify: with the "crowds" or with Peter?

2. The first prophecy of the Passion (v. 22). For Luke the preceding incident is recorded simply as a prelude to this prophecy. Note that he omits Jesus' praise of Peter (Mt. 16:17-19). All three Synoptics speak of the necessity — or "must" — of the passion but Luke emphasizes this more than the others (see 4:43; 13:33; 17:25 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44). "Rejected" is also given emphasis by Luke (see 20:17). Matthew omits it but Mark (9:31) also uses the word. However, like Luke, Matthew later (21:42) quotes Ps. 118 (Vulgate 117):22: "It was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone." The prophecy of Zechariah (12:10-11) should be tied up with this part of the Gospel reading.

3. Invitation to follow Jesus and take up the cross (vv. 23-26). The preceding narrative has really been leading to this. In Matthew the invitation is extended to the "disciples"; in Mark, to them and "the people", in Luke, to "all". Luke is thinking of his Christian readers who are exhorted to take up their cross "daily".

The Second Reading develops a different theme: the breaking down of all human barriers achieved by baptism in Christ.

Thirteenth Sunday of the Year

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:16.19-21. Elijah calls Elisha to the prophetic office. — **Second Reading:** Galatians 5:1.13-18. You were called to liberty. — **Gospel:** Luke 9:51-62. The inhospitable Samaritan village and the hardships of the apostolic calling.

The first part of the Gospel reading (vv. 51-56) seems to be very loosely related to the second (vv. 57-62). But they both answer the question: what kind of men should apostles be?

An apostle, like Jesus, must "resolutely take the road for Jerusalem" to "celebrate" the Paschal Mystery of Passion, Death and Resurrection (v. 51).

An apostle must avoid a glorious — or triumphalist — messianism, and react more humanely to human frailties (vv. 54-56).

An apostle must have complete trust in the Providence of God (vv. 57-58).

An apostle must break his "wordly" attachments to his Dear ones (vv. 59-60).

And finally, an apostle must have a sense of urgency that gives him no time for superfluous pleasantries (vv. 61-62). These verses should be contrasted with the First Reading, and it will be seen that Christ's call is more urgent than that of the ancient prophets.

The Second Reading is about Christian liberty. It is not merely "freedom from" sin and self-indulgence; it is also "freedom for" service or works of love.

14th Sunday of the Year (July 7)

THEME 1: I will send toward Jerusalem peace like a river.
(Isaiah 66:10-14)

Our pericope is taken from the last chapter of the Book of Isaiah, which spreads before our eyes the eschatological panorama of God's redemption. The redemption will be so total, goodness will so overcome evil, that the resulting situation will be like a new creation, because of its undreamed-of manner.

However, the prophet tries to give us a glimpse of that unforgettable moment. Our pericope concentrates on the dawning of a messianic age when sorrow and suffering cease and the messianic people (no distinction between Jews and Gentiles) are born to a life wholly new, marvelously divine.

Jerusalem is the capital city of this messianic kingdom where God dwells and fulfills every prayer of his messianic people. All of God's children nurse at the breast of Jerusalem — an image that beautifully portrays universal peace, contentment and love. Imperceptibly, the image changes and God takes the place of Jerusalem, fondling, comforting, and nursing his children. Only God would dare to speak of himself this way.

To underscore the certainty of the fulfillment of all these, the Hebrew present participle is used and God is introduced as speaking under solemn oath. The river of peace mentioned here alludes to the paradise of joy where the redeemed man will live reunited to his God. The whole pericope is an idyllic poem of joy. The prophet is continually crying out "rejoice!" to messianic Jerusalem and its sympathizers.

THEME 2: The marks on my body are those of the Lord Jesus (Gal 6:14-18)

The pericope is taken from Galatians, a strong and polemical 1 letter, written by Paul to warn the Christians of that Church against a Judaizing error, against a "different Gospel." The Judaizers of the Galatians communities seem to have been Christians of some exaggerated or strict Jewish background.

They not only advocated the adoption of certain Jewish practices like circumcision, the celebration of special feasts, the exaggerated reverence for angels and spirits. Aside from sowing confusion among the Galatian Christians, these Judaizers impugned Paul's authority as an apostle, charged him for not preaching the true Gospel (understood as including the Mosaic Law), accused him of opportunism.

This prompted St. Paul to send the Galatians a strong letter, warning them against the innovators, defending his position as an apostle, stressing the Christian's freedom against the demands of the Law and of circumcision.

Paul countercharges the Judaizers for not preaching the real "message of the Cross" out of fear of persecution from the Jews or other Judaizers, preferring to preach circumcision instead. He tells to their face their hypocritical insistence on the Mosaic Law which they do not observe themselves.

While the Judaizers boast on their circumcised flesh, Paul allows himself to boast on nothing except the cross. It is a boasting not of self-reliance but of dependence on grace and divine favor, through which Paul and all true Christians share in the Christ-event and become new creatures.

Indeed, he boast of carrying on his flesh the marks (Kk. Stigmata) not of circumcision but of Jesus. For the cause of Christ, Paul had suffered so much from illness, floggings, and stoning that he could call the evidence of these sufferings as a "brand" by which he is forever marked as the "slave of Christ Jesus."

**THEME 3: Your peace will rest on that man
(Lk 10:1-12, 17-20)**

The pericope is taken from Luke's journey-narrative which is a special feature of his Gospel. Luke is not primarily concerned with describing a geographical journey. He so recounts the details, impressing upon them his "theology", allowing his readers to see how God's will is fulfilled through events leading to Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem.

The Lucan journey-narrative not only shows how, through the Christ-events taking place in Jerusalem, the fulfillment of the OT promises was effected, but it also stresses the qualities of the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem. St. Luke thus lays down for the Church the conditions for a journey to the cross and glory.

The mission of the seventy-two disciples (other manuscripts mention only seventy) serves as an occasion for proclaiming such conditions. The seventy-two were a larger group of disciples who followed Jesus but were not as closely associated with him as were the Twelve. Christ's message to them is similar, at times even identical to the one He addressed to the Twelve.

The seventy-two are commissioned to do nothing more than prepare for the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom is union with Jesus through faith, which God alone, not man, can give. However, through their ministration, peace (in the Lucan Gospel this is associated with the salvation being brought by Christ) will descend upon well-disposed individuals, begetting tranquillity in them.

As a result of the preaching of the disciples, Satan's own Kingdom collapses. This is a symbolic way of showing the effect of the disciples' mission. Jesus has already conquered Satan in principle; the effects of his victory will be realized in his Church. On earth his disciples will tread unhurt upon scorpions; but they are admonished not to rejoice on account of this, but because their names are written in heaven.

15th Sunday of the Year (July 14)

**THEME 1: The Word is very near to you for your observance
(Dt. 30:10-14)**

Few OT books are quoted or alluded to so frequently in the NT as Deuteronomium. It is used to illuminate the mission of Jesus, and it provides the elements for describing the charismatic liturgical community of the NT.

The most theological of the OT books, Dt is composed mainly of homiletic expansion of the Law. Consisting of material of different kinds, Dt is the result of a long process of formation, from earliest times to the post-exilic period.

It gives a mature picture of the covenant and the life under it. There is already in Dt the beginning of a conceptual treatment of revelation and the word of God, which in our present pericope is practically hypostatized. This word of God is addressed liturgically to the community, the Qahal Yahweh, which becomes the "Ekklesia tou theou" of the NT. The encounter between the word of God and the covenant community occasions a moral demand on the part of the latter which reaches its highest expression in the "Shema", quoted by Jesus as the greatest and the first of the commandments.

The keeping of the word of God (a necessary condition to regain happiness that was lost by sin) is not too difficult for it is something close to the heart of man, as the author of the pericope stresses. St. Paul recalls this insight of Dt when describing the availability of faith and salvation. St. John must have had in mind the personal character attributed to the word of God in this passage when he composed his prologue on the Word.

**THEME 2: All things were created through Christ and for him.
(Col 1:15-20)**

Our pericope is a Christian liturgical hymn, proclaiming Christ as the directive center of the universe and head of the Church. Scholars could not determine whether Paul composed the hymn himself, or used it because it was known to the Colossians from their baptismal liturgy.

Paul considers Christ as the new Adam, head of a new creation when he describes the latter as the image of the invisible God. Adam had been created to the image of God and commissioned to rule over all the earth; Christ the new head of humanity fulfills this mission super-abundantly.

As the first-born of all creation, in whom all things were created, Christ holds a position of supremacy, authority and power over all, including the invisible angelic beings who were thought to control the world. Even they owe their creation to Christ. Moreover, Christ is the goal and perfection of the universe and is its cohesive power holding all things together.

As head of his body, the Church, Christ is the principle of authority and vitality. He is its source of life and growth. In his Church, Christ forms the nucleus of a redeemed humanity, makes a new beginning, a new creation. His resurrection is the cause of those who follow him.

The fulness of God — his presence, divinity and wisdom — is in Christ, who shares this with the Church, which in turn affects all humanity. Christ and his complement, the Church, so possess God's fulness and power that no other intermediaries are necessary, contrary of Jewish and Gnostic doctrines. It is he who will restore all things to God. The pericope is a magnificent hymn proclaiming Christ in his full role as Lord, Kyrios of the universe. Paul had to insist on this, after learning that some local teachers were disturbing the faith of the Christians at Colossae. Of Jewish and Gnostic tendencies, these innovators claimed that certain angelic beings had control over human affairs, and even over all creation. Hence one's primary concern, according to them, was to propitiate these spirits, for which a certain knowledge (Gnosis) and practices were necessary.

This type of teaching clearly jeopardized Christ's position, who would thus be reduced to one of the many intermediaries of God. Paul vigorously confronts these errors, and stresses Christ's unique place and all-sufficient role as Lord of the universe.

THEME 3: Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:25-37)

Our pericope concerns the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan. Pious and individual reflections on it have brought forth various interpretations with varying degrees of usefulness. Preachers there were known who proclaimed this pericope reading with some sense of embarrassment (it mentions the attitude of a priest and a levite). Just what exactly does the parable intend to teach?

A lawyer (in Mt a pharisee, in Mk a scribe) inquires about eternal life; for all his learning he is still concerned about his security. Jesus' answer implies that the way to true life is to be found in total love of God and neighbor as stated in the "Shema" prayer recited daily by every devout Jew.

Wishing to be sure of eternal life, the lawyer asks for further definition of "neighbor". Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan answers more the question of how one can be neighborly to others than who is one's neighbor, the former being more connected to the issue of eternal life.

Done with exquisite artistry, the parable involves a comparison of extremes: the failure of the ministers of God, who should have been models of neighborly love, and the unselfishness of the hated Samaritan. From the comparison, Christians should be able to measure the unlimited nature of the duty to love.

The parable does not intend principally to cause embarrassment to priests and other ministers of God (although it does have a salutary effect for them). It shows how salvation is to be achieved: one need not be a lawyer or a priest to attain it. In the course of the parable, he who possesses the secret of eternal life happens to be a stranger without the lawyer's learning and concern for security and with the status and dignity of the priest. The stranger gained eternal life because his love for others was spontaneous, disinterested, kindly, personal, and effective.

16th Sunday of the Year (July 21)

THEME 1: Lord, do not pass your servant by.
(Gen 18:1-10)

Our pericope presents a picture of Oriental courtesy. It is described with all the human warmth and vividness that we can expect of an account coming from the Yahwist source. The doctrine of hospitality that this pericope teaches is however subsidiary to the prediction of Isaac's birth which is its intended point and overriding interest.

The story of Abraham of which our pericope is a part, marks a turning point in the Book of Genesis. From the viewpoint of salvation history, Abraham begins a new period. The mounting alienation of man from God and from his fellow creatures which characterized the first chapters of Gn gives way, with Abraham, to a new orientation of salvation history, marked by God's intervention and the response in faith by the Semite patriarch.

The special divine concern for Abraham and the other patriarchs that followed him can only be explained by the divine plan that the Book of Genesis so eloquently develops and the Book of Exodus climactically stresses. The plan involves an intervention by God to deal a deathblow to the developing forces of evil consequent to the fall of man, his premiere creature, culminating in his covenant-

love with men which would endure forever. The call of Abraham sets the stage for the inauguration of such plan.

THEME 2: A mystery hidden for centuries has now been revealed to God's Saints. (Col 1:24-28)

To the Christians at Colossae Paul recalled how God's fullness (pleroma i.e. his presence, divinity and wisdom) was in Christ, showing its effects in the whole world through the preaching of the word. This gives Paul an opportunity to explain his own role in God's plan.

Paul, inspite of the fact that he also is a member of the Church, can complete the sufferings of Christ for the sake of the same Church. This may be difficult to understand. But the immediate contexts lead us to think that the completion of the sufferings of Christ is intimately bound with the completion of the preaching of the Gospel.

The preaching of the word is being completed whenever it is brought to places where Christ has not been preached. This will occasion a division among men: some will receive the Word with joy; others will persecute both the Apostles who brought the Word and the new Christians who receive it. The Apostolic sufferings endured as the Gospel is brought to new places are the sufferings of Christ being completed by the preacher.

Paul calls *mysterion* the subject of his preaching. Referring initially to secret rites or teachings or initiations, the word gradually come to mean a "secret" of any kind. In the OT it is used in this way and also in the sense of a revelation from God. What is the *mysterion* that Paul preaches? "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is the hidden presence and working of Christ in the community of believers, a presence which, while now hidden, will be revealed gloriously in the future.

THEME 3: Martha welcomed Jesus into her house. Mary has chosen the better part. (Luke 10:38-42)

The pericope is about an incident which took place at Bethany, a village near Jerusalem. Lukes makes use of this story to stress the primacy of faith in a Christian, just as he used the story of the Good Samaritan cf. Theme III of the previous Sunday) to stress the necessity of a practical, effective helpfulness.

The characterization of Martha and Mary fits perfectly into what we know of them from John's Gospel. Martha is the fretful

and fussy host, overly concerned about a number of incidental things; Mary is the tranquil and contemplative person.

The reply of Jesus to Martha's complaint and demand for help is susceptible of various interpretations: (1) "Only a few things are needed, indeed only one"; (2) "Only a few things are needed"; (3) "there is need of one thing only". The point to be kept, seemingly, is that there is no substitute to the true blessedness of hearing the word of God and keeping it alive.

17th Sunday of the Year (July 28)

THEME 1: I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak. (Gen 18: 20-32)

The pericope is about Abraham's plea for the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. God has disclosed to his favored servant his plan to destroy the gross cities: in thus revealing his secret plan, he (at least the author) intended to teach Abraham and his descendants a lesson on the necessity of moral rectitude.

The "bargaining" scene, otherwise reminiscent of Oriental business practices, reflects the Yahwist author's theological preoccupation on the problem of retribution. Collective responsibility for a crime, and therefore collective punishment (including even the innocent) was an accepted principle in early Israel. Now, however, the Yahwist author asks whether the justice of a few men cannot win God's mercy for the whole group. It is the same principle of community responsibility but viewed from the other side.

The answer to the theological question is touching although not final and precise. Justice, as well as sin, has its communicable effects. In the interest of a minimal number of just individuals, there is a divine willingness to overlook the evil of the many. In the prophets God will spare Jerusalem for the sake of one just man; in Isaiah's Suffering Servant, the innocent one suffering for the guilty multitude describes the future redemptive work of Christ for sinful mankind.

THEME 2: He has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins. (Col 2:12-14)

Paul recalls in this pericope the symbolism of the ceremony of baptism. The descent into the pool and burial in its waters represents the Christian's death to sin and the world, because in the sacrament of baptism he receives the fruits of Christ's salvific death. By the same token, the ascent from the pool signifies the Christian's

resurrection with Jesus (through his power) to a new and more perfect life. The resurrection of the Christian is described as already taking place.

With the baptismal rite, therefore, the life of sin and impurity of the Colossians (Christians) came to an end, and life with Christ involving full pardon of sins begins.

Moreover, God has cancelled in baptism all indebtedness that the Colossians may have incurred for violating the Law. Death was the punishment for disobedience: now Christ took upon himself the debt of punishment by nailing (as it were) the handwritten bond of indebtedness to the cross.

THEME 3: Ask, and it will be given you.
(Lk. 11:1-13)

The pericope deals on prayer. It opens with Luke's rendition of the Lord's prayer. Due to differences between Matthew's and Luke's versions, the latter's must have derived from a separate liturgical tradition in the early Church. Matthew's comes from an Aramic background in Syria, is more tense with expectation of the eschatological struggle. Luke's is from a more Greek setting of Gentile Churches, and although the eschatological note is not absent, is directed to the daily, pressing needs of the Church.

We call God our "Father" with all the possible claims we can attach to such title. We pray for the definitive, eschatological glorification of his name and the establishment of his Kingdom. The aorist tense (once-for-all meaning) of the Greek verbs gives an eschatological overtone to the above petitions.

For the petition of the "bread" Luke modifies it as to ask for sustenance in the daily struggle of the Christian. The eschatological nuance is however present for Luke speaks of the eschatological banquet elsewhere in his Gospel.

Luke reverts to the aorist tense for the petition of the forgiveness of sins. It refers therefore to the final pardon which removes the last obstacle to the heavenly banquet. Likewise, the Christian begs (aorist tense) to be delivered in the conclusive battle against Satan at the end of time.

Verses 5-8 (parable of the persistent friend) serve to teach that the petition of the daily bread in the "Our Father" is always heard. The remaining verses of this pericope (vv. 9-13, parable of the evil but provident parents) while pointing out the suitable manner of praying, stress faith in God's continual and effective fatherly concern, whose finest gift for his children is the good Spirit.

II. HOMILIES

PENTECOST (June 2)

John 20:19-23. Sermon Theme: We find the Holy Spirit in external charisms and in a clean conscience.

WHERE TO FIND THE SPIRIT

Charisms are important in attracting people. Just think of the hundreds of foreigners who have come to the Philippines to be treated by faith healers! Think also of the hundreds of people who make sacrifices to go to a place where miracles are said to happen, or where a visionary is said to converse with a heavenly visitor. If people could only be attracted to christianity this way . . . But yes, people have been attracted to our religion in this way. That is what the first reading at today's mass tells us. The apostle appeared in public as men who had charisms from heaven, extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit. And what happened? Three thousand people became Christians in just one day! (Acts 2:41). If, every day, three thousand people would become Christians, the world would be Christianized in a matter of months.

Why does God not give his Church more charisms so that the world would quickly become Christian? The answer is in the saying, "Easy come, easy go." If a commercial convinces you to buy a detergent, but then it turns out that it is so complicated to use that detergent, you will probably just throw it away. Or, when you finish the first bottle, you do not buy another one. That is how it would be with a Christianity propagated mainly by charisms. It would be skin-deep Christianity, or first-impression Christianity. It is not the kind really pleasing to God.

Yet God chose to use charisms on the first Pentecost to attract people to the Christian faith. This is understandable because the first Pentecost was the "big rally" that launched the Church. There had to be room for some extravaganza — otherwise the rally would not be a success.

But after the rally comes the difficult follow-up. This is really what will make the rally count. To do this work, Our Lord equipped his apostles with another gift of the Holy Spirit, not the external gift of charisms but the internal gift of forgiving sins. This is what

the Gospel reading tells us about. If people were to be attracted by the charisms of the apostles but were not to be delivered from their sins, everything would be in vain.

Today, people are still attracted by charisms or what seem to be charisms: faith healing, extra-sensory perceptions, the gift of tongues. Many people spend time, effort and money to have a taste of these things or at least observe them. But are they sufficiently moved to be sorry for their sins? Do they go to confession to be forgiven from their sins? Do they become better Temples of the Holy Spirit?

To experience the power of the Holy Spirit who was poured out on Pentecost we do not have to go to seek people who have extraordinary charism. It is enough for us to go to the sacrament of penance or reconciliation. It would also be good to seek the Holy Spirit in prayer. The Holy Spirit is found in a clean conscience and a prayerful soul.

HOLY TRINITY (June 9)

John 16:12-15. Sermon Theme: The Holy Trinity is relevant to your life.

COME IN, TRINITY

When people hear that the Holy Trinity is a mystery, they usually think it has nothing to do with their life. It is, for them, something to be discussed by Theologians but something irrelevant to daily life. How wrong is this way of thinking! It comes from the devil. People who think this way close their ears to three persons knocking at their doors, asking to be let in as friends.

The Father knocks at your door because he wants to give you creativity. How many time have you said to yourself: I wish I could fashion my destiny, organize my life the way I want to live it, overcome the obstacles that keep me oppressed. Well, who created the world? Who made order out of chaos? Who made the plants and the trees grow and bear fruit and gave the power of reproduction to fishes, birds and animals? Your Father who is knocking at your door. Let him come in and give you a share of his creative power.

The Son knocks at your door because he wants to give you light. How many times have you groped in darkness? How many times have you felt gloomy and depressed? How many times have you felt that things are just too much for you? Well, who is the Light of the world? Who is it that gives rest to troubled hearts?

Your Brother, Jesus Christ, who is knocking at your door. Let him come in and give you a ray of his light.

The Holy Spirit knocks at your door because he wants to give you love. How many times have you gone into your shell like a snail who has been hurt? How many times have you felt as hard as a rock?

CORPUS CHRISTI (June 16)

Luke 9:11-17. Sermon Theme: Distribution of the Holy Eucharist.

TAKE HIM HOME

Some people are shocked when they learn that lay men have been assigned to distribute Holy Communion to the people. For them the consecrated bread, which is the body of Christ, is so sacred that reverence for it must take priority over everything else.

But the priorities of Christ himself were different. If all he wanted was reverence, he could have stayed in heaven and not bothered to become Incarnate. Or having become incarnate, he could have hired body guards to keep the people away from him. Instead, we read in the Gospels that people would press around him to such an extent that he was often in danger of being crushed by the crowds. And these were not his enemies. They were simply people who wanted his help. Like the woman who touched the hem of his garment in order to be cured (Mark 5:25-34).

Let us not be more Christian than Christ. Let us follow his priorities. His first priority is that men should enjoy the salvation he worked and died for. For this reason he instituted sacraments so that men of all times and places would have access to him. And he wants them to have easy access. So, surely, if the priest is all alone and there are so many communicants, Christ would want respectable lay men to help in distributing Holy Communion. The Gospel reading for today reminds us that when Jesus multiplied bread, he was not the one who distributed it to the thousands of men who needed it. He asked his disciples to do this. And they, in turn, must have asked the help of others, otherwise it would have taken a long, long time for them (only twelve) to give food to so many (Luke says five thousand) already hungry people. Something similar could be done in the distribution of Holy Communion.

There is something even more important I want to remind you about. Jesus is in the Blessed Sacrament not just to be venerated from afar. He wants to be taken into his real temple which

is your body. So, let us clean ourselves. Let us make ourselves "presentable" temples and let us take him in. Do not envy the few chosen lay men who can take the hosts in their hands and distribute it to others. You have much higher privilege: that of taking Christ, under the form of bread, home to yourself.

12th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (June 23)

Luke 9:18-24. Sermon Theme: Carry your cross daily.

DAY AFTER DAY

The synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, all tell us about Christ's invitation to carry the cross. But Luke alone tells us that we have to carry the cross every day. It does not seem too bad, the way Matthew puts it. If we read him alone, it would seem that only the disciples (Mt. 16:24) — the intimate friends of Jesus — have to carry a cross. So, a reader might say, that is for some special people, not for me. It does not seem too bad either, the way Mark puts it. Yes, he includes "the people" (Mark 8:34) among those invited to carry the cross. But, judging from what he says about laying down one's life "for the sake of the Gospel", it would also seem that the challenge is for those specially dedicated to spread the gospel. At any rate, he does not say that the cross has to be carried day after day.

But here comes Luke and he says that followers of Christ have to carry their cross "every day". Is this not asking more than what Christ did? He carried his cross only one day!

The fact is that Luke has in mind a "cross" different from the one that comes at a crucial moment when a man is given the opportunity to die for Christ. Luke is thinking of the cares that come with daily living. For him, these, too, when undertaken in a Christian way, lead to a witness to Christ. Let us, for a moment, recall the words of Christ in St. Matthew: "Do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (6:34). A man can give witness to Christ by living according to this rule.

It seems so easy, and yet so many people fail to give witness to Christ by failing to put into practice his teaching about day to day living. Most of us, when we have a problem, say to ourselves: it is not much this thing that is really bad but what will happen after it and then what would still follow. So we think of the future and its problems and forget that if we do what we can today, we would be in a better position to meet the problems of tomorrow.

We have to accept the fact that there are things we can control, yes, but there are also things that only God can control. Let us

do our part, and let God do his. Let us live **today** and let us not fear the future because it is in the hands of God. It would be fatalism to say, "There's nothing I can control in my life." And it would be playing Almighty God to say, "I can control everything in my life." Let us accept our limitations. Let us be humble. This is what it means to carry our cross daily.

13th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (June 30)

Luke 9:51-62. Sermon Theme: Vocation to apostolic life.

VERY URGENT

Some people might think that Christ is somewhat exaggerating when he tells prospective apostles to be ready for extreme poverty and complete trust in Divine Providence (Luke 9:57-58), to cut off all worldly attachments to loved ones (vv. 59-60) and to follow at once, without saying good-bye to relatives and friends. Yes, there might be a little exaggeration here. But let us not miss the point. In the Gospel reading it should be very clear to us that the call to the apostolic life is **very urgent** and demands immediate and drastic response. In theological language, experts would say that the apostolic life is an **eschatological vocation**. People must have a sense of urgency, a sense of having little time left, of living on borrowed time, in order to become effective apostles.

Apostles must be young-men-in-a-hurry. They need not be young in age. But they must hear an inner voice telling them: "run, don't walk" because they are full of energy. They must be in a hurry to conquer the world.

But why all the hurry? Fact number one: almost two thousand years have past since Christ came, and yet less than one-third of the world is Christian. Most probably more than half of these are only Christians in name. Fact number two: there are now less vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, than ten years ago. Whereas the ideal ration is one priest for every one thousand faithful, we presently have only one priest for every 65,000 faithful.

It would not be right to say that the future is bleak. That would be an **unchristian** attitude. But it is right to say that the future presents a very urgent challenge. Calling all generous young people!

14th Sunday of the Year (July 7)

Unified Theme: THEY WHO BEAR THE MARKS OF CHRIST IN THEIR BODY ARE THE HERALDS OF TRUE PEACE.

There is nothing that the world desires so much as peace, but paradoxically there is nothing about which it is so reckless as that same peace. Its madness on the arms race, its proverbial greed about material goods, its indifference to justice and fairness, its snobbery towards the true Source of peace are but some of the few ways the world eminently succeeds in losing peace and despairs of finding it.

The Gospel statement should be an eye-opener: peace will come only on well-disposed individuals. No amount of threat or cajolery, no drudgery of shuttle-diplomacy can produce an enduring peace if its supposed-beneficiaries do not come up with the requirements of the Gospel.

On the other hand, we know from whom peace is to be sought and prayed for. The Biblical readings assure us that peace is not an illusory goal. As sure as God is true, perfect peace will be the ultimate condition of the world: there will be a new world, a new creation. Man would inhabit a new paradise of joy. The inspired author sort of grapples with his symbols and imagery to describe an undescribable reality.

However, there are requisites for meriting the gift of peace. One is what St. Paul terms as the "marks" of Christ in his body. The true "son of peace" (i.e. the person deserving to enjoy peace) is he who accepts gladly illnesses, trials and contradictions for Christ's sake. Not only does he qualify to receive and enjoy peace, but he becomes an ambassador of peace before his fellow-men. The shuttle-diplomacy becomes a shuttle-apostolate.

15th Sunday of the Year (July 14)

Unified Theme: THE WORD THAT LEADS TO SALVATION IS NOT DIFFICULT TO KEEP.

One hears of a thousand and one ways of getting security and happiness. For example, one is struck at a brazen offer appearing in a newspaper of giving you the feeling of a millionaire at a poor man's price. What is that? The prescription for happiness turns out to be a hollow advertisement for wall-paper coloring.

So it is with our crazy world. Men will keep on searching for elixirs and prescriptions for happiness, and they will be given in-

variably crazy answers. Not until one asks that question to Jesus Christ, who will then give the eternally truthful answer: "You must love God with all your heart and mind, and you must love your neighbor as yourself."

It is the Incarnate Word proclaiming the Word of life and salvation. The proclaimed Word throws a challenge to men demanding a response in faith. This response is more simple and uncomplicated than one can imagine. One need not have the knowledge of a lawyer nor the status of a priest, both of which are admittedly beyond the reach of many. A stranger, an outcast of the accepted society (like the Samaritan of the Gospel) could also attain to salvation.

Why? Deuteronomy gives us the clue. The Word of God is not far from us. One needs not soar high nor dive deep nor travel far and wide to encounter it. It is within the reach of men. Especially is this Word accessible to the ECCLESIA TUO THEO (Church of God): it is proclaimed regularly to the Christians as it used to be proclaimed (and is still so even today) to the devout Jews gathered in liturgical assembly.

16th Sunday of the Year (July 21)

Unified Theme: THE HIDDEN MYSTERY OF GOD IS REVEALED TO THOSE WHO EAGERLY PAY ATTENTION TO HIM AND TREAT HIM HOSPITALITY.

The Christian is confronted often with the problem of choosing priorities. He has to decide at a given situation whether to act as a Martha or as a Mary. Prudence will tell him when it would be necessary for him to act one way or the other. Sometimes the choice is not between what is good and what is better; it could at times concern an agonizing decision between what is apparently good yet ultimately evil and what is apparently evil but ultimately good.

Many Italians for example chose to retain the divorce law even though the Roman Pontiff had told them they were conscience-bound to vote for its repeal. Asked why they acted to otherwise, they gave such pet replies as these ones: they felt no one should dictate to them what they ought to do; they want their country to be progressive! Progress is certainly a value to be appreciated: but it was a mistake to line up "progress" against "morals" as if these two were enemies. Should there really be a need for us to choose between "progress" and "morals", here would be a delicate instance of a decision on priorities.

Our decision then ought to be the kind that would prompt Jesus to thank His Father for revealing His mystery to the little ones and hiding it from the great. Those who eagerly pay attention to God's Word (acknowledging their dependence on him and shunning false liberalism) will discover the hidden mystery of salvation.

Since that hidden mystery discloses Christ in us, our hope of glory, we would do well to treat hospitably the divine Guest present in each of us and in our community. This act of hospitality not only will hasten and confirm God's plan of salvation for the world, in whose history he had deigned to intervene.

17th Sunday of the Year (July 28)

Unified Theme: HAVING RECEIVED FROM CHRIST THE GIFT OF PARDON, CHRISTIANS HAVE THE DUTY AND PRIVILEGE TO PLEAD PARDON FOR MANKIND.

More important than reconciling men among themselves is the task of reconciling men with God. For men can befriend men in unholy alliance against God, as is happening in many quarters of the globe. How often is the relation of comradeship invoked (Comrade So and So is a fashionable style of greeting in certain quarters) with the hidden or overt intention of subverting the will of God.

The Christian has received the gift of pardon from God, and is reconciled to him. His baptism effected the end of his life of sin and injustice, and the beginning of his life with Christ. Moreover his resurrection, with Christ and through his power, has in a certain sense already begun. He is a new creature, a friend of God, just like Abraham of old.

He now can set about pleading for his fellowmen. Like Abraham, the Christian can dare to bargain for the sake of his brothers. Who knows God may relent and will take action to prevent men from destroying themselves further.

This is attuned to some of the petitions in the "Our Father." We were taught by Christ to ask forgiveness for our trespasses, security from temptation, and deliverance for evil.

As this year has been declared a Holy Year by the Roman Pontiff, it will do well for a Christian to find in the excellent prayer of the "Our Father" the motivation and expression to exercise his prerogative and duty of interceding for his fellow-creatures. As he becomes more and more aware of the great gift of pardon he received from God, he should show gratefulness by endeavoring, according to his means, to reconcile also his brethren to God.

Our Mother

Third of a series

THE CHURCH'S AWARENESS OF THE MYSTERY OF MARY

by

Fr. Regino Cortes, O.P.

The month of May is very special to Filipino devotees of Mary. Everywhere in the Philippines her altar is adorned with flowers offered by youthful, innocent "zagalas" singing hymns of praise during the traditional "flores de Mayo."

There is another way of honoring Mary, not only with flowers but by reflecting on the greatness of her person. She is full of mysteries which the Church little by little manifested to her children in the course of time. We are going to trace these mysteries in this series dedicated to our Mother, from the awareness of the Church about the mystery of her virginity in the first centuries of her existence to the mystery of her assumption into heaven proclaimed by Pope Pius XII only in 1950, to her other mysteries which may still be latent in the consciousness of the Church.

The relationship of the Church with regards to Mary is that of a daughter and mother. Mary is the mother of the Church. Just as we always say: "like father like son" so we may also say "like mother like daughter." There are many features in the mystery of Mary which are also present in the mystery of the Church. Mary is virgin and mother, the "new Eve", the "mother Church" of Christians, the "new mother of the living."

A most unique mystery which the Church has always professed in Mary's person is the fact of her virginity: "not based on a theological acceptance of the possibility of virgin births, which is then applied to the particular way of describing God's intervention in human history; not just a literary device to convey the divine pre-existence of the Word; nor is the Virgin birth a human construct,

as if Christians feared that the divinity of Jesus would be compromised by His human father." (Pastoral Letter of ANCCB, Nov. 21, 1973, no. 44). The Church believes this mystery because she is convinced according to her divine-given consciousness that this is the way God has chosen in His infinite wisdom that the Word should come into the world.

From the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke we have the apostolic testimony that Jesus had no human father. The Church has also discerned a reference to the Virgin birth in the words of St. John: "begotten not by blood, nor by carnal desire, nor by man's willing it, but by God" (Jn 1:13).

Patristic allusions to Mary's virginity are numerous since the first years of Christianity. Aside from the words of the creed: "born of the virgin Mary" we have the most valuable testimony of St. Ignatius of Antioch (+110): "the Son of God . . . truly born of a virgin." St. Justin echoes this faith in the middle of the second century calling the Blessed Mother simply the "Virgin Mary". Just a few years distant St. Irenaeus (+202) reflects more profoundly: "Because an unexpected salvation was to be initiated for men through God's help, an unexpected birth from a Virgin was likewise accomplished. The sign was God-given; the effect was not man-made".

In the fourth century a new awareness of Mary's virginity sprung forth in the Church: the awareness that Mary during her life-time remained always a virgin. She became the model of consecrated virgins and celibate monks. This awareness of the Church about Mary's perpetual virginity was in due time officially expressed in her Councils as that of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

Contrary to what others may think the virginity of Mary is never an anti-sign for married life. She remains the advocate of married couples that their love for each other would always be pure, loyal and true to the end. Her virginity is rather an anti-sign for those who abuse that precious gift given by God to man: his power to procreate, which is a participation in God's creative power. The abuse of man's sexual powers is in itself an abuse against life. Let the blessed Virgin make us aware that man's procreative faculty should be exercised with the greatest sense of responsibility to generate better individuals who would be future citizens of our world and the world to come.

COMMUNICATION

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

APPEAL FROM CAMARINES SUR

Dear Father:

Believe me, for the first time last Christmas we celebrated Christ's birth without a Church. It was our saddest Christmas. And you will please give us a little of your precious time to hear our sad tale.

Last October 19, 1973, fate was cruel to us when a fire of an undetermined origin reduced both our Church and Rectory to ashes. The people were in panic, afraid that the scourge of fire might spread into the entire Poblacion. But God willed that only the two buildings belonging to Him be subjected to the baptism of real fire. Believe me, nothing, absolutely nothing was saved, not even a single extra-clothing for me, except what I was wearing. Because of this, my poor parishioners and I are so helpless. As a priest, you know what mental anguish, what psychological worries keep on tormenting me day in and day out. It is my faith in our *priestly solidarity* that gives me much hope. And this is the reason why I am writing you for an **ARDENT APPEAL**

I know that for the sake of the Priesthood of Christ that binds us both, for the sake of a brother priest in distress, you will not deny us, me in particular, your charity. I confess to you, that any gesture of brotherly sympathy, any expression of brotherly concern — which I know you will show — will make me feel strong to meet the big challenge lying ahead. And I assure you the gratitude of a poor people like my parishioners who will return to you the only wealth left to us — our humble prayers that the Good Lord may always have you in His safe Keeping.

Yours very gratefully in Domino,

(Sgd.) REV. JESUS B. ESPLANA
Parish of St. Michael the Archangel
Pamplona, Camarines Sur G-326

Comment: Readers may send help directly to Fr. Esplana or through the Boletín.

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LETTER FROM MINDANAO

Dear Father Efren,

Greetings from this remote corner of Mindanao!

I decided to write you because I felt challenged by your "solicitation" for reactions — p. 205 of the March 1974 issue of the Boletin... With the article, "Reflections on Evangelization," you did a great service to the Church in the Philippines in line with her role of "witnessing" to justice. You have also succeeded in creating a climate of dialogue among your readers.

Since you have set a tone for dialogue, I would like to make a contribution by way of a suggestion. Since the main target of the Boletin is not so much the academic world of seminary professors, clerics in formation and ecclesiastical officials but the ordinary parish pastors and missionaries engaged in actual pastoral work, may I suggest that you also publish more articles on concrete pastoral experiences. I want to read more about pastoral experiences in other dioceses and specially among "grassroot" parishes. I want to know more different strategies in building Christian communities, liturgical and paraliturgical programs, lay leadership formation programs, new approaches to church support, experiences of apostolate among minority groups, spiritual renewal programs for priests, religious and lay leaders, etc. This would of course, necessitate a team of "field editors" who will go around and collate all these pastoral experiences. But I think this could be done. I would like the Boletin to be a kind of pastoral forum.

Finally, enclosed is the statement^(*) of the recently concluded Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference II held in Cagayan de Oro last March 28-April 1, 1974. I believe this reflects the mind of the Church in Mindanao at this time. I am submitting you this just in case you have not received a copy yet.

More power to the Boletin. May God bless your work fruitfully.
In Christ,

(Sgd.) FR. PIO EUGENIO
St. Francis of Assisi Parish
Trento, Agusan del Sur

Comment: We have asked some priests who have done wonderful work building community in barrios to put their experience in writing. We are still awaiting results. We welcome articles from readers.

(*) A summary of the statement is published in our Here and There Section.

QUESTIONS FROM FARMERS — III

A priest from Agusan has sent us 57 questions gathered from farmers. Here is our third installment. We invite our readers to send us their answers, even just to one or two of these questions. We will publish the best answers. They can be long or short, as you wish.

30. Why do priests not marry?
31. Priests are for the rich. Priests are rich people.
32. Is it true that priests and nuns do not love?
33. Is it true that priests and nuns are "in despair" people?
34. Is it a sin for a priest to fall in love with a woman and vice-versa?
35. We heard that priests are allowed to marry now.
36. At Mass only the priests receives the wine and the bigger host, while the people receive only small hosts. Is this not "unjust"?
37. Why are there different classes of Mass, Baptism, funeral and marriage ceremonies? We thought the sacraments should be given free. Why does the priest charge very high fees for these?
38. We know priests who are gamblers, drunkards, and adulterers. Why are they like that?
39. Can we not confess directly to God? Why should I confess to a priest who is a sinner himself?
40. Is it true that the Church owns plenty of land?
41. If Christ is truly God, how come He died?
42. If Christ died for us, He redeemed us from sins. Therefore we are already saved even if we keep on committing sins.

HERE AND THERE

CBCP PUBLISHERS NEWSLETTER

The General Secretariat of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has begun publishing "The CBCP Monitor", a bi-monthly newsletter with a pastoral thrust. The Monitor will act as a vehicle which will transmit, feed and facilitate an interchange of fresh news that concerns the Church both in the national and international levels.

This project of the CBCP General Secretariat is designed as a service towards the realization of the CBCP objectives. The Second Vatican Council defined these objectives in general: "An episcopal conference is a kind of council in which the bishops of a given nation or territory jointly exercise their pastoral office... especially through forms and programs of apostolate that most adequately the needs and the signs of the times" (Christus Dominus n.38).

In particular the CBCP objectives are: (1) to study the pastoral situations affecting the whole Church in the Philippines; (2) to formulate joint pastoral policies and programs, and implement them through the Episcopal Commissions and Church agencies in co-ordination with the different ecclesiastical jurisdictions; (3) to promote cooperation and mutual assistance among the dioceses focusing on the universality of the Church's apostolic mission; (4) to promote fraternal solidarity with the rest of the universal Church, particularly, the Holy See; and (5) to promote cordial relationship with civil institutions and with all men of good will.

The CBCP General Secretariat is headed by Rev. Jose C. Sorra and is located at 2655 F.B. Harrison, Pasay City (P.O. Box 408, Pasay).

PASTORAL CONFERENCE WANTS ACTION FOR JUSTICE

CAGAYAN DE ORO. — The Second Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference issued a statement recommending action to set aright "many injustices touching the fundamental rights of our people still prevalent today."

Concrete steps of action recommended by the Conference are: — that we help our people, especially the oppressed, to develop themselves even if our motivations are misunderstood; — that we

lend our voices to the "voiceless victims of injustice" and when necessary, responsibly use the pulpit to exercise our right and duty to denounce instances of injustice as clearly stated by the Synod of Bishops; — that in doing so, we do not limit ourselves to injustices inflicted on priests, religious and church institutions and interests, but take up the cause of all people; — that we take initiative to

set up a Citizens' Committee for justice and peace in every diocese to be composed of a cross-section of the community. Among its functions will be: to support social awareness programs, stimulate sensitivity to unjust acts, situations and structures. This group or a sub-committee could act as the counterpart group in the Church-Military (Government) Liaison Committee (CMLC) which we recommend to be set up where necessary and desirable; — that we continue our assistance to the evacuees in Zamboanga, Jolo, Basilan, Cotabato and other places; — that we commit more priests and resources to work among our abandoned national cultural communities; — that in the event of another referendum, we shall demand as atmosphere of complete freedom.

The recommendations were arrived at after three days of reflection and prayer

“on how to make the Mindanao-Sulu Church self-sustaining and self-governing” while at the same time maintaining the proper relationship with the ambient cultural communities and with the nation as a whole. Participants realized that “the prevailing socio-economic-political and religious structures somehow prevent our total human development as planned by God”. They found it necessary to address themselves directly “to the fundamental question of justice posed by the present situation”.

Held at Cagayan de Oro city from March 28 to April 1, the Conference gathered together 272 delegates, namely, bishops, priests, religious and lay leaders from 14 out of the 15 ecclesiastical jurisdictions of the Mindanao-Sulu Church, the Sulu delegation being absent due to recent disturbances in the region.

MEDICAL MISSIONS HELP NEEDY

MANILA. — The University of Santo Tomas Medical Missions Inc. once more extended its helping hand to the needy when it launched its annual Summer Mission program.

Five scheduled missions started last Holy Week. The Holy Week Mission (April 7-14) for Calapan, Oriental Mindoro accomplished a total of 782 cases mostly involving surgery. The team headed by Dr. Segundo Lansang was composed of 31 members broken down as follows: six surgeons, one internist, three obstetrician — gynecologists, three anesthesiologists, one dentist, three nurses, four medical interns, three clerks, three EENT specialists and one chaplain.

The second mission gave medical aid to residents of Iligan City, Lanao del Norte from April 18-24. Dr. Florentino Doble, surgeon,

headed the 21-member team composed of four surgeons, two obstetrician-gynecologists, two EENT specialists, two anesthesiologists, one pediatrician internist, five nurses, four medical interns-clerk, and one chaplain.

Other missions were: April 29-May 5 in Camalig, Albay; May 9-15 in Leon, Iloilo; and May 19-26 in Nasugbu, Batangas.

The University of Santo Tomas Medical Missions which is now on its 13th year of existence has fielded 136 regular summer missions throughout the country and has treated 250,082 cases involving major and minor surgical operations and medical consultations during its summer missions. It has constructed the St. Martin de Porres Medical Center, a 50-bed charity hospital and social center

in Sapang Palay. MMI has also established 11 permanent clinics in Luzon.

Groups desirous of availing

themselves of the services of the UST Medical Missions may contact the Father Regent of the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

ACUP OFFERS SEMINARS

MANILA. — The Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines (ACUP) has offered Summer term seminars on the socio-cultural and economic development of the Philippines through better College and Graduate School education.

The socio-cultural seminar studied how education can minimize the bad and maximize the good elements of Filipino socio-cultural life, and how education can introduce new elements that have been helpful in the development of other countries. The seminar on economic development studied why the Philippines, which is second only to the United States in higher education enrolment/population ratio, does not have a more developed economy than other developing countries where there has been less of higher education. Speakers pointed out how seminar participants can cooperate in making Philippine higher education more productive and functional in the attainment of accelerated economic growth.

Scholarship grants for the seminars were made available by the ACUP to 100 students recruited by the eleven member universities, namely: Adamson University (Manila), Aquinas University (Legazpi City), Ateneo de Manila University (Quezon City), Divine Word University (Tacloban City), Notre Dame University (Cotabato City), Saint Louis University (Baguio City), University of San Agustin (Iloilo City), University of San Carlos (Cebu City), University of Santo Tomas (Manila) and Xavier University (Cagayan

de Oro City). The ACUP also published manuals for the seminars.

The sponsorship of the seminars is the first major project that puts the ACUP in the public eye. The Association was formed on April 25, 1973 and duly incorporated on June 21, 1973. Since then it has (1) published a Manual on Formats and Questionnaire Forms of Foreign Foundations, designed to help member-institutions in approaching foundations for Assistance in their operations; (2) published a monthly newsletter; (3) helped the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines formulate Guidelines and Operating Procedures for the Holy Year Celebration 1974-75; (4) rendered research service to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference by preparing a position paper on Pastoral Action in Tertiary Education.

In the coming months the ACUP plans (1) to hold a Congress of Southeast Asian Association of Catholic Universities with the participation of India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan; (2) and to survey member-institutions on the socio-economic characteristic of their students, on the employment, unemployment and underemployment of their graduates, on their cooperation with the local hierarchy and the government, on the community services they render, on what they have done for cultural minorities, and on other questions affecting education in the Philippines.

The ACUP was formed to implement a desire of Vatican II in its Declaration on Christian Edu-

cation, and was first inspired by Msgr. Carmine Rocco, former Papal Nuncio to the Philippines. President of the ACUP is Fr. Leonardo Legaspi, O.P., Rector of the University of Sto. Tomas; Secre-

tary General is Fr. Paul P. Zwaenepoel, C.I.C.M., President of Saint Louis University. Its Secretariat is located in Baguio City (P.O. Box 71).

BISHOP VELASCO APPOINTED VICAR GENERAL

MANILA. — Bishop Juan B. Velasco, O.P., D.D. received an appointment from the Archbishop of Manila, to exercise the function of "Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Manila with all the faculties corresponding to his position for the glory of God and the good of His People."

"It is understood therefore that His Excellency, Most Rev. Juan B. Velasco, O.P., D.D., performs, like each of the four (4) Auxiliary Bishop of Manila appointed as Vicars General, who exercise their apostolate in their respective cir-

cumscriptions of the Archdiocese, his mission especially among the Chinese residents of Manila, without in the least limiting the faculties of Rt. Rev. Msgr. Peter Tsao, SVD, previously appointed as Vicar General with jurisdiction over the four (4) Chinese Parishes."

Bishop Velasco is the Bishop of Amoy, mainland China, but he had to leave when the Communists took over the country. His new appointment was published in a circular letter on April 18.

ASIAN SISTERS ANALYSE NEW ROLES

QUEZON CITY. — Sisters from 14 Asian countries met in the Philippines to analyse the multiple roles open to today's Asian Sisters seeking to serve the Church as "Women of God, Prayer and Action". The meeting was held April 1-20 at San Jose Seminary, Quezon City.

More than 45 Sisters from Fiji Islands, Hongkong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, South Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Thailand took part in

the meeting which was chaired by Sister M. Christine Tan, RGS of the Philippines.

New board members of the Asian Service Centre for Religious Women, headquartered in Manila, were elected at the end of the meeting. They are: Sister Mary Christine Tan, RGS (Philippines), President; Sister Beatrice Leung, P.B. (Hong Kong), Vice-President; Sister Amelia Vasquez, RSCJ, Secretary, and Sister Loreto Eugenia, RA, Treasurer, both of Manila.

KNIGHTS OF MALTA AID RP LEPERS

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. — The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, which earlier contributed \$46,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide drugs and vehicles for the agency's leprosy control programme in the Philippines, has

offered additional funds to help improve the treatment of children with leprosy.

Since 1954, UNICEF has been collaborating with the government of the Philippines and the World Health Organization (WHO), a

UN-affiliated agency, in a programme of health services for the control and treatment of leprosy. Its operations have been concentrated particularly towards examination of school children and

treatment of those found to be afflicted.

The renewed assistance pledged by the Order of Malta would be directed towards a leprosarium on the island of Culion.

ASIAN BISHOPS END MEET BISHOP GAVIOLA ELECTED SECRETARY

Meeting in Plenary Session for the first time since its formation in Manila in 1970, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), discussed Evangelization in Modern Asia. The meetings were held April 21-27 in Taipei.

Each Episcopal Conference participating made available to the others their individual responses to the questionnaire on Evangelization circulated by the Vatican in preparation for the Synod of Bishops to be held in October in Rome. This facilitated exchange of ideas.

Plenary Sessions and Workshops were held on: The Theology of Evangelization in the Asian Context; The Challenge of Indigenization of the Church in Asia; Evangelization and the Great Religions of Asia; Missionary Formation for Evangelization; Evangelization and Conscientization in the present socio-economic context of Asia.

Bishop Mariano G. Gaviola of the Philippines was elected Secretary General at the closing

plenary assembly on April 27. He assumes the position left vacant by the late Bishop Francis Hsu of Hong Kong.

Bishop Gaviola was convenor of the FABC's Standing Committee prior to his election. As Secretary General he will be in charge of coordinating the work of the specialized offices of FABC such as the Office for Human Development, the Office of Social Communications, the Office of Education and Students' Chaplains, and the Office of Ecumenism and Inter-religious Affairs.

The establishment of the FABC was conceived during the historic gathering of some 180 Bishops of South and East Asia in Manila last November 1970, attended by the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, as a permanent structure for the effective implementation of the decisions of this Asian Bishops' Meeting. The statutes of the FABC was approved by the Holy Father on November 16, 1972. It has its Central Secretariat in Hong Kong.

ANTIPOLO SITUATION STUDIED

The Archbishop of Manila, Jaime L. Sin, has authorized a study designed to assure a proper religious atmosphere for the shrine of the Virgin of Antipolo in Rizal province.

This step was the offshoot of an "unofficial" visit of the Archbishop last April 17. He found out that worship in Antipolo Church was an ordeal where a de-

votee has to undergo harassment by vendors and photographers. Pickpockets also abounded.

About 280 vendors occupy a total stall space of 400 square meters of the Church premises, making it virtually a marketplace for religious and tourist items.

If the Antipolo situation proves to be beyond reform, the venerated brown image of Our Lady of Peace

and Good Voyage might be transferred to another shrine in Manila or Cavite.

Antipolo traditionally attracts residents of metropolitan Manila

and the neighbouring provinces during Maytime celebrations. These celebrations have been highlighted this year in line with the Department of Tourism's "Come to the Fiestas" program.

LEGION OF MARY GROWS

MANILA. — Reports from the Legion of Mary Senatus of Northern Philippines show an increase of members and of activities, some of them specially interesting.

In Olongapo City there is a Praesidium (units) specializing in the moral upliftment of hostesses in bars and nightclubs. In many places units have been engaged in the "Holiday Apostolate" and in organizing seminars on Family Planning.

The Maria Coronata Curia (district council) reported its supervision of four Praesidia of prisoners. One Praesidium is composed of convicts in death row.

A play explaining the meaning of the Mass was reported by the Lingayen-Dagupan Comitium (diocesan council). In the Manila district where the Immaculate Conception Curia works, Holy Communion has increased from 22,000 to 58,000 due to efforts of le-

gionaries. Central Rizal Curia members have made a census of all the aged sick so that the priest may bring them the Sacraments.

Pilgrimage for Christ is the name of project that brought a group of 32 legionaries to Talim Island — Cardona side, to conduct a spiritual-socio-economic survey. They visited 786 families and discovered 1,106 confirmation cases, 163 Marriage cases, 92 Baptismal cases needing pastoral attention from the parish priest. A similar project was undertaken in San Pablo, Laguna, with the encouragement of the Bishop, Msgr. Bantigue.

Due to membership explosion two new curiae have been formed: Our Lady Queen of Peace Curia in Rizal province, and the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Curia in Manila. Almost all Praesidia and Curiae have reported increased membership.

RURAL MISSIONARIES UNDERGO TRAINING

The Rural Missionaries of the Philippines (RMP), a group of Sisters from different congregations, are holding their annual training program on May 16 to June 7, at St. Augustine's Seminary in Tagaytay City. The theme of the program is Christian Community Building in the light of present orientations in Evangelization and Development.

More than 85 Sisters are presently working as Rural Missionaries all over the Philippines, helping needy people through social action projects and uplifting their morale by the example of

Christian concern and commitment. The Sisters as a rule are "borrowed" from their congregation for a period of two years.

The original Rural Missionaries numbered only 19 in 1969. Their group was formed upon the request of Bishop Julio X. Labayan, head of the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA). The request was acted upon by the Association of Major Religious Superiors for Women in the Philippines (AMRSWP). They presently have their national office at 509 P. Faura, Manila.

CONFESSIONAL BOXES TO REMAIN

VATICAN CITY. — To correct the wrong information given by press reports that confessional boxes will be abolished in the wake of reforms in the rite of Penance, the Pope told a general audience that "the confessional, as a protective screen between the minister and the penitent, to guarantee the absolute secrecy of the conversation imposed on them and reserved for them, must, it is clear, remain." He recalled how people, even famous and important ones, were attracted to confess to a priest, Fr. Pouget, because he was blind.

In accordance with the recently published "*Ordo Paenitentiae*" which reforms the sacrament of Penance, "we will accustom ourselves henceforth to defining (it) as the sacrament of reconciliation," the Pope said.

Of the three forms of "recon-

ciliation approved in the new rite, the Pope recommends the second form, that of collective preparation followed by individual confession and absolution. "It unites the double merit of the community act and the personal act. This is the best form for our People, when it is possible; but it usually presupposes the simultaneous presence of several ministers of the sacrament; and that is not always easy. But we hope, especially in the case of homogeneous groups: children, young people, workers, sick people, pilgrims, etc., that it will be celebrated more often, because it facilitates preparation and a more orderly procedure." The first form of "reconciliation" is the individual one, known to all. The third form is collective reconciliation and one general absolution, reserved for special or emergency cases.

USE MASS MEDIA FOR EVANGELIZATION

VATICAN CITY. — A study document on "Social Communications and Evangelization in the World of Today," the theme of the eighth World Communications Day, May 26, has been issued by the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications.

The document said, the message of Christ has not been heard by all people. To ensure that all people can hear Christ's message, the mass media should be used more efficiently.

"A Catholic press is indispensable for evangelization... Today, specially when the world is changing so rapidly, when old structures are crumbling, and seemingly well established ideas turning upside down, it is important that Christians should be able to turn

to the Catholic press for guidance."

Radio and television, the document said, "can contribute to the rapid change of mentalities, to the creation of new types of social relations, to the transformation of man himself."

In speaking of film and other audio-visual media, "It can be fairly suggested," the document said, "that the present evolution of ideas and behaviour as well as current attitudes to life and understanding of its meaning are in quite large part the results of the cinema productions of recent years."

The most important question with film, as with the other mass media, the document noted, is how it can be put to more effective use.

BRIEFLY SAID

FATHER HERBERT RYAN, a leading ecumenist, told the 11th annual National Workshop on Christian Unity (U.S.A.) that the emphasis on ecumenism has shifted from social action to a renewed interest in the spiritual life. The ecumenical trend in the 1960's was "for Christian outreach, joint social action, the empowerment of the powerless, aiding the disadvantaged to enter as a group into the American process." But today, ecumenical efforts need a new thrust because the strong enthusiasm for social action has largely died and "Christians in America today have started a search for deepening of their inner lives. This search crosses denominational barriers and the emerging forms that this search has taken, prayer groups, discussion and Bible groups, charismatic fellowships, religious communes, are already thoroughly ecumenical."

JAMES IRWIN, one of the astronauts who went to the moon on Apollo 15 in August 1971, experienced a genuine religious awakening while in space. On his return, he started to spend weekends recounting his experience to church groups around Texas. Then in 1972, he retired as an astronaut to set up the High Flight Foundation, a non-profit organization in Colorado Springs whose purpose is "to share my faith in God and serve humanity."

FATHER PATRICK PEYTON, national director of the Family Rosary Crusade in the U.S.A., was "ecstatic" over Marialis Cultus, the recently published papal document on devotion to Mary. To him "it means that the Holy Father is exhorting all the Bishops of the world officially to take upon themselves the job that the Family Rosary Crusade for thirty-two years, for a generation, has raised its voice to proclaim on all the con-

tinents of the earth. To me it is a mission crowned. The future Family Rosary Crusade apostolate has been clarified and sanctified. 'The Family that Prays Together Stays Together' will continue to resound the world over."

KARL RAHNER, the eminent theologian, wrote to the Rev. Martin Bogdam of the Lutheran synod of Bavaria stating that, although he does not expect any change in the Catholic Church's policy of not ordaining women in the foreseeable future, he holds that the present practice has no "absolutely binding character such as a dogma, because it is based merely on human and historical reflection that was valid in past ages under cultural and social conditions that are now changing rapidly."

FATHER ANICETO FERNANDEZ, Master General of Dominicans, addressing the International Congress commemorating the 7th Centenary of the death of St. Thomas Aquinas, said, "The best thing about (contemporary) Thomistic revival is that it does not seem a short-lived fashion or a material repetition of his teaching, but rather an open and dynamic return to study it more deeply in its authenticity and consider it from new angles or aspects, which light to the serious problems of society and the Church." In concluding his address he said: "We cannot pass over in silence (Thomas') beautiful and profound teaching on creative and saving Love. These two loves must not be considered as separate and almost independent, but as one love that creates in order to save and orders and subordinates the whole of creation to salvation." He quoted the words of St. Thomas: "All beings, before beginning to exist, were as if shut up in God's hand, that is, in his power. But

the hand was opened with the key of love, and then the creatures appeared."

FATHER JACQUES GUY BOUGEROL, President of the International Bonaventure Commission, delivered an address at the Antonianum, Rome, on the occasion of the seventh centenary of Saint Bonaventure's death, which occurred on July 15, 1274, four months after that of St. Thomas Aquinas. In his conclusion he said that, 'As a theologian Bonaventure was convinced — and he was correct in this as in so much else — that only a continual return to the sources (Scripture and Tradition) would enable us to listen to the Spirit, develop (i.e., deepen) our understanding of the faith and, thus, better enable us to love it. As a friar Saint Bonaventure was equally convinced that a constant return to the sources (Francis and his initial/intuitive inspiration) would clearly demonstrate that the Order (of Friars Minors or Franciscans) existed solely for the purpose of the friars' sanctification and their

service of the Church or Christ, the world, and every person."

ARCHBISHOP JAIME L. SIN of Manila, addressing a conference of public school teachers at Abad Santos High School in Binondo, said that teachers must have a sense of humor and must "turn on their TV's" — meaning the three Theological Values of faith, hope and charity. Aside from insisting on the need for these virtues and their ultimate goal which is union with Christ, the Archbishop recommended a fourth value known as a sense of humor. "You might say, but what has a sense of humor got to do with going to God? Let me tell you, my dear teachers, that Christ has a sense of humor. You know why? Considering all the foolishness that we are doing here on earth, considering what big fools we make of ourselves many times, God would have given up on us a long time ago if He did not have a sense of humor. A sense of humor will enable us to laugh at ourselves. And the capacity to laugh at oneself is a true sign of humility and lack of pride. If we have a sense of humor, we have humility."

SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

1. Philippine Books

Andres, Tomas Quintin D, O.F.M. Cap.: *Kristianismo sa Bagong Lipunan*. St. Paul Publications, Pasay City. — 192 pages. — Paperback, ₱8.00 (postage included).

This book confronts present-day Philippine Christianity with a changing society. Brings you face to face with your own faith experience in line with the liturgical year. Helps you in discussions and homilies.

Balaguer, Josemaria Escriva de: *Christ Triumphs Through Humility*. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila, 1963. — 20 pages. — Paperback ₱1.50.

There is only one race in the world: "the race of the children of God." It is the Christian task to make the whole human race speak the same "language", the language that Christ taught His disciples while still on earth. And that is, humility. A follower of Christ can lead the other—Christians or non-Christians—by living the Christian way of life: to humble one self while he/she meets the challenges of everyday living. Humility begets obedience and obedience begets love. Through love we become followers of Christ.

Balaguer, Josemaria Escriva de: *Loyalty To The Church*. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila, 1972. — 28 pages. — Paperback, ₱1.50.

"Loyalty To The Church" is the first of a series of homilies given by Msgr. Balaguer last June 4, 1972, the Second Sunday after Pentecost. He forms an immediate connection between the church's doctrine and the life of an ordinary Christian. The essential properties of the Church help to enlighten the confused mind of the modern Christians with regard to the present problems, situations or circumstances. Msgr. Balaguer combines theological depth and simplicity of style.

Teresa Escano

Balaguer, Msgr. Josemaria Escrivá de: *Ang Daan*. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila. Paperbound, newsprint, 274 pages, 4-1/2" x 7".

The Way has been published in all the major languages and has sold over two million copies. Called a modern spiritual classic, it written with a freshness that makes it a joy to read. *L'Osservatore Romano* said that the Author 'has written more than a masterpiece: he has written straight from the heart...' Another reviewer summed it up, "There are 999 counsels, brief in verbiage but profound in thought."

It is ideal for prayer and spiritual reading.

And now the Tagalog version "Ang Daan" (2nd printing).

Balaguer, Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá de: *Santo Rosario*. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila. Paperbound, bookpaper, 47 pages, 4-1/2" × 7", ₱2.00.

Para sa iyo, aking kaibigan, na bumabasa ng librong ito, sinulat ko ang "Santo Rosario" para matulungan ka, at pati na rin ako, na maging taimtim sa pagdarasal kapag nanalangin ka sa Inang Birhen.

Huwag mong bayaang magambala ka ng tunog ng mga salita habang pinag-iisipan mo ang mga alalahaning ito. Huwag mong basahing malakas, sapagka't maaaring mawala ang kanilang matalik na kahulugan.

Subali't bigkasin mo ang mga Ama Namin at mga Aba Ginoong Maria ng bawa't misteryo nang maliwanag at marahan. Makatutulong ito sa iyong pagmamahal kay Maria.

— Ang may-akda

Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priest issued by order of Pope Pius V. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila Paperbound, bookpaper, 635 pages, 5-1/2" × 8", ₱20.00.

This book contains the complete text and is written in easily readable English, a useful reference in expounding Catholic doctrine. It contains detailed explanations of the Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer.

Urteaga, Fr. Jesus: *God and Children*. Sinag-Tala Publishers, Manila. Paperbound, newsprint, 241 pages, 4-1/2" × 7", ₱5.00.

In this book, Fr. Urteaga draws heavily on his own rich experience as a teacher and spiritual director. To his subjects he brings much doctrine, much humour and enormous common sense. These qualities combine to make *God and Children* a very valuable book for all parents and especially parents of young children.

2. Books From Other Countries

Rahner, Karl: *La Gracia Como Libertad*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1972 — 324 págs. — Rústica 290 pesetas.

The sweeping title has been chosen to include Karl Rahner's short articles, radio and T. V. lectures and interviews, sermons, and even plugs for others' books. The main theme is that supernatural grace does not nullify human free will, though the latter can hinder the former: in fine, that man should act as if all depended on himself, but should pray as if everything good were a gift from above.

Rodriguez, Mauro: *Mensaje Cristiano y Salud Mental*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1973 — 204 págs. — Rústica 225 pesetas.

Aren't religious exercises nothing more than outpourings from diverse mental aberrations? Aren't pious people tainted with, or prone to, mental disorders? Doesn't obedience inhibit full personal development? Weren't many Saints, including St. Augustine, mentally unbalanced?

The book under consideration collects a vast array of facts without exhausting this *avant-garde* theme. The author warns us that his ideas are beamed to seminary professors and such other members of the intelligentsia, and not to every Tom, Dick and Harry.

Schnackenburg, Rudolf: *El Evangelio Segun San Marcos*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1973 — Tomo I, 224 págs. — Rústica 180 pesetas Tomo II, 348 págs. — Rústica 280 pesetas.

This work, in two volumes, came from the pen of a well-known Scripturist and professor of Wurzburg University. This is indeed an authoritative, up-to-date and post-Vatican study of St. Mark's gospel, with special emphasis on the relevance and applications of his doctrines to our lives in our own age. In spite of its scholarliness, it is easily understandable for anyone with an elementary knowledge of the catechism.

Schreiner, Josef y otros autores: *Forma y Proposito del Nuevo Testamento*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1973 — 476 págs. y 1 pliego de mapas — Rústica 450 — Tela 520 pesetas.

Authored by a battery of 16 Scripturists, this book is a many-splendored work on the New Testament. It underscores the historical background, the literary forms and the doctrinal aspects, and makes many applications of the gospel teachings to our daily lives (*Sitz im Leben*). This volume is very useful as a sourcebook for catechists, preachers and even theologians, and is also recommended as a book for spiritual reading or meditation.

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