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EDITORIAL

Ten Years After Vatican II

Two steps forward, one step backward, a little jump here, a little jump there.

This seems to be the dance of the Philippine Church in the ten-year period after Vatican II.

There have been no sweeping reforms nor furious reactions. But there has been a steady balancing on divergent and even opposing tendencies, a convergence of sporadic initiatives for renewal.

It took us some time to switch to the new order of saying Mass. The texts and guidelines were not immediately available to all, even in English. It took some more time to translate them to the different Philippine languages and dialects. Even now there are complaints that the liturgical texts are not easily available. But this does not mean we are way behind in **real** liturgical renewal. The Mass is in fact more meaningful to more Filipinos than before. It is brought more easily to remote places and our simple rural folks participate in it in a manner they never did before. In the towns and cities our churches continue to overflow. At every Mass there is a good number of communicants, although we are still far from one hundred percent.

Sometimes, people express shock at some "bizarre" liturgical innovations. But in general, the attitude is lenient and open to accept

whatever may turn out to be meaningful and helpful in worship. Indigenization is slowly but surely making a headway.

What we have said about Liturgy can also be said of Ecclesiology. Ecumenism, Bible Study, Social Action, Missionary Work, Mass Communications, Education, etc. In all these areas and aspects of Christian life we in the Philippines have had no great dramas inspired by Vatican II. But we have movement. We have dances. We have expressions of a healthy vitality.

The most important aspect of the post Vatican II Church in the Philippines is that the common Tao has caught the spirit of reform and renewal. This may not be evidenced by rallies, demonstrations, revolutionary changes. But it is there. In the heart of the Filipino. He supports reform and renewal the Filipino way. Which is to say: quietly, meditatively, acting in his own good time, but surely moving forward. Or at least moving meaningfully. He is dancing to the time of Vatican II.

In this issue

December 8 was the tenth anniversary of the solemn closing of the Second Vatican Council. It is time to reflect on the results produced by the opening of the Church's windows.

Yves Congar has some thoughts to share with us on **The Church After the Council**. He begins by noting some contributions of the Council which are of historic significance for theological method, liturgical life, and the involvement of the Church in the temporal order. He then looks at the main sources of the Church's difficulties in living up to and beyond Vatican II. He concludes with some optimistic reflections.

Sacred Doctrine in the Contemporary Pastoral Ministry is masterfully treated by Barnabas Mary Ahern, C.P., member of the Pope's Theological Commission. The authentic renewal of the Church, he

says, "derives primarily from the living word of God which the Holy Spirit has illumined and made efficacious". In this light, the apostolic workman must denote himself more than ever before to a three-fold task: "first, he himself must be totally devoted to God's word; secondly, he must be a trustworthy ambassador in speaking this word; thirdly, he must recognize in God's word the only true bond of charity and unity in the Church."

On November 21, 1964, when Pope Paul VI promulgated the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, "Lumen Gentium", in which the Mariological thinking of Vatican II took its final form, the Pope also proclaimed **Mary Mother of the Church**. Fr. Leonardo Legaspi helps us take a closer look at this doctrine.

The last set of "Questions People Ask" for our present volume is on **Penance and Anointing**, in line with the on-going liturgical reform. As in the previous sets we have Herman J. Graf to thank for this contribution.

THE WORLD DAY OF PEACE 1976

Text of Presentation

"THE REAL WEAPONS OF PEACE"

Weapons, peace—two terms which at first sight are contradictory. It is however on purpose that the Holy Father uses them, as Saint Paul defended "the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left" (2 Cor 6:7). For today it is indeed a question of defending peace. Peace, in effect, means in the first place the absence of war. And it is no small thing to outlaw war and exclude it from life—war in all its forms; international wars, civil, racial, religious and ideological wars.

But to safeguard peace is above all, to promote it, to spread it everywhere as a whole harmony of values, a civilization made up of what is human, a sign of society which is complete, that is to say, true, just, free, and united in solidarity and brotherhood.

Let us save peace, let us create a new peace—this is the rallying call which Paul VI addresses to the world. A universal appeal: to all men and women, and to all communities. At the same time a varied appeal: the conclusion of his Message is specifically addressed to the "followers and servants of the Gospel", but not in any way to monopolize it, since the Gospel has no frontiers. In this is founded the basic unity of the Message and the universality of its prophetic intent.

I

ANALYSIS OF THE MESSAGE

Before presenting the key ideas, it is helpful to describe briefly the plan and logical development of the message.

The text begins with a diagnosis. Starting from "the immediate experiences of the historical situation in which we all immersed", Paul VI sees a twofold existential process.

One, which is encouraging: Peace is gaining ground. "... the idea of Peace... is gaining importance and attention in men's minds. Activities are developing in the direction indicated by Peace". The other, which is disquieting, shows "unmistakable symptoms of incipient or future conflagrations": a resurgence of nationalism, of the arms race and of

the arms trade, a tearing apart and poisoning of the social fabric by hatred. The Pope is not so much concerned with an enumeration as with an overall evaluation. Despite the admirable "efforts being made to calm these centres of warfare and guerilla activity... Peace... is merely a truce... Peace... is a work of continual therapy. Its health is by its very nature frail".

And so—what is to be done?

In the first place, avoid false weapons, that is to say: fear (nuclear), surrender, servile resignation; or, conversely, the desire to achieve peace by the weapons of war, mistrust, excessive armament, etc.

In the second place, choose with discernment the real weapons of peace, those which are akin to it: recourse to law, "in the first place... the observance of pacts", which constitute the "shield" of peace; the upholding and creation of worthwhile international institutions; and, still more, "moral principles", which are mankind's other armour.

Finally, since the time of Christ, "the new Law of mankind which goes forward and which arms Peace with a formidable principle: 'You are all brethren'" (Mt 23:8).

The Message concludes by comparing the progress of Peace with that of a procession, "perhaps a little slow, but... nonetheless sure and beneficial for the whole world".

After that, the conclusion invites Christian to bear witness to a "peace... armed only with goodness, love and forgiveness".

II

POINTS MADE BY THE MESSAGE

Four points, from among many others, can be extracted from this important Message.

ITS ORIGINALITY

The 1976 theme is on the lines of previous Days of Peace, and particularly of the last three: "Peace is Possible" (1973), "Peace depends on you too" (1974) and "Reconciliation—the way to Peace" (1975). It follows the same general lines.

But one notices, with concern, the duty and the right felt by the Vicar of Christ to communicate to the world a pledge, a responsible call, both of alarm and of hope. For the first time at this early date (18 October instead of 8 December) he makes this the direct content of his theme.

The text is concerned less with the development of theoretical principles than with cautions, questionings and appeals.

ITS FORMULATION

In the motto, every word counts, but so also do their opposites and their implications.

There is no verb in the title, but obviously one is indicated: "let us choose" or "let us take up"—as a worker takes up his pick or his pen—the real weapons of peace. Not only the insignia of the symbols of peace, or even its tools, the bricklayer's trowel, to build it up, but its means of combat, the weapons of the soldier, to defend it. In other words, the pope invites us all to a commitment. But not to an indeterminate one: it is a question of choosing and choosing well.

ITS PROGRAMME

The Pope sums it up in these words: "It is necessary . . . to provide Peace with other weapons—weapons different from those destined to kill and exterminate mankind". In a word, Peace has weapons other than armaments.

Other weapons: but also, and unfortunately, these same weapons, the military weapons: the minimum of equipment, in men and material, needed for collective security. Because, the Pope observes sadly, from the fact that moral principles suitable for safeguarding rights are "in practice" in an "immature . . . state, only at the beginning of their penetration into the profound and operative consciousness of People . . . Disarmament is either for everyone, or it is a crime of neglect to defend oneself. Does not the sword, in the concert of historical and concrete life in society, have its own *raison d'être*, for justice and for peace? (cf. Rom 13:4). Yes, we must admit it".

The disarmament advocated by Paul VI, "if it is not to constitute an unforgivable error of impossible optimism, of blind ingenuousness, of a tempting opportunity for others' oppression", should be a "judicious disarming". It is in this way that it will be "another weapon of Peace". But must we really stop there? Must we keep on with this ruinous and scandalous arms race, this system which has become lunacy, which is transforming national and international security into maximum insecurity? Evidently not. It is urgent to stop this recourse to death, which keeps in being and stimulates the mutual outbidding of both buyers and sellers in the arm trade. It is a matter of proceeding without delay to that mu-

tual and progressive reduction of military and scientific armaments which the world has awaited so long.

ITS DIALECTIC

It is still more urgent and vital to catalogue, to classify, to choose and to utilize in the vast arsenal of which mankind henceforth disposes "the real weapons of Peace", those enumerated in the Message.

But above all, this weapon, which is the main pivot of the Message: the future perspective "of the new mankind still to be born, still to be educated". In effect, Paul VI observes: "... has there not come into the world a transforming dynamism, a hope which is no longer unlikely, a new and effective progress, a future and longed for history which can make itself present and real" ever since Christ's operative word?

It is in this dynamic and eschatological perspective that there are reconciled, without contradiction, the two duties simultaneously expressed by Paul VI in this appeal: the duty of help to individuals or peoples in danger (the principle of legitimate defence) and the duty of renouncing arms—"thou shalt not kill" (principle of non-violence).

"Already, but not yet": the whole outlook, the entire pastoral approach of the Pope lies in this difficult and fruitful existential tension. It everywhere goes beyond the strict limits of casuistry, without allowing either alibi or evasion. It is essentially—on the same lines as the Second Vatican Council—historical and pedagogical, and because of this, widely and concretely capable of being put into practice.

It is this outlook which provides a plan of reading at the end for the "followers and servants of the Gospel" and for the duty "not... of cowardly weakness, nor... surrender in the face of injustice, but... of fraternal love", of forgiveness and of reconciliation.

THE REAL WEAPONS OF PEACE

*Message of His Holiness
POPE PAUL VI
for the celebration of the
DAY OF PEACE, 1 JAN. 1976*

To you, Statesmen!

To you, Representatives and Promoters of the great international Institutions!

To you, Politicians! To you, Students of the problems of life in international society, Publicists, Workers, Sociologists, and Economists concerned with the relationships between Peoples.

To you, Citizens of the world, whether you are fascinated by the ideal of a universal brotherhood or disappointed and skeptical regarding the possibility of establishing relationships of equilibrium, justice and collaboration between Peoples!

And finally to you, the followers of Religions which promote friendship between people; to you, Christians, to you, Catholics: who make peace in the world the principle of your faith and the goal of your worldwide love!

IN THIS YEAR 1976, as in previous years, we once more presume respectfully to come before you with our message of Peace.

We preface our message with an invitation: that you should listen to it; that you should be attentive and patient. The great cause of Peace deserves a hearing; it deserves your reflection, even though it may seem that our voice is repeating itself on this recurrent theme at the dawn of the new year; and even though, erudite as you are by reason of your studies and perhaps even more by your experiences, you may think that you already know everything about Peace in the world.

And yet, perhaps it may be of some interest to you to know the nature of our spontaneous feelings concerning this implacable theme of Peace — feelings that derive from immediate experiences of the historical situation in which we are all immersed.

* * *

Our first feelings in this regard are twofold, and they are at variance one with the other. First and foremost, we see with pleasure and hope that progress is being made by the **idea** of Peace. This idea is gaining importance and attention in men's minds; and it is accompanied by the development of the structures of the organization of Peace; there is an increase of official and academic manifestations in its favour. Activities are developing in the direction indicated by Peace: journeys, congresses,

assemblies, trade-links, studies, friendships, collaboration, aid, and so forth. Peace is gaining ground. The Helsinki Conference of July-August 1975 is an event which gives reason for hope in this regard.

But unfortunately, at the same time we see the manifestation of phenomena contrary to the content and purpose of Peace; and these phenomena too are making progress, even though they are often restricted to a latent state, yet with unmistakable symptoms of incipient or future conflagrations. For example, accompanying the sense of national identity which is a legitimate and commendable expression of the many-sided oneness of a People, there is a rebirth of nationalism, which exaggerates national expression to the point of collective egoism and exclusivist antagonism. In the collective consciousness it brings about the rebirth of dangerous and even frightening seeds of rivalry and of very probable contentions.

There is a disproportionate growth — and the example causes shivers of fear — of the possession of arms of every kind, in every individual Nation. We have the justified suspicion that the arms trade often reaches the highest levels in international markets, with this obsessive sophism: defence, even if it is planned as something purely hypothetical and potential, demands a growing competition in armaments, which can ensure Peace only through their opposed balance.

This is not the complete list of the negative factors eating away at the stability of Peace. Can we give the name peaceful to a world that is radically divided by irreconcilable ideologies — ideologies that are powerfully and fiercely organized, ideologies that divide Peoples from one another, and, when they are allowed free rein, subdivide those Peoples within themselves, into factions and parties that find their reason for existence and activity in poisoning their ranks with irreconcilable hatred and systematic struggle within the very fabric of society itself? The apparent normality of such political situations does not conceal the tension of a corresponding iron hand, ready to crush the adversary as soon as he should betray a sign of fatal weakness. Is this Peace? Is it civilization? Can we give the name people to a mass of citizens who are opposed to one another to the bitter end?

And where is Peace in the festering centres of armed conflicts, or of conflicts that are barely contained by the impossibility of more violent explosions? We follow with admiration the efforts being made to calm these centres of warfare and guerilla activity which for years have been devastating the face of the earth, and which every minute are threatening to break out into gigantic struggles involving continents, races, religions and social ideologies. But we cannot conceal the precariousness of a Peace which is merely a truce of already clearly defined future conflicts, that is, the hypocrisy of a tranquillity which is called peaceful only with cold words of simulated reciprocal respect.

We recognize that Peace, in historical reality, is a work of continual therapy. Its health is by its very nature frail, consisting as it does in the establishment of relationships between overbearing and fickle men. Peace demands a wise and unceasing effort on the part of that higher creative imagination which we call diplomacy, international order or the dynamic of negotiations. Poor Peace!

What then are your weapons? Fear of unheard-of and fatal conflagrations, which could decimate, indeed almost annihilate humanity? Resignation to a certain state of endured oppression, such as colonialism, imperialism or revolution which begins as violence and inexorably becomes static and terribly self-perpetuating? Preventive and secret weapons? A capitalist, that is, egoistical organization of the economic world, which is obliged by hunger to remain subdued and quiet? The self-absorbed bewitchment of a historical culture, presumptuous and convinced of its own perennial triumphant destinies? Or the magnificent organizational structures intent on rationalizing and organizing international life?

Is it sufficient, is it sure, is it fruitful, is it happy — a Peace sustained only by such foundations?

More is needed. This is our message. It is necessary before all else to provide Peace with other weapons — weapons different from those destined to kill and exterminate mankind. What is needed above all are moral weapons, those which give strength and prestige to international law — the weapon, in the first place, of the observance of pacts. *Pacta sunt servanda* is the still valid axiom for the consistency of effective relations between States, for the stability of justice between Nations, for the upright conscience of Peoples. Peace makes this axiom its shield. And where pacts do not reflect justice? Here is the justification for the new international Institutions, the mediators for consultations, studies and deliberations, which must absolutely exclude the ways of the so-called *fait accompli*, that is to say, the contention of blind and uncontrolled forces, which always involve human victims and incalculable and unimputable ruin, rarely attaining the pure object of effectively vindicating a truly just cause. Arms and wars are, in a word, to be excluded from civilization's programmes. Judicious disarming is another weapon of Peace. As the prophet Isaiah said: "He will wield authority over the nations and adjudicate between many peoples; these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles" (Is. 2, 4). And then let us listen to the word of Christ: "Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Mt. 26, 52). Is this utopia? For how much longer?

* * *

Here we enter into the speculative world of ideal humanity, of the new mankind still to be born, still to be educated — mankind stripped of

its grievous weight of murderous military weaponry, and rather clothed and strengthened by moral principles which are natural to it. These are principles which already exist, but still in a theoretical and in practice immature, weak and tender state, only at the beginning of their penetration into the profound and operative consciousness of Peoples. Their weakness, which seems incurable to the diagnosticians, the so-called realists of historical and anthropological studies, comes especially from the fact that military disarmament, if it is not to constitute an unforgivable error of impossible optimism, of blind ingenuousness, of a tempting opportunity for others' oppression, should be common and general. Disarmament is either for everyone, or it is a crime of neglect to defend oneself. Does not the sword, in the concert of historical and concrete life in society, have its own *raison d'être*, for justice and for peace? (cf. Rom. 13, 4). Yes, we must admit it. But has there not come into the world a transforming dynamism, a hope which is no longer unlikely, a new and effective progress, a future and longed-for history which can make itself present and real, ever since the Master, the Prophet of the New Testament, proclaimed the decline of the archaic, primitive and instinctive tradition, and, with a Word having in itself power not only to denounce and to announce but also to generate, under certain conditions, a new mankind, declared: "Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them . . . You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: 'You must not kill'; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: Anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court" (Mt. 5, 17, 21-22).

It is no longer a simple, ingenuous and dangerous utopia. It is the new Law of mankind which goes forward, and which arms Peace with a formidable principle: "You are all brethren" (Mt. 23, 8). If the consciousness of universal brotherhood truly penetrates into the hearts of men, will they still need to arm themselves to the point of becoming blind and fanatic killers of their brethren who in themselves are innocent, and of perpetrating, as a contribution to Peace, butchery of untold magnitude, as at Hiroshima on 6 August 1945? And in fact has not our own time had an example of what can be done by a weak man, Gandhi — armed only with the principle of non-violence — to vindicate for a Nation of hundreds of millions of human beings the freedom and dignity of a new People?

* * *

Civilization walks in the footsteps of Peace armed only with an olive branch. Civilization is followed by the Doctors with the weighty volumes on the Law which will lead to the ideal human society; there follow the Politicians, expert not so much in the calculation of all-conquering armies for winning wars and repressing the defeated and demoralized, but rather in assessing the resources of the psychology of goodness and

friendship. Justice too moves in this ordered procession, now no longer proud and cruel but completely intent on defending the weak, punishing the violent and ensuring an order which is extremely difficult to achieve but which alone is worthy of that divine name: order in freedom and conscious duty.

Let us rejoice: this procession, though interrupted by hostile attacks and by unexpected accidents, continues along its way before our eyes in this tragic time of ours. Its step is perhaps a little slow, but it is nonetheless sure and beneficial for the whole world. It is a procession intent on using the real weapons of peace.

This message too must have its appendix for those properly called followers and servants of the Gospel — an appendix which recalls how explicit and demanding Christ our Lord is in regard to this theme of peace stripped of every weapon and armed only with goodness and love.

The Lord makes statements, as we know, which appear paradoxical. Let it not be distasteful to us to rediscover in the Gospel the rules for a Peace which we could describe as self-abnegating! Let us recall, for example: "If a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well" (Mt. 5, 40). And then that prohibition of revenge — does it not undermine Peace? Indeed, does it not aggravate, rather than defend, the position of the injured party? "If anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well" (Mt. 5, 40). So there are to be no reprisals, no verdettas (and these are all the more wrong if they are committed to prevent injuries not yet received!). How many times in the Gospel is forgiveness recommended to us, not as an act of cowardly weakness, nor as a surrender in the face of injustice, but as a sign of fraternal love, which is laid down as a condition for us to obtain God's forgiveness, which we need and which is a far more generous forgiveness! (cf. Mt. 18, 23 ff., 5, 44; Mk. 11, 25; Lk. 6, 37; Rom. 12, 14, etc.).

Let us remember the pledge we give to be forgiving and to pardon when we invoke God's forgiveness in the "Our Father". We ourselves lay down the condition and the extent of the mercy we ask for when we say: "And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us" (Mt. 6, 12).

For us also therefore, who are disciples of the school of Christ, this is a lesson to be meditated on still more and to be applied with confident courage.

Peace expresses itself only in peace, a peace which is not separate from the demands of justice but which is fostered by personal sacrifice, clemency, mercy and love.

From the Vatican, 18 October 1975.

PAULUS PP. VI

THE CHURCH AFTER THE COUNCIL

by

Yves Congar, O.P.

*On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the French Catholic review Informations Catholiques Internationales, Father Yves Congar presented a panorama of the life of the Church in the last twenty years. This article is a summary of the second part of Fr. Congar's reflections.**

In any consideration of the post-conciliar Church, it is good to begin by noting a few contributions of the Council which are of historic significance. First, the Council is marked by a renunciation of the monopoly of scholasticism in Catholic teaching, although the theologians of the Council themselves had the benefit of a scholastic training. Vatican II preferred the more concrete, synthetic, and historical model of the Fathers. It listened to the voice of the Eastern Church, and followed the inspirations of the patristic period and the Bible. It is to this fact that the Council owes perhaps the greatest part of its ecumenical value.

Second, the positive results of the liturgical reform are quite evident, yet the effects are not only positive. Many riches, Latin among them, have been lost to all but the liturgical specialists.

Vatican II also gave us a renewed view, both of the Church and the temporal order. Of the many emphases of conciliar thought concerning the Church, only a few are enumerated here: People of God, royal priesthood, charisms, ministries, priesthood of the apostolic type, collegiality, local churches and the organization of national episcopates, the Church seen as Communion and not just as society, and finally, ecumenism and openness to dialogue. The law of truth governing this dialogue is to be ready to change something of one's own point of view in grateful response to what the other brings.

As regards the temporal order, the attitude of the Council is marked by the end of concentration on the idea of two competitive powers. The "temporal" is seen as the whole human effort to organize life and possess the world, and the Church assists men to succeed in this effort, knowing that its true purpose and goal is in the kingdom of God to which

* Reprinted from *Theology Digest*, Vol. 23, Number 1/SPRING. 1975, pp. 31-37.

Jesus Christ has the keys. In approaching the problem of the "two powers," the Council moved in the direction of an apostolic independence of the Church. This can be seen, for example, in Spain, in South America, and in France in what René Rémond has called the second Separation.

Unforeseeable turbulence

Paul VI presided over the completion of the Council, but he is above all the Pope of the post-conciliar era. The pressures which are weighing on the contemporary Church, or at least the most vehement pressures, do not seem to come from conciliar seeds. The conciliar "thaw" brought with it new problems, difficult to master, which in some cases the Council had neither envisaged, nor even suspected.

The first of these problems is that which is caused by rapid technological universe, the truth is not seen in what can be received from the past. It is ahead. More will be known tomorrow; more will be able to be done tomorrow. This leads to an attitude of lack of interest in and a break with tradition, with what has been handed down. This is something different from an openness to the future. It is good to be open to the future — and to the present — but from the point of view of the Church or religious life to break with what has gone before us it not only wrong but catastrophic.

This can be linked with the radical criticism of everything that represents "the Establishment," with the institutional. The various protest demonstrations which took place in the world shortly before and after May, 1968, disclosed an attitude of rebellion against that authority which seeks to impose itself without one having freely determined it oneself. To the extent that such demonstrations represent a desire for rupture with the past, they are an illness. However, it must in fairness be added that these same phenomena contain positive and valid aspects which will have to yield their fruit.

Information rapidly disseminated

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the fantastic development of the media of information and acquisition of knowledge. This "media explosion" has resulted in important consequences.

First, we hear of everything before it is possible to give any teaching about it, not only in the Church, but even in the family and in school. Information is given about such topics as divorce, war, abortion, etc., often in the heat of topicality and in a certain passionate atmosphere.

News media are bound to prefer the new, the exceptional, and the sensational. The "image makers" are inclined to favor what contests, dis-

credits, and overthrows what are called taboos or conventions. As sensitivity is blunted, as organisms become immunized, it is continually necessary to increase the doses. The capacity for reflection and judgment, in a word **moral nature** (something quite different from morality), is not strengthened in the process.

Opinion and authority

Owing to the rapid spread of information and, more deeply, by reason of an attitude of individual freedom and sincerity understood as spontaneity, people no longer tend to think or judge on the basis of principles proposed by an authority, which was until recently regarded as the custodian of the system and its coherency. Rather, they are inclined to judge on the basis of the issues themselves, following the bent of their personal tastes. In matters regarding marriage, the baptism of children, the ministry and the formation of priests, to give just a few examples, we are witnessing the phenomenon of "partial identification," or pluralism.

The impact of this is considerable, so much so that it calls for theological study and an attempt at a pastoral answer. All this clearly involves a serious crisis of the magisterium. Of major importance was the reception given to **Humanae Vitae**, ranging from acceptance, to non-acceptance, to a combination of the two. Although there is much to deplore in the present attitude, it does present itself in an atmosphere of personal responsibility. It is this "personal responsibility" which is one of the key phrases of the present generation.

Still another effect of the rapid spread of information and sharing of ideas touches Protestant-Catholic dialogue. In this world in which very different men are mingled, in which, even on one's own side of the dialogue, it is no longer possible to avoid contact with others or confrontation, a certain erosion of specificities takes place. On the one hand, Catholics and Protestants, as well as Catholics and non-believers, see that they have not succeeded in convincing the other, leading each to conclude that the other has reasons on his side. On the other hand, living on the basis of convictions and personal commitments more than on the basis of the official positions of his group, a certain Catholic finds that he is more in agreement with a certain Protestant, and vice-versa.

Frontiers which were tightly closed until recently have been breached. There is a certain relativization of rules and norms, even doctrinal ones. In connection with this, there has occurred what has been denounced by some as a "protestantization" of Catholicism.

The situation produced by emphasis on private judgment and alienation from the institutional has placed us in a civilization, or rather a society, of transgression. Nietzsche, with his criticism of all accepted

norms, and Marcuse, with his incredible abuse of the terms "repression" and "repressive," have been its prophets. Cardinal Roy recently spoke of the "right to dissent" and the "civism of dissent." He thinks of conscientious objection as an objectively appreciable and justifiable motive of justice.

Yet similar behavior is met with on quite a large scale in ecclesial life. As contemporary man has no love for patience, instances of dissenting behavior multiply. Examples of this can be seen in the priests who marry, who accept professional work or a political commitment against the directives of their superiors, and in the case of public stands taken in favor of abortion.

Conversion to the world

The Council desired and laid the foundation for openness to the world. For many, this formula is radically insufficient, for it has as its presupposition a dualism which they reject. This in itself is a post-conciliar attitude, for the Council itself kept the classical dualism between the Church and the world, while establishing a relationship between them proportionally common to the eschatological Kingdom already inaugurated in history.

But today many pass from the maxim "Faith and politics" to that of "Politics and faith," meaning that political commitment has a place, even a privileged place, in the experience of faith. One meets God; He is experienced in events, in others. Some go so far as to reject the idea that faith is, in the first place, a constituted deposit, to be received and transmitted. The hermeneutic function of faith is regarded, rather, as that of bringing about conversion to the human, to the "political," in the widest sense of the term.

Yet, this movement has received support from the hierarchy. A number of episcopal declarations in this vein have recently appeared. Some examples of these are the statements of the French episcopate of March 1966 and October 1972; those of the South American episcopate at Medellin in August 1968; and of course, the pontifical documents, such as the letter to Cardinal Roy in May 1971.

The Church of the poor and oppressed

The Council had expressed the wish for a serving, poor Church. Far beyond gestures and declarations, in the struggles with the harshest realities confronting the poor, the post-conciliar Church, and in particular many Latin American bishops, have carried out acts in service of the poor which were often a denunciation of the alliance with those in power. This going over to the side of the oppressed and the humble on the part of the

official Church will be, in the eyes of history, a feature of the post-conciliar Church. Yet this fact is inseparable from new reflections, bound up with the socio-political situation, on the ministry — or rather ministries — of the priest to the community of men.

It is difficult to draw up a summary balance sheet of the searching and fermentation of ideas which, with respect to this area of faith and politics, make the post-conciliar era something different from the Council and its application. To give some examples: "revolution theology"; political theology; the place given to "orthopraxy," alongside, and sometimes in preference to, "orthodoxy"; the application to the Church herself of socio-political categories and analyses borrowed from Marxism.

The Church lives and grows

Before developing any conclusions along these lines, it is worthwhile to remember two things: 1) The period immediately following the great Councils was often a difficult time (i.e., the dogma of Nicaea took 56 years to be completely "received"); and, 2) the news media inevitably give preference to what is unusual.

Apart from those events which interest the news media, the Church lives and grows daily. The Eucharist is celebrated, the faith is preached and taught. People pray, love God, receive his Word and his grace. A great effort is made in catechetics for the realization of living celebrations. The Church organizes her activity, adapts herself to new situations, and exercises her mission.

Having indicated some of the difficulties of the post-conciliar period, we turn next to what has been built up over the past seven or eight years, to present movements, and to what the future promises.

In the first place, structures have been set up. However much we might regard structures as a necessary evil, they are necessary, and what is needed are structures that correspond to life and serve it. Within the the structures themselves, there must be lateral, as well as upward and downward communication.

Since the Council, Secretariats or Commissions and Councils have been added to the classical Roman Congregations. The Holy Father has reformed not only the Curia but also the composition of the Conclave, in order that (as in the case of the Synod Bishops) a real representation of the whole college of bishops at the primatial center of the Catholic Church may be ensured.

It is true, it is difficult to establish "collegiality," and it is even more difficult to state what it is conceptually. The word is used in a wide sense as communion, common decision and responsibility, which is not exactly the dogmatic sense in which the Council spoke of the "college" (it did not use "collegiality").

Ten years is not a long enough period to bring about such a change successfully when, on the one hand, there is no exact model and, on the other hand, the machine cannot stop functioning. We have, all the same, the organization of the national episcopates with their heavy administration of secretariats and commissions. We have the pastoral synods of Hollands, Switzerland, and Germany, and we have the Synod of Bishops.

Reforms and challenges

The liturgical reform has been continued with the publication of the liturgical texts in the common language, with an incomparable cycle of Bible readings, and with the publication of new rituals for the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals (funerals, etc.). It is unquestionably a great work, which allows the participation of the whole community which is, under the presidency of the ordained minister, the real celebrant.

The pastoral magisterium has been exercised at the Roman level and at the national level on all subjects relevant to dogma or social directives. For example, we have "Master et Magistra," "Pacem in Terris," "Humanae Vitae," "Mysterium Fidei," **The Creed of the People of God**, "Populorum Progressio," the letter to Cardinal Roy, numerous messages and addresses at the general audiences given by the Pope on Wednesdays.

It was noted above under what difficult circumstances the magisterium is exercised today in a world in which everyone decides for himself what he does or does not admit. It seems that the magisterium is called to find new methods of operation, as offering guidelines rather than conclusions, with the understanding that it must retain the right to define the faith and condemn error.

The institution, therefore, is active; consequently, it is living. But there is an element of the present crisis which affects not only the Church. Life is threatening to abandon the institutions. It is to be found elsewhere. This is true in the positive sense, but a new synthesis is being sought in which this life will be integrated with the renewed institutions. Positive values can be recognized in this, that the Church is learning to live by its base. That is to say, it is learning to define itself not as a body of ecclesiastics with a clientele of faithful, but as a community of faithful within a universal communion. It is the initiatives of these small groups and micro-realizations of community with their great value of evangelical significance, which are taking over the monopoly of the priest, without suppressing but modifying the role of the priest. With respect to these small groups, it will always be necessary to address the problem of their conformity with the faith and their harmonization with the overall life of the Church.

Theology is not dead

Theology is far from being moribund. Yet fears and criticisms can be expressed concerning it, such as the lack of reliable philosophical bases, adventurous questionings, and the often reducing and limiting character of the human sciences which are imposing themselves more and more in the field of Christian thought. These sciences certainly have something to contribute, and they can do so only if they are first cultivated for themselves, in accordance with the necessities of their own methodology.

Finally, the center of the great dogmatic issues is less explored than the biblical, patristical, and sociological specialities. But publications and reviews remain on a high level. This is true in the field of biblical studies particularly, where the progress of a substantial consensus among exegetes uncontaminated by Bultmannianism must be recorded. Moreover, new opportunities are opening up for lay-persons, to whom we already owe so much in the fields of church history, sociology, and patrology.

The Church of the future

Ecumenism, too, is alive. It is said by some to be in crisis, or at least asleep, because many people would like to see a newsworthy event every day. But it is quite wrong to think that no progress is being made. The range of activities is wide, from the wonderful irradiation of Taizé, to the drawing up of an ecumenical translation of the Bible, from the agreements on the Eucharist and on the ministry by the Dombes group, to the activities of "secular ecumenism," or joint action for justice and the liberation of man.

The openness to dialogue inaugurated by the Council is far from having yielded all its fruit. It is a work of generations, perhaps of centuries. We have, in fact, begun to recognize not only the existence, but the value and richness, of spiritual worlds to which it seems impossible not to attribute a place in God's plan.

Recent experiences lead one to conclude that today the Church is called to become, in a new way, the Church of the peoples. It is so already, but it had to become so by going beyond the purely Jewish framework of its origins and throwing itself into the Greco-Roman world, first with St. Paul, then with the Fathers. Today it is called to go beyond its Greco-Roman, European cradle, to become really African, South American, and Asian. In this way it can assume the demands and receive the contributions of cultural situations inevitably marked by religions from which Christ, unknown to them, cannot however, be completely absent, since he is the center and summit of everything. The Church is called, finally, to develop in a new way what is, in a sense, the sacrament of Christ's salvation — the liberation of man.

SACRED DOCTRINE IN THE CONTEMPORARY PASTORAL MINISTRY

by

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Today, ten years after the close of Vatican Council II, we are able to see how effectively the Holy Spirit guided the Council Fathers in charting the course of authentic renewal in the Church. The years immediately following the Council often brought lowering clouds of confusion, faulty emphases, and misunderstanding. But happily this miasma is gradually disappearing, and a healthy atmosphere of light, order and peace is awakening new life in the Body of Christ.

This renewal of the Church derives primarily from the living word of God which the Holy Spirit has illumined and made efficacious. As at Thessalonica long ago, the perennial Gospel of Christ has come to the Church of today "not in mere words, but with the power of the Holy Spirit which makes for strong convictions" (1 Thess 1, 5). Fidelity to this Gospel is the best response the Spouse of Christ can offer to the ineffable mercy of God's total self-giving. For it is the triune God Himself who draws men to newness of life. As St. Paul affirms, the Father is the source of all

redemptive and unifying love; Jesus the Son, God's perfect gift, expresses this love with the full willingness of His human heart; and the Holy Spirit, fire and unction, communicates God's gift of Himself to every person who will receive Him (cf. Rom 5, 5-10; 2 Cor 13, 13).

This saving action of the Trinity and the new, vital response to it in the life of the Church point up the opportunities and exigencies of the pastoral ministry. The renewal that is in course gives to the pastoral office a new stimulus and challenges it with urgent demand. Amid all its divergent activities and multifaceted modes of service, the ministry of the Church, if it is to have real impact upon the world, must work with renewed conviction that only "the Gospel of Christ is God's power to save those who believe" (Rom 1, 17). Apostles may use various means to plant and to water; but only God who reveals Himself and acts powerfully through the Gospel can "make things grow" (1 Cor 3, 7). In the light of this truth St. Augustine

affirms that "saving faith is begotten, nourished, protected and strengthened' only by the sacred doctrine of God's word (*De Trim.* xiv, 1).

Therefore, to fulfil his mission of building up the Church, the apostolic workman faces a three-fold task. First, he himself must be totally devoted to God's word;

secondly, he must be a trustworthy ambassador in speaking this word; thirdly, he must recognize in God's word the only true bond of charity and unity in the Church. These three aspects of Gospel service have always inhered in the very nature of the pastoral ministry. Today, however, they have special resonances in a Church renewed by Vatican Council II.

1. The Minister's Love of Sacred Doctrine

The Gospel word is a "seed" that has more power than an atom bomb. Whereas the bomb can deal only death and destruction, the word of the Lord gives "spirit and life" (Jn 6, 63). When this seed falls into the good earth of a heart alive with faith it sinks roots and grows into fruitfulness. But there is nothing automatic in this growth. The word of God is not a magic abracadabra that transforms man apart from his own personal response. Rather, the revealed word manifesting the thoughts and will of God confronts its hearer as a person endowed with mind and will. As an intelligent person, therefore, the believer must consciously assimilate God's thoughts with grateful love and form in himself corresponding convictions. This sincere and alert faith begins a process of constant development. Because God's thoughts are as high above merely human thought as the heavens above the earth (Is 55, 9), the word which brings these thoughts of God to men in an ever-fruitful source of growing

conformity to the Word incarnate who is the perfect image of the Father's thought and will.

The Church herself has lived through this process of growth. While tenaciously faithful to the words of revelation, the Spouse of Christ, urged on by her great love of God, has gained luminous insights into the deep mysteries of revelation and its necessary consequences in human life. To paraphrase the words of Vincent of Lerins. "While dogma and conviction have remained always the same, there has been true growth in the Church's understanding and application of the divine word" (*Commonitorium*, 28; *MPL* 50, 668). This fact of the Church's development of the revealed word into sacred doctrine accounts for the fluidity of expression in the Question with which St. Thomas introduces his *Summa Theologica*. Reading this introduction one finds it difficult at times to determine whether the Angelic Doctor is speaking directly of the revealed word itself or of the sacred doctrine which authentically educes

the rich wisdom inherent in God's word.

In an analogous way the minister of the Church must share this process of development in his own personal life. If he is to profess God's word to people to nourish and strengthen their faith, he himself must constantly grow in experiential understanding of revelation and in loving fidelity to the precepts of life which it offers. Like Paul, the Apostle, a true apostle should be able to boast, "If you read (or hear) my words, you will have some idea of the depths that I see in the mystery of Christ" (Eph 3, 4).

This personal development calls for both intellectual study and reflective prayerful pondering. In one of the most beautiful articles of the *Summa Theologica* (Pars 1, Q. 43, art. 5), St. Thomas explains that true Christian wisdom is not a barren speculative knowledge but an experiential understanding that is alive with love ("scientia cum amore" — ad 2). Looking to the mystery of the Divine Word in the Trinity, the Angelic Doctor observes that He is "not any sort of word, but the Word who breathes forth love" (ad 2). Hence He is the model of living faith. As the Divine Word cannot be thought of without the Holy Spirit who is love, so true, Christian knowledge of the mysteries of God not only illumines the mind but also enkindle the affections (ad 3).

This ideal of personal growth in understanding the word of God is

not a mirage. Vatican Council I insisted on the reality of this development: "When reason, illumined by faith, seeks earnestly, devoutly and reverently, it will attain by God's help a most fruitful understanding of the mysteries of God" (*Constitutio de fide catholica*, c. 4; Denzinger-Rahner, 1976). Fully aware that this personal growth was not only possible but imperative for the minister of the Gospel, St. Paul repeatedly urged his disciple Timothy to be the "good servant of Christ Jesus" who has "really digested the teaching of the faith and the good doctrine" (1 Tim. 4, 6).

The need apostles have always had for an "absorbing interest" in God's word (cf. 1 Tim 4, 15) is especially urgent today when a pastor must often deal with people who are very well instructed and spiritually alive. As St. Paul himself recognized, there is a reciprocity between the work of a pastor and the response of his flock (cf. Rom 1, 11-12). This interaction of mutual sharing and stimulation was emphasized in the 1971 Synodal document on the Ministerial Priesthood: "In the exercise of his ministry the priest is enlightened and strengthened by the action of the Church and the example of the faithful" (Part 2, 1, 3). The role which the laity are now joyously undertaking in the liturgy, the interest in the Bible which they manifest in their study-clubs and biblical weeks, the resurgence of the life of prayer which has brought priest and people together for shared prayer

and for group reflection on God's word—all of this requires the pastoral minister to be like Nepotian, St. Jerome's disciple, who "made his heart a living library of God's word." If an apostle is to fulfill his primary task of ministering the word of God to men, he must be "fully equipped and made ready" by personal devotedness to the word of God which makes him a humble and competent master of sacred doctrine (cf. 2 Tim 3, 16-17).

In the past few years this need has been widely recognized and provided for. Many dioceses have created centres, institutes, and symposia that priests may receive an on-going education in the sacred sciences. This sound intellectual knowledge is of prime importance for the authenticity of Gospel ministry. Today, however, merely intellectual knowledge is not enough. Because our laity have come alive with a new love for the word of God that lives in scripture, liturgy, theology and the apostolate of justice and charity, the voice of the priest who mingles with them and speaks to them must ring with the accent of his own personal love for God's word. To achieve this authenticity a man must live the dictum of St. Thomas, "The will and the intellect mutually include each other" (*Summa Theol.* Pars I. Q. 16, art. 4, ad 1). But this wondrous unity, essential for experiential know-

ledge of God's word is forged only in the fire of prayerful reflection wherein the Holy Spirit both illumines the mind and shapes the will.

Inaugurating a house of prayer for priests at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Huntington, N.Y., Bishop Kellenburg emphasized this serious need for studying the word of God with mind and heart. He said, "Because our priestly involvement with the faith is obvious, we cannot go for long periods without considering these fundamental questions. How deep is my personal relationship with God? How serious is my own commitment to prayer? To what degree am I able to face the Lord in the quiet or my own soul to share with Him my work, my needs, my goals and ideals?"

These pointed questions bear out a fundamental truth which St. Thomas emphasizes when he speaks of the nature of sacred doctrine. He insists that God is always its proper object. (*Pars. I. Q. 1, art. 7*). Because all faith is simply man's loving response to God who reveals Himself and manifests His ways with men, the doctrine which develops this faith must itself look primarily to God. It is only in His light that man can see everything else as coming from Him and, if rightly used, leading to Him. Sacred doctrine, therefore, grows authentically through human understanding only if, like the apostles of the early

Church, the minister of the Gospel unveils his heart in prayerful pondering to "reflect like a mirror the brightness of the Lord" that he

may "radiate the light of the knowledge of God's glory, the glory shining on the face of Christ" (2 Cor 5, 18; 4, n).

II. The Minister's Responsibility for Sacred Doctrine

Devotion to the word of God can never be a merely personal factor in the life of the minister. Because, through God's call, he has been chosen to serve the Church and because, through ordination, he has been divinely empowered for this task, he bears grave responsibility to safeguard and promote the revelation of God in all its integrity. As God's appointed spokesman he must never belie, distort, or water down the contents of the divine message. This obligation, as negating all infidelity, binds him *semper et pro semper*.

The need to safeguard God's word has always been an essential duty of God's people. The Torah of Israel, summed up in the daily profession of faith the *Shema*: (Deut 6, 4-9; 11, 13-21; Num 15, 37-41), emphasizes the need of God's people to hear (*Shama*), to guard (*Shamar*), and to do (*'asah*) the words of God. This obligation carried special weight as the prime duty of the teachers of Israel, prophet and priest. Thus the Isaian Servant of Jahweh, the model of all prophetism, speaks of his need to be integrally faithful to God's word: "The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher. He sharpened my hearing that I might listen like one who is taught. The Lord God opened my ears and I

did not disobey or turn back in defiance" (Is 50, 4-5).

Jesus, the perfect Servant of Jahweh, was unique in fulfilling this responsibility. Writing of Him, the "apostle and high priest of the religion we profess" (Heb 3, 1), the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews emphasizes Jesus' constant fidelity to the word and will of the Father. Using the single word "faithful," this epistle sums up the constant preoccupation of God's Son to echo perfectly in His teaching every word and promise of God: "The Son of God, Christ Jesus, was never a blend of Yes and No. With Him it was, and is. Yes. He is the Yes to every one of God's promises" (2 Cor 1, 19-20). Each time Jesus spoke of the word His Father revealed in the Torah He was so faithful to the meaning of that word that He cut away all false and superficial interpretations to declare the fullness of all that God intended (cf. Matt 5, 17-48). Even when this authentic teaching aroused the hostility of the Scribes and Pharisees and even though His fidelity to the Father's word would lead to His death, he held fixedly to the responsibility of His prophetic mission to deliver God's word without distortion or dilution: "Not a jot or tittle of the Law shall pass." He said, "un-

til all things are accomplished" (Matt 5, 18).

Impelled by His own devotedness to the revealed word, Jesus insisted that the teachers of God's people in the New Covenant must be just as faithful as He was: "If any man sets aside even the least of the Law's demands, and teaches others to do the same, he will have the lowest place in the kingdom of heaven, whereas anyone who keeps the Law, and teaches others to do so, will stand high in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5, 19).

It is little wonder, therefore, that Paul, the Apostle, eminent teacher of the nations, echoes Jesus' insistence on the minister's obligation to preach the Gospel "without deceitfulness or any watering down the word of God . . . but by stating the truth openly in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4, 2). The Apostle singles out responsibility and trustworthiness as the first duty of the minister who brings God's word to men (1 Cor 4, 2). He warns that all preaching and teaching will be tested by the fire of an exacting judgment (1 Cor 3, 11-15). Those who have been faithful to the Gospel will receive their reward; those who have distorted it will discover that their apostolic work has been useless.

St. Paul is very precise in explaining what this fidelity requires. Not content with vague and general allusions to the "Gospel", "the

Word of God," "the foundation that in Christ Jesus," he reiterates frequently that the message which must be kept intact is authentically expressed in the sacred doctrine handed down in the catechetical teaching of the local churches; he calls this teaching **paradosis**, i.e., the integral message of Jesus transmitted by the Apostles and rightly interpreted in the Spirit-guided teaching of the Church. Twice the Apostle affirms that he himself had received from church teachers the instruction he needed on two essential points of faith, the Eucharist and the Resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 11, 23; 15, 3). Because this **paradosis** was taught to every convert and because it always included the same essentials (cf. Gal 1, 6-9), St. Paul takes for granted that this universal and unchanging teaching is the patrimony of every local church. Hence, writing to the Colossians, a church which he had neither founded nor visited, Paul confidently urges his readers to be faithful to all they had learned from Epaphras, the founder of their church: "You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received (in your catechetical instruction); you must be rooted in Him . . . and held fast by the faith you have received. Make sure that no one traps you by some second-hand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world instead of on Christ" (Col 2, 6-8).

Illusory Rhetoric

These words of St. Paul, interpreting faithfully the mind of Jesus, have been a beacon light in every age of the Church's life, preserving her from any falsification or distortion of the integral Gospel of Christ. Each time the doctrines of the Church have been threatened by the illusory rhetoric of man-made scientific or philosophic rationality, the pastors and theologians of the Church have been able to identify error by reason of its contrast with the unchanging word of God handed down in the sacred doctrine of the Church. This past year has seen two significant examples of this. An inter-denominational group

of concerned Christian scholars, meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, issued an "Appeal for Theological Affirmation" in which they repudiated thirteen pervasive themes that are "false and debilitating to the Church's life and work." At the same time, in Regensburg, Germany, twelve outstanding Catholic and Lutheran theologians called on contemporary Christianity to defend the full divinity of Christ against the heresy which has reduced Christ to a mere creature, the "man for others." In their strictures against error both of these groups of Christian scholars were simply reaffirming what the sacred doctrine of the Church has taught from the beginning.

Old Error

This forthright affirmation of Christian truth in the face of error is the urgent duty of every minister of the Gospel at the present time. It would be naive to discount the inroads which Heideggerian Existentialist philosophy has made upon the faith of our people in the dogmatic and moral teaching of the revealed word. As applied to the interpretation of the New Testament by the Bultmannian school of Form-Criticism, the Existentialist principles substitute mere words for the actual reality of the Christ-event which has saved the world. Everything supernatural in God's saving plan, i.e., the divine interventions in the virgin-birth of Jesus, in His miracles, in the re-

demptive power of His death and in the transformation of His real humanness through a corporal resurrection—all this is seen as pure fabrication created by the early church to provide a God-inspired pattern for self-fulfilment. Only man-made words bind the "Christ of faith" to the "Jesus of history." Interpreted according to this false principle the New Testament reveals not an objective divine soteriology but only a so-called Christian anthropology devised by the genius of men.

It should be obvious to all that an old error has come back under a new label. Reductively, Bultmannism is but another form of Nominalism and Gnosticism. By

ascribing man's salvation to mere faith in words and ideas this system belongs to the "worldly wisdom" which St. Paul condemned, because it "empties the cross of Christ of its efficacy as a divine event" (cf. 1 Cor 1, 17).

The repercussions of this new nominalism on the moral teaching of the Church subjects the ethical imperatives of Christian life to the ebb and flow of sociological situation and psychological needs. In the same way this system would shape the contents and form of the sacramental life of the Church to accord with the constantly changing existential norm of contemporaneity. Instead of being a means of vital encounter with Christ in His "once for all" redemptive mystery, the sacraments and their liturgy would be volati-

lized into fluid symbols of the life and needs of the present Christian community.

To all this the Apostle Paul would respond with his fiery word of rejection, "**Me genoito!**" (Heaven forbid!). This expostulation which Paul uttered every time he saw a distortion of the **paradosis** must echo in the heart of every minister of the Church whenever he, too, confronts dogmatic error. As teacher of the faith, he is a man who stands responsible before God for the integrity of doctrine in the hearts of God's people. It must be his abiding conviction that when one truth of the faith is distorted or watered down, all truths of faith will suffer. Jesus Himself has taught that "even the least of God's words" must be treasured and safeguarded (Matt 5, 19).

III. The Minister's Duty to promote Sacred Doctrine

At times a forthright condemnation of error is the only way a pastoral minister can safeguard the truth of the Gospel. However, most of our people are either unaware of false views propounded in scholarly circles or are frankly uninterested in the intricate reasoning that leads to and supports error. Unless something patently unchristian, like injustice or immorality, touches their daily life, they will not see the practical importance in their priest's censure of an error which seems to them esoteric and far removed. Practically, therefore, the best way for a minister to combat error is to

present sacred doctrine in all its beauty, fullness and practicality.

The value of this positive presentation of truth is impressively evident in the letters of St. Paul. Though the Apostle bitterly condemned the errors which were weakening the faith in Galatia and Corinth, most often he strove to illumine his converts with a positive exposition of the full riches of the Christian message. Though a consummate theologian Paul was, above all, a pastor. Hence, in dealing with his people, Paul consistently used sacred doctrine for the practical purpose of

forming in them a truly Christian mind.

Thus he has little to say explicitly about the immanent life of the Trinity. Instead he sought to draw his Christians into this mystery by showing them how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are always at work with divine power to realize in every human life their saving plan of love. To preserve his converts from the impurity which spoils Christian life Paul strengthened them with the reminder that the Holy Spirit was lovingly present and active in their very person; to sin would be an insult to this divine Spirit and a defilement of God's temple (cf. 1 Cor 6, 18-20; 1 Thess 4, 3-8). Instead of speaking of the past historical sufferings of Jesus, the Apostle preferred to emphasize the actuality of Christ's Passion in present Christian life. He insists that, through baptism, the death and resurrection of Jesus have so much become part of each Christian's personal history that,

like Jesus, they must ever regard themselves as "dead to sin but alive to God" (cf. Rom 6, 1-11; Col 2, 12-13). More than this, Paul makes the Passion of Christ very real for his converts by showing them that, once united to Christ through faith and baptism, they become "another self" for him. Hence, their trials and difficulties are really "the sufferings of Jesus" if only they share His fidelity to the Father by their own loving obedience to God.

On every page of his Epistles St. Paul manifests a keen sense of the bond that unites all revealed truths and of the eminent importance of each article of faith in practical Christian life. His one concern was to make the saving power of sacred doctrine operative in the lives of his converts. This pastoral orientation and this full confidence in the power of God's word to save and to sanctify are prime requisites for every minister who would lead his flock securely along the ways of God.

Living Unity

It requires only a moment to see how carefully all the articles of faith are to be treasured and how dynamically each of these articles makes its operative contribution to Christian life. It could not be otherwise for all are intimately bound together in the living unity of God's plan for man's salvation. An example will help to emphasize this. The dogma of original sin, with its resultant weakness and tension in every human life (Rom

7, 14-24), makes one aware of his constant need for the strength and purity of the redeeming blood of Christ if, as a son of Adam, he is to live always as a son of God. What this means becomes clear in the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Because she was given the grace of Christ in the first moment of her existence and because she was totally faithful to this gift all during her life, her sanctity and loveliness are the perfect model for the spiritual striving of all

those who, through baptism, have been re-created in Jesus to the image of God.

Though here we have spoken of only four articles of faith, all the others could be added. God's plan for our salvation is wondrous in its simplicity and unity. Every divine reality in Christian life comes from God's infinite love; and the purpose and power of each reality is to bear man to God. The very person of Jesus, in whom are "all God's treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2, 3), makes this clear. Out of His infinite love "God sent His Son . . . to enable us to be adopted as sons" and to utter for all eternity the beautiful word, 'Abba, Father' " (cf. Gal 4, 4-6).

Therefore, though we recognize a hierarchy in the divine realities which God's word has revealed, a minister of the Gospel must never make light of what some would call a "lesser truth." Every gift of God manifest in the dogmas of sacred doctrine has power to sanctify the Christian; and, in God's providence, some of His "lesser" gifts have had notable impact on the spiritual life of the Church. Thus the glory and prerogatives of

Mary, Mother of God, do not rank with the glory of her Son, the incarnate Word; in the Pauline letters, for instance, Mary is mentioned only once (Gal 4, 4). However, the fact of history is undeniable that many saints of the Church have found in the Blessed Virgin Mary the most powerful incentive and support for their sanctity. Something similar may be said of another "lesser" dogma, the doctrine of Purgatory. The Church's teaching on the final purification of those who die in Christ touches the heart of the Christian deeply whenever death claims a dear relative or an intimate friend. The dogma of Purgatory, therefore, provides God with one of His most effective means to direct the vision of His children upon earth to their eternal destiny.

Cherishing all the truths of faith, the pastoral minister, like the teacher of the Law in Matthew's Gospel, "is a householder who can produce from his store both the new and the old" (Matt 13, 52). It is by making use of all the treasures of God's word that a minister will best safeguard and make fruitful the integral word of God in the lives of our Christian people.

IV. Sacred Doctrine: the Bond of Unity and Charity

Fidelity to God's word, on the part of minister and people, is the sure guide to that charity and unity which, today, are shouted from the housetops as the operative themes of true Christianity. This contemporary emphasis is so resonant of

the teaching of Jesus that striving for Christian love seems to fulfil all the ideals and authentic Christian life. At times one is tempted to think that charity, no matter how it is understood, and unity, no matter how it is achieved are the

"Open, Sesame" to all that is best in the life of the Church.

All this is true, so long as charity and unity are rightly understood. However, the love of neighbour which the Gospel extols has basic exigencies which some may not see. Even the New Testament, if its separate parts are not read in the context of the whole, could lead one to a myopic understanding of what charity means. The ideals of service, sympathy, concern for the needs of our brother, patience, courtesy and kindness are so emphasized in the Gospels and Epistles that one may fail to see that all these activities have a distinctive form and finality.

Charity and unity have their only source in the love of God which "is poured forth into our hearts by the Spirit who is given to us" (Rom 5, 5). But God's love flows from and is identical with the perfect unity of His thought. The Spirit of love proceeds from Father and His divine mind. There could be no Spirit without the Word; there could be no divine love without divine thought. So, too, in all that God has done to save men, His works of love always accord perfectly with the plan and purpose He has revealed in His word and promise. The Prophets of Israel saw this clearly. Each of them follows the lead of the Prophet Hosea in emphasizing that salvation comes not only from God's mercy but also from His total fidelity to His plan and promise. This is the meaning of the phrase which first appears in Hosea and recurs repeatedly in the other Pro-

phets and in the Psalm: *hesed weemeth* (mercy and fidelity). In both Old and New Testament the living God is not only merciful and compassionate but also rock-like in His unchanging fidelity to the word and promise which manifest His thought and plan: "All the ways of the Lord are mercy and fidelity (*hesed weemeth*)" (Ps 25, 10; cf. *Summa Theol.* Pars I, Q. 21, art. 4).

This special character of God's love, as something that flows from and is ruled by His thought, provides the form and guide-line of Christian charity and unity. To be authentic they must be vital with and characterized by the truth and plan that are in God. This is what Jesus meant when He prayed, "Father, consecrate them by the truth; thy word in truth. But it is not for these alone (the Apostles) that I pray, but, for those also who through their words will believe in me; may they all be one, as thou, Father art in me and I in thee, so also may they be in us" (Jn 17, 17-21).

If as Christians, prompted by God's love, we are to minister to the needs of our brothers and to strive for unity with them, our activities must be ruled by the thoughts which God has revealed through His Word. True fellowship (*koinonia*) among men has its source and its rule in true union (*koinonia*) with God, a union with Him which requires perfect fidelity to His word. Repeatedly St. Paul emphasizes that the deeds of Christian service and the striving for Christian

unity must all be seen as integral elements of that charity (*agape*) which, like God's love for men, is ruled by the divine thought and word. Thus, in his letter to the Colossians, Paul speaks of this kind of charity as an all-embracing context which alone provides the unifying form for particular deeds of sympathy and service: "You should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other . . . And over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on charity" (Col 3, 12-14).

For St. Paul the distinctive note in charity is its special finality of helping men to live in accord with God's word. A sentence in his epistle to the Philippians is typical of all his thought. When he appeals to these Christians to be "united in love," he immediately explains that he means they must "be united in their convictions, with a common mind" as he immediately explains, means total accord with the "mind of Christ." So, too, in his moral recommendations to the Ephesians, he prefaces his directives by affirming that "charity, selflessness, gentleness and patience" must flow from and be based on a total unity of faith (cf. Eph 4, 1 ff).

Today, when our people have come alive to the pressing need for charity and unity, one may

joyfully say that the Church is "ripe for the harvest" of great works for God. But in seeking to strengthen and promote these surges of life the pastoral minister must keep in mind the fundamental truth taught both by Jesus and St. Paul: charity and unity are authentically Christian only when they are ruled by the word of God as delivered to us in the doctrine of the Church. Whereas Marxism is limited to an earth-bound vision of life, the Church cherishes a heavenly vision of man's true destiny to which only the word of God can guide us. For the minister of the Gospel, therefore, the source and rule of his apostolic work must be the firm and abiding conviction that the local church is an authentic Christian community of love only when its people are "of one mind and one heart" in seeking God according to the norms of His word.

In practice, this means that the pastoral ministry of the Church and of every diocese constantly stands under judgment, the judgment of God's word that is "living and active and cuts like any double edged sword" (Heb. 4, 12). Though the Church and its constituent dioceses should be alive with every kind of pastoral activity, it is even more important that unity of faith and purpose shine radiantly in the rainbow of manifold services and pluriform practices. To safeguard this unity

and to strengthen it belong eminently to the charism and responsibility of the Holy Father and the Bishops. Corresponding to this guidance and utilizing their

own rich gifts, all other ministers of the Church must strive to build communities of love in which the powerful word of God gives life to true charity and unity.

V. Sacred Doctrine: the Living Word of the Pastoral Ministry

Speaking of His own ministry Jesus said, "I have come that men may have it in all its fullness" (In 10, 10). These words refer not only to the love with which He gave His life on the cross but also to the solicitude with which He sought to make the word of God a living word in the hearts of men. He who insisted that "God is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Matt 13, 3) confronted men in the human context of their daily needs, vital concerns, and Palestinian ways of thinking and speaking. In fact, His message was so relevant to His hearers that today careful biblical scholarship is often necessary to determine the precise meaning of His words. As one reads the Gospels one does not know what to admire more—the truth and beauty of Jesus' teaching or His pastoral solicitude to touch the hearts of men with words they could understand and respond to.

The letters of St. Paul reveal the heart of an apostle modelled on the heart of the solicitous Christ. Not only was Paul the faithful spokesman of God's word but, in his ministry, "he became all things to all men that he might gain all for Christ" (cf. 1 Cor 9, 22). Thus he constantly held up

the prism of men's thoughts to the eminent mysteries of God that he might refract into human hearts the rays of light that would warm and transform them. To the Corinthians and Romans, fascinated by the Stoic image of the world as a unified body. Paul explained the mystery of Christian union with Christ and His disciples as the union of the Body and its members. To help men understand what Christ accomplished by His death and resurrection Paul utilized nine different images, all of them familiar to converts who loved to seek out in the Old Testament shadowy anticipations of God's mighty work through His Son. The spectrum of these Pauline images is rich: redemption, expiation, reconciliation, forgiveness, justification, salvation, a new creation, adoption, the Paschal sacrifice. As one marvels at the Apostle's ingenuity he is struck by Paul's solicitude for relevance. In speaking the word of God he kept his eye firmly fixed on the concerns and background of his audience for he knew well that only the word which colours the imagination and warms the heart will bring conviction.

This need for ministry to be relevant is an urgent rule for all apostolate; to be effective the word

which ministry speaks must be felt to be a living word. A statement like St. Augustine's, "O Beauty, ever ancient and ever new" may mislead some to a non-Augustinian conclusion. They may think that, so long as an "ancient" truth is expressed, it is bound to have the ring of "newness." The sad result of this conclusion would be dull teaching and boring preaching that would only put people to sleep. Certainly, sacred doctrine, if authentic, is always "ancient;" but the challenge of ministry is to make the age-old truth sound vital and new. If people today say that they believe in God and in Jesus but do not believe in the Church, could it be that some ministers have failed

to show them the wonder of Jesus living in the Church to meet their present needs and to illumine their present darkness. This striving for relevance shaped the contents of St. Paul's letters. It is significant that he wrote only twice of man's redemption from original sin (Rom 5, 12-21; 1 Cor 15, 21-22); but he wrote numberless times of how Jesus frees men from their personal sins and from the sin-situation in which they live. Could we say that this disproportionate treatment was dictated by Paul's concern to make the redemption meaningful to his readers by showing its effects on the sins of which they were painfully aware?

Enlightened Understanding

An apostle's duty to be relevant demands two things: an enlightened understanding of sacred doctrine, and sensitivity to the pre-occupations of men. Often enough sacred doctrine can be expressed in a clear and crisp sentence, as when St. Thomas writes of the Eucharist: "The Eucharist is the sacrament of Christ's Passion according as a man is made perfect in union with Christ who suffered" (S. Theol. III, Q. 73, art. 3, ad 3). But it is the duty of the minister to unfold for his hearers all the heartening truths which St. Thomas has condensed into this brief sentence. With an eye to the needs of people and with the help of the Epistle to the Hebrews, cc. 2 and 5, he has to show that the Jesus who comes to us in the Eucharist

is truly our Brother (Heb 2, 11). who has endured all the testings we must go through here upon earth (Heb 2, 10; 5, 1-10), and who brings the power of His divinity to strengthen men who are weak with His own total fidelity to the Father.

Obviously this kind of preaching and teaching requires of the minister both careful study of God's word and careful attention to the language, images and motives which will make God's truth a living power in the hearts of men. Pere de Vaux always taught his students at L'Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem that if someone wanted to have the Bible release its secrets, he had to ponder the text long and prayerfully. In this regard

priests could be of great help to one another if they would meet frequently, in small groups, to share their prayerful reflections on a point of sacred doctrine and its relevance to the people among whom they are working. "A brother helped by a brother is like a strong city."

No price is too great to pay that the Gospel minister may be adept in presenting God's word as the light and life of people's hearts today. This is the very meaning of our ministry in the Church; to give Jesus to men in word and sacrament constitutes our priestly identity. Our Holy Father, Pope Paul VI, made this clear in his message of 27 September 1974 to the Synod of Bishops.

"Very often (the sons and daughters of the Church dedicated to apostolic work) are urged to forget the priority that the message of salvation must have, and thus to reduce their own action to mere sociological or political activity, and the message of the Church to a man-centered and temporal message.

Hence the need to restate clearly the specifically religious finality of evangelization . . . the kingdom of God, before anything else, in its fully theological meaning, which frees man from sin, and proposes to him love of God as the greatest commandment and as the ultimate destiny of eternal life."

THE BLESSED VIRGIN AND THE CHURCH

by

Fr. Leonardo Legaspi, O.P.

The Blessed Virgin in the Mystery of Christ

The only Marian text in St. Paul, but a very weighty one, and therefore the corresponding formulary in the ancient Church's confession of faith, describes the salvific Incarnation of God's Son by saying that he "was born of a woman". (Gal. 4:4). This is the marrow which makes the Marian formularies so important for orthodox faith in the mystery of Christ. At the same time, it pinpoints the place in Mary in the Mystery of Christ.

Christ is true Man because he was born of a woman; he is the true Son of God because no earthly father begot him, the eternal God is His Father; divinity and humanity are united in the one Person of the Word, so that Mary is in truth the Mother of God (Council of Ephesus, Mansi 4, 1130; 2635 and 4,1071; Council of Chalcedon *ibid*, 7, 111-116; Council of Constantinople II, *ibid*. 9, 375-396).

The Role of the Blessed Virgin in the History of Salvation

When speaking of the history of salvation, a very important point should be borne in mind: the history of the Old Testament People of God progressively prepares for the advent of Christ, and at the same time there is a gradual and homogeneous growth in revelation and a deeper understanding of the faith. For in God's plan, creation and the history of His people were always ordered to the Incarnation of the Word. So, looking back now that the Incarnation has come to pass, we must see pre-Christian saving history as preparing for the central event of all history, of which Mary is an essential part.

From the Old Testament we see three prophecies in which the role of Mary in the history of salvation is emphasized: the proto-gospel (Gen. 3:15); the passage in Isaiah, quoted in the New Testament (MT. 1:23), about the Virgin who will bear a Son whose name will be "God with us" (Is. 7:14); and finally all those poor and humble members of God's People whose very poverty and humility embody expectant hope of salvation,

the type of whom is Mary. She it was who brought the waiting People of God over into the age of fulfillment when the Incarnation of the Word answers the longing of man.

In the New Testament (LK 1:38) we see also that the decision whereby she conceived the life that renews everything is not an assent only by herself. In a literal sense, the fiat of Mary enters as a true cause into the redemption of all men. With her assent to the coming of the Lord, Mary stands at the head of humanity insofar as it is the recipient of salvation, in a true sense summing up the assent of faith. By her assent, she received in faith the mission and coming of the Redeemer, with whom the initiative always remains and that by the grace of the coming Redeemer, to whose conception the pre-destined Mother had to utter her consent before the Incarnation could take place, the gift of the Father arrives among men.

The spirit of Mary's assent to the Incarnation carries through all the events that interweave her life with the Lord's. Article 57 of **Lumen Gentium** gives us random samples of them — and they all sound the same note — a blend of the faith in which she shares the life, the work, and sufferings of the Son, and the meaning this share of hers has for the rest of man.

“This union of the Mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death; first when Mary, arising in haste to go to visit Elizabeth, is greeted by her as blessed because of her belief in the promise of salvation and the precursor leaped with joy in the womb of his mother (Cf. Lk 1:41-45); then also at the birth of Our Lord who did not diminish his Mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it, the Mother of God joyfully showed her firstborn son to the shepherds and the Magi; when she presented him to the Lord in the temple, making the offering of the poor, she heard Simeon foretelling at the same time that her Son would be a sign of contradiction and that a sword would pierce the mother's soul, that out of many hearts thoughts might be revealed) Lk. 2:34-35); when the Child Jesus was lost and they had sought him sorrowing, his parents found him in the Temple, engaged in the things that were his Father's and they did not understand the words of their son. His mother, however, kept all these things to be pondered in her heart (Lk 2:41-51).”

Mary and the Church in the Divine Plan

The Church, in the eternal plan, is the prolongation of Christ in time; it is His Body, in which every member has a definite place, an individual way of resembling the God man, a spiritual vocation and a supernatural activity. Complete self-communication would be lacking, if the powers of action were not conferred. Christ makes His members His co-operators,

by granting them the redemptive energy of charity and the ability to merit, pray, and act for mankind's salvation. Human nature is social; and the grace of Christ that is given to human nature is social. The community of the redeemed is socially organized into a body that is the complement of Christ and His fullness. The multitude of persons composing it form a unity, which the Son of God has taken to Himself and espoused.

As we have already seen, in the divine plan, Mary has a place and function analogous though vastly superior to those of the Church. The Second Person of the Trinity became incarnate, not in a nature created for this purposes, but in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. Her union with the Word is not hypostatic, as is the union between the assumed human nature and the Son of God; it is a union of person with person, the intimate relationship of motherhood. God utilized the woman in the Incarnation, not because He needed an instrument, but rather because He wished to exploit to the utmost the possibilities of union with the Incarnate Word which the maternal power of woman presented to Him (M. J. Nicolas, O.P., *Marie et L'Eglise dans le plan divin*, in BSFEM, vol. II, 1953, p. 165).

Relation of Mary and the Church

Mary is related to the Church through the relations which both she and the Church have with Christ. The kinship between Christ and Mary is comparable with the kinship between the Church and Christ's members.

Mary is the mother of Christ, and the Church through grace, generates Christ in the souls of the baptized; as Mary cared for and nourished the infant Christ, so the Church cares and nourishes and cherishes Christ in souls. Mary is the new Eve, and the Church also is the new Eve; each is mother of all the supernaturally living.

Furthermore, because of the mystic oneness of the Church with Christ, Mary's relationship with the physical Christ is extended to His members; the Mother of the head is also the mother of the body. The underlying basis of the likeness is the fact that the Church, along with its head, is the mystical Christ, according to the Saviour's own word: "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." (Acts 9:5).

Mary, Mother of the Church

On 21 November, the day on which Pope Paul promulgated the Dogmatic Constitution in which the Mariological thinking of the Council took its final form, the Pope also proclaimed Mary, Mother of the Church, in the following words:

"This moment is the most solemn and the most appropriate to fulfill an intent to which we alluded at the end of the previous session — an intent which many Fathers of the Council have made their own — asking that the maternal role of the Blessed Virgin towards Christians be explicitly declared during this Council. To this end we have estimated it opportune in this public session to give to the Virgin for her honour the title ... We proclaim Mary Mother of the Church" (Closing address: AAS 56 (1964) 1015).

Leo XIII in his Encycl. *Adiutricem populi*, in ASS, vol. 28, 1895-1896 stated this same truth "truly indeed Mother of the Church."

The root foundation of this special title is Mary's Divine Motherhood. Pope Paul in this same closing address describes this doctrine before leading up to the proclamation:

"Truly, the reality of the Church is not exhausted in its hierarchical structure, in its liturgy, in its sacraments, in its juridical ordinances. The intimate, the primary source of its sanctifying effectiveness is to be sought in its mystic union with Christ; a union which we cannot conceive as separate from her who is the Mother of the Word Incarnate and whom Jesus Christ himself wanted closely united to himself for our salvation. Thus the loving contemplation of the marvels worked by God in His Holy Mother must find its proper perspective in the vision of the Church." (ASS 56 (1964) 1015).

While the radical basis of the ecclesial motherhood of Mary is her divine maternity, the concept proximately grows out of two doctrines given prominence by the Constitution, both of which have firm roots in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

Mary, Spiritual Mother of the Church

Mary is the physical mother of God and also the spiritual mother of men, particularly of the faithful. *Lumen Gentium*, (articles 52-54) affirms this truth repeatedly.

Thus, after quoting a signal passage from St. Augustine, "(Mary is) clearly the mother of the members (of Christ) ... because she co-operated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head (St. Augustine, *De S. Virginitate*, 6; PL 40,399), an introductory paragraph add (art. 53): "Wherefore ... the Catholic Church, taught by the Holy Spirit, honors her with filial affection and piety as a most loving Mother." Then the introduction continues (art. 54): "Therefore this sacred Council ... intends to describe diligently both the role of the Blessed Virgin in the Mystery of the Incarnate Word and of the mystical Body, and the duties of redeemed mankind toward the Mother of God, who is mother of Christ and mother of men, particularly of the faithful."

In the second of its major sections, on "The Blessed Virgin and the Church," this chapter comes to say (articles 61-62):

"In this singular way (Mary) co-operated in the work of the Saviour by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in giving back supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is our Mother in the order of grace.

"This maternity of Mary in the economy of grace endures without interruption, from its beginning with the consent she gave in faith at the Anunciation and sustained without wavering beneath the cross, down to the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. For, taken up into heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continues to procure us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home."

Mary then is our Spiritual Mother because she had some part, a subordinate but real role, in our regeneration, our generation unto the supernatural and saving life of grace; and that together with and under Christ, she is a cause of our becoming children of God, so far as it is possible for her to be such a cause.

Mary, Mother of the People of God

The other doctrine to which we must attend is set forth in the Constitution's second chapter, on the Church as the "People of God." There the conciliar document, again reaffirming a truth well grounded in Holy Writ and Tradition, professes that God does not save men "merely as individuals, without bond or link between one another. Rather it pleased Him to bring men together as one people, the People of God, and to this people all men are called, and with this people all men are related in various ways." (articles 9, 13-16; AAS 58 (1965), pp. 12-20).

When we bring the above doctrines to bear on one another — that about Mary's spiritual maternity and that about the Church as the People of God — we readily recognize that our Lady is the Spiritual Mother not simply of each Christian as an individual, but of all Christians as united in the one community which is the Church. Her maternity in the order of grace is not exercised first on an individual and then only by way of consequence on the Mystical Body which is the Church, the People of God. It is exercised on the Mystical Body and members simultaneously and on the members as making up the Body.

Mary's spiritual maternity, then, in regard to the faithful, means that she is "Mother of the Church".

Questions People Ask

ON PENANCE AND ANOINTING

by

Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.

I. CONFESSION AND ANOINTING

QUESTION: (75-7).* In the booklet "Anointing of the Sick" (Manila, Catholic Trade Inc., 1974) I find a strange instruction and I am wondering the reason for this and also if this is from the official instruction from Rome. It states there, and I quote — "Whenever it is necessary, the priest should hear the sacramental confession of the sick person, if possible, before the celebration of the anointing. If the sick person confesses at the time of the anointing, this takes place during the introductory rite. Otherwise the penitential rite should be celebrated." In the old ritual, — I quote from the one I have before me — "The priest now hears the sick person's confession, if desired, and absolves him."

My question is — why separate confession from anointing of the sick? In practice, as fairly busy priests, must we make two visits to the same sick person, one for the confession and one for the other sacrament? Confession is a very important sacrament for the sick person, so why even insinuate that it need not be given when the priest gives the anointing of the sick? My only suggestion is that we retain the old rubric in this important matter — namely, "The priest now hears the sick person's confession, if desired, and absolves him."

ANSWER

Your letter contains several questions. I shall answer them one after the other.

1. "Is the rubric (quoted above) truly from the new, official Roman ritual?" — The text quoted from the booklet "Anointing of the Sick" is a

* Questions 75-1 to 3 were published in January; 75-4 to 6 were published in November.

faithful copy of the provisional translation of the International Committee on English in the Liturgy which in turn is a correct translation of the official Latin text (p. 30, n. 65). You find the same or similar wordings in the same Roman (Latin) document on p. 38, n. 86; p. 41, n. 98; p. 41, n. 100; p. 49, n. 115.

2. "Why separate confession from the anointing of the sick?" — During the Middle Ages people had come to believe that the anointing of the sick person from the last remnants of sin and so prepare him for immediate entrance into the glory of heaven. Therefore, the anointing was preceded by sacramental penance and the viaticum. This was also the reason why it was called 'last anointing' or 'extreme unction'.

But the anointing is a sacrament of the sick. Even before the Second Vatican Council, popes of this century (e.g., Benedict XV and Pius XI) for pastoral reasons pleaded for the earliest possible anointing, as soon as there was a prudent or probable judgment to danger of death. The new ritual and the apostolic constitution of Pope Paul VI which made the ritual public, have restored the original meaning of anointing as a sacrament for the seriously ill. The revised rite has removed the danger of death as a condition for the reception of the sacrament. The recipient is one who is dangerously (*periculose*) ill: "prudent or probable judgment about the seriousness of the sickness is sufficient; in such a case there is no reason for scruples, but if necessary a doctor may be consulted" (n. 8).

Thus the anointing of the sick re-gained its "independence" as sacrament. It is a sacrament of its own; it is a sacrament not only in connection with penance or the eucharist as viaticum.

3. "As fairly busy priests, must we make two visits to the same sick person, one for the confession and one for the other sacrament?" — This depends on the circumstances. A chaplain in a hospital should follow the rubric and try to avoid to celebrate these two sacraments together. He visits the patients regularly and should hear their confession on these occasions. If the patient is seriously ill he may then, i.e., after confession, also celebrate the anointing.

In a rural parish, however, the priest is not seldom "forced" by the circumstances (when he is called in too late; when the distances are too great; when the roads are too rough, etc.) to celebrate the sacraments of penance, anointing and communion together. He will often have to use the "Continuous Rite of Penance, Anointing, and Viaticum for those near Death" of the new ritual, even if death is not yet imminent, because he foresees that he cannot come very soon a second time to the place.

4. "Why even insinuate that it (confession) need not be given when the priest gives the anointing of the sick?" — Even the old rubric which you propose as a substitute for the new text contains such an insinuation:

"The priest now hears the sick person's confession, **if desired** (quod si aegrotus velit confiteri audiat illum et absolvat)". The new ritual's wording seems to be better because it states an objective need (Whenever it is necessary) and not merely a subjective conviction of the patient (if the patient so desires).

II. APOSTOLIC BLESSING IN THE HOUR OF DEATH

QUESTION: (75-8). Is there any mention of the Apostolic Blessing at the Hour of Death in the new ritual for the sick? I just could not locate it and I was wondering, if we include it, as in the old form, or is it eliminated?

ANSWER

It has not been eliminated It is found in the "Continuous Rite of Penance, Anointing and Viaticum for those near Death" and in the "Rite of Anointing without Viaticum for those near Death." There are even two versions. For your convenience I insert the two versions here: "At the conclusion of the sacrament of penance the priest may give the plenary indulgence for the dying:

**By the power the Apostolic See has given me,
I grant you a plenary indulgence
and pardon for all your sins,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
+ and of the Holy Spirit. — R. Amen.**

The second, optional formula is the following:

**Through the suffering, death and resurrection
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
may almighty God free you from all punishments
in this life and in the life to come.
May he open paradise to you
and welcome you to the joy of eternal life. — R. Amen."**

COMMUNICATION

LIST OF CARDINALS

Dear Father Editor:

I am a secondary fourth year student of Our Lady of Victories Academy, Amulung, Cagayan. One of my subjects (elective) is Ecclesiastical History. In one of our daily recitations I asked our instructor how many cardinals we have in the Church and what are their names and addresses. He said, he does not know. He advised me to consult our Father director, but he advised me to consult the "Boletin Ecclesiastico de Filipinas".

Hence, this, my letter of request for the publication of all the names of Cardinals of the Catholic world with their respective addresses.

I thank you for your condescension to my request.

Respectfully in Christ,

William Centeno

Dear William:

We are happy to answer your request for a list of Cardinals. We obtained the basic information from the book "Annuario Pontificio 1974" and updated it through information we found in the "Acta Apostolicae Sedis" 1974 and 1975. The division by countries is our work.

The last time the Pope promoted clerics to the rank of Cardinal was on March 3, 1973. At that time there were already 105 Cardinals. The 30 newly promoted ones brought the total to 135.

Thirteen cardinals have died since then, leaving only 122 at the end of September 1975. These are the cardinals who have died:

1. Boleslaw Kominek, Archbishop of Wroclaw (March 10, 1974)
2. Stephan Trochta, Bishop of Litomerice (April 6, 1974)
3. James Charles McGuigan, Retired Archbishop of Toronto (April 8, 1973)
4. Jean Danielou, S.J., (May 20, 1974)
5. Ildebrando Antoniutti, Camerlengo of the Sacred College (August 1, 1974)

6. Paul Pierre Meouchi, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch (January 11, 1975).
 7. Lorenz Joeger, Retired Archbishop of Paderborn (April 1, 1975).
 8. Charles Journet (April 15, 1975).
 9. Josef Mindszenty, Retired Archbishop of Esztergom (May 6, 1975).
 10. Arturo Tabera Araoz, Prefect of the S. Congregation for Religious and Secular Institute (June 13, 1975).
 11. Luigi Raimondi, Prefect of the S. Congregation for the Causes of Saints (June 24, 1975).
 12. Luis Concha, Retired Archbishop of Bogota (September 18, 1975).
 13. Maurice Feltin, Retired Archbishop of Paris (September 27, 1975).
- The Pope is expected to create new cardinals soon.

Sincerely yours,

Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P.

1. A). CARDINALS IN CHARGE OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE ROMAN CURIA

_____, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes.

SEBASTIANO BAGGIO, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops.

GABRIEL-MARIE GARRONE, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education.

JAMES ROBERT KNOX, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship.

FRANZ KONIG, President of the Secretariat for non-believers.

GIUSEPPE PAUPINI, Grand Penitentiary.

PAUL PHILIPPE, O.P., Prefect for the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

SERGIO PIGNEDOLI, President of the Secretariat for non-Christians.

_____, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

AGNELO ROSSI, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or "Propaganda Fide".

MAURICE ROY, President of the "Council of the Laity" and of the Pontifical Commission "Justice and Peace".

FRANJO SEPER, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

DINO STAFFA, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Signature Apostolica.

EGIDIO VAGNOZZI, President of the Prefecture of the Economic Affairs of the Holy See.

JEAN VILLOT, Secretary of State, Prefect of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church.

JOHANNES WILLEBRANDS, President of the Secretariat for the Union of Christians.

JOHN JOSEPH WRIGHT, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy.

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ANTONELLI, O.F.M.
PAOLO BERTOLI
CARLO CONFALONIERI
MAXIMILIEN DE FURSTEN-
BERG
PERICLE FELICI
EFREM FORNI
CARLO GRANO
SERGIO GUERRI
PAOLO MARELLA
UMBERTO MOZZONI
MARIO NASALLI ROCCA DI
CORNELIANO
SILVIO ODDI
ALFREDO OTTAVIANI
PIETRO PALAZZINI
SALVATORE PAPPALARDO
PIETRO PARENTE
UGO POLETTI, Vicar General
of the Pope for Rome.
FRANCESCO ROBERTI
ANTONIO SAMORE
LUIGI TRAGLIA
GIOCOMO VIOLARDO

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C.M., Patriarch of Alexandria
of the Copts.

JOSYF SLIPYJ, Metropolitan
Archbishop of Lwów of the
Ukrainians.

JOSEPH PARECATIL, Metro-
politan Archbishop of Erna-
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Kenya

MAURICE OTUNGA, Arch-
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Kinshasa (Congo)

JOSEPH MALULA, Archbishop
of Kinshasa.

Madagascar

JEROME RAKOTOMALALA,
Archbishop of Tananarive.

North Africa

LEON ETIENNE DUVAL,
Archbishop of Alger.

South Africa

OWEN McCANN, Archbishop
of Cape Town.

Tanganyika

LAUREAN RUGAMBWA,
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Upper Volta and Niger

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TESTA, Archbishop of Cor-
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Paulo.

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Archbishop of Sao Salvador
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Chile

RAUL SILVA HENRIQUEZ,
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tiago of Chile.

Colombia

ANIBAL MUÑOZ DUQUE,
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Guatemala

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xico.

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TRENCE J. COOKE, Arch-
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JOHN FRANCIS DEARDEN,
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JOHN KROL, Archbishop of
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TIMOTHY MANNING, Arch-
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Archbishop of Boston.

PATRICK LOUIS O'BOYLE,
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hington.

LAWRENCE JOSEPH SHE-
HAN, Archbishop of Balti-
more.

Uruguay

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O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of
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Venezuela

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TERO, Archbishop of Cara-
cas.

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JUSTINUS DARMOJUWONO,
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GIACOMO LERCARO, Retired
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MARCELO GONZALEZ MAR-
TIN, Archbishop of Toledo.

NARCISO JUBANY ARNAU,
Archbishop of Barcelona.

HOMILETICS

by

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

I. BIBLICAL NOTES

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

(February 1, 1976)

First Reading : Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Second Reading: First Corinthians 7:32-35

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:21-28

First Reading: God promises his People that after the demise of Moses he will not forsake them but send them another prophet to guide them. A prophet is not necessarily one who foresees the future but one who is God's mouthpiece (Hebrew: God's mouth), inspired to speak God's message to his People, and interpret the mind of God for them (v.18). "Prophet" in this oracle is first of all a collective line of charismatic men, given to Israel in the long period of her development (otherwise the promise would soon be meaningless). But toward the end of Old Dispensation, Israel awaited an individual of special stature to cap the entire line of prophets (as can be seen from Jn. 1:21; 6:14, and some of the Essene writings). Peter identifies him with Jesus, the Savior (Acts 3:22). Listening to a true prophet is like listening to God himself (v.19) but falsifying prophecy is punishable with death (v.20). Jesus is not only God's mouthpiece, he is the very Word of God.

Gospel Reading: At the very outset, Jesus greatly impressed his audiences by the authority he wielded both in word and in deed. His teaching was dynamic, refreshing, giving entirely new insights and ideas. And he exercised authority even over unclean spirits, with a mere word of command. Putting this into writing decades after the Pentecostal event, Mark correctly interprets the authority of Jesus to be that of the Messiah, and his dethroning of evil spirits as the visible sign that the reign of God has come among them in the very person of Jesus. Thus the expression "Holy One of God" can have its full Christian

meaning here, a title very close to the title "Son of God" which Mark in the first verse of his gospel set forth to establish. (See also Lk.1:35; Jn. 10:36). The rebuking by Jesus of the unclean spirit is in Greek the technical expression for exorcism. Jesus knew well that he was not dealing with abstract evil forces but very concrete beings over which he manifested that he was the "Stronger One" (Lk. 11:22).

Second Reading: Christ and his glorious Coming meant everything to Paul (v.21), so he gives here the ideal which is more adapted to prepare man for that Coming, the ideal of "the undivided heart." By no means does he deny that married couples can and should be devoted to Christ and should prepare well for his Coming, but the unmarried can do this more easily since their whole attention can be in one direction, whereas married couples have the duty to be concerned for each other. In this mutual love and concern they are to serve the Lord and prepare for his Coming. But married or unmarried, let Christ be the chief concern of everyone.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

(February 8, 1976)

First Reading : Job 7:1-4,6-7

Second Reading: First Corinthians 9:16-19,22-23

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:29-39

First Reading: The book of Job thrashes out a problem which has long troubled man: why does God allow an innocent man to suffer? The current view at that time (placed on the lips of Job's three friends) made personal sin responsible for all suffering. Job himself (the author's own view) contests this, and searches for a better solution. In today's passage Job compares his unfortunate situation, which he shares with the rest of mankind, to a soldier's endless service (real drudgery in the Ancient East) or to the monotony of a day laborer or to downright slavery. He longs to see the end of each day and of each night, and begs God to pity him, for life is so fleeting. The true solution to his problem will be brought by Christ the Lord in the fulness of time.

Gospel Reading: It is the saving mission of the Messiah to cure every kind of evil. Not only did Jesus cure by a mere word but also by a single touch of the hand. "He raised her up" is a technical term in the Greek often used for the resurrection, perhaps to symbolize that the salvific work of the Savior is to raise up from sin, sickness and death to new life that is everlasting. Peter's mother-in-law placing herself at once at the service of the Lord also pictures the People of God serving Christ after being delivered by him from evil.

Frequently in Mark's Gospel Jesus endeavors to keep secret the real nature of his person, evidently because of the false expectations of a political and world-conqueror on the part of the people. Later on he reveals himself in full colors to the chosen twelve as the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. The thrust of his mission is spiritual although it affects the whole man. He too needs strength for the conflict and early morning finds him communing with the Father, thus giving an example of prayer added to a full day's work. When Peter would capitalize on his popularity he at once rejects the idea. His mission is to serve all mankind, and bring the Good News to all. He must continue to dethrone Satan and set up the Reign of God.

Second Reading: Transformed from a persecutor to an ardent apostle of Christ by the Damascus-encounter, Paul was fully aware that his divine call to preach the Good News was no merit of his own, but was his bounden duty. His reward was in willingly doing so, and even gladly giving up those things which he could have freely demanded, such as support from his communities. He wanted his example to be entirely selfless so as to be a worthy witness of the Glad Tidings. He went even much further: becoming the slave of all like his Master, accommodating himself to the weaknesses and demands of those he dealt with, in order to win over as many as possible. (The older translation "to save all" is defective and does not correspond to the Greek). Sharing the blessings brought by the Good News of Jesus is ample recompense for his efforts.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

(February 15, 1976)

First Reading : Leviticus 13:1-2.44-46

Second Reading: First Corinthians 10:31 to 11:1

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:40-45

First Reading: Various skin diseases that went under the name of leprosy in ancient Israel are here treated in detail (for fully two chapters) in the Priestly Code. Isolation from community worship is demanded, also certain actions designating the afflicted person as leprosy, with ceremonial purification rites until a favorable judgment would be reached by a Levitical priest, pronouncing the person as "clean". The choice for this passage in the Christian liturgy seems to be that leprosy affords a natural image of disfigurement and thus of inner sinfulness (though there is no connection necessary at all); and the accompanying circumstances and ritual are a remarkable image of Christian purification in the sacrament of penance.

Gospel Reading: Since leprosy excluded from the life of Israel and from her community worship, the cure of the leper has also a messianic significance: Jesus came to save all, even the outcasts and the lepers, and to restore them to full life in the community. A few Greek manuscripts of the Western Family have "moved to anger" instead of "moved to pity" (referring the anger to a demon supposedly possessing the leper) but the weight of the manuscriptis is undoubtedly for "moved with pity", the reading adopted by all modern translations. (A conflated synthesis of two events by Mark does not seem likely in this instance). Jesus touched the "untouchable", removing the disease by the very contact which ordinarily contracted it. He willed to incarnate himself into human nature with all its miseries in order to transform man totally to new life. Noteworthy is the loving-kindness of his prompt response and action, as also his concern that the Law be carried out. This would give the Levitical priests the opportunity to recognize the significance of the miracle. His warning to keep secrecy was to prevent an undesired result in people hoping for a popular, worldly Messiah, but the leper restored to newness of life could not restrain his joy, and set about proclaiming the miracle wherever he went. Had Jesus been bent on popular applause and kingship, he could have had it on the spot, but that was not the Father's plan and will.

Second Reading: After a long treatise in which Paul lays down very sensible and practical rules concerning eating food offered to idols (ch. 8-10), he concludes with an over-all advice: all our actions, no matter what they are, ought to be done for God's glory, for that is the chief motivation of the Christian. By giving good example to believers and non-believers alike, he will give the best witness to Christ, though this will demand constant self-renunciation. Paul follows Christ in this emptying of self in the service of others. Let his Christians imitate him in their stead.

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(February 22, 1976)

First Reading : Isaiah 53:18-19.21-22.24b-25

Second Reading: Second Corinthians 1:18-22

Gospel Reading: Mark 2:1-12

First Reading: Deutero-Isaiah presents a striking picture of God's wonderful love despite Israel's ingratitude. Again and again she forgot her God, yet Yahweh will never forsake her. Unheard of wonders he will bring about for her, surpassing the wonders of the first Exodus, so that she cannot help but perceive them: a way in the wasteland and rivers of water in the desert, to slake the thirst of all. Then Israel will

break forth in praise of her God. Though her sins are so many they weary him, Yahweh will gratuitously wipe them from his memory. The expressions "way in the desert and rivers of water" are symbols of God's new favors to his People, and of his undying love. Worthy of note is that Jesus refers to himself as the Way, and to his Spirit as rivers of water (Jn. 7:38f). His salvific work finds expression in these verses.

Gospel Reading: Today's miracle is a good example of the Early Church's expatiating on the deeds of Jesus, interpreting their sign-value in the light of the Easter faith (cf. Vat. II, Divine Revelation, no. 19). Jesus would hardly reveal his divine power of forgiving sins to hostile scribes at this early juncture. The miracle was one of healing the paralytic, but Jesus intended more than bodily healing. The healing of the inner man was the deeper understanding of the miracle when the believing community realized the full power of Jesus over the works of Satan; sin, with the consequences of sickness and death. This sign-value the oral evangelists incorporated into their preaching when they recounted the miracle. It is also possible that we are dealing here with a synthesis of a miracle story and a controversial encounter, the latter taking place at a time when Christ had put forth his full claims. For the Christian reader of Mark's time, it is faith in Jesus' divine person and power that brings healing to the whole man, both body and spirit, so that he rises to new life imparted by Christ the Savior. Without the help of others (as is expressly noted) he may not have been able to reach Jesus nor obtain the consequent benefit of the Savior. Both the salvific work of Christ and the part played by others in that work is brought out in the account.

Second Reading: The Apostle offers a vigorous defense of his sincerity in face of accusations of inconstancy, fickleness and insincerity, after he found it advisable to revise his plans of visiting the community. The guarantees of his sincerity are threefold, bound up with the very persons of the Trinity: 1) the fidelity of God by which he now swears (using the usual oath-formula "as God is faithful"); 2) the sincerity of Christ who is Paul's entire object of preaching: Christ who was totally sincere, carrying out the will of the Father to the last detail; Christ, the fulfillment of all God's promises; Christ, in whom alone both Paul and the converts are grounded; 3) the very Spirit of God indwelling in Paul, with whom he is anointed, "sealed" as belonging entirely to Christ, and who is the pledge of full possession yet to come. He is the Spirit of Truth. In the midst of this defense Paul also gives us a glimpse into community-worship of his time, where with one voice all respond "Amen" when prayers are offered through Christ to the Father. "Amen" is the Hebrew word for confirmation of what was said, the "yes" by which the People of God fully agree and exhibit perfect confidence of being heard, because of their reliance on Christ.

EIGHTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**(February 29, 1976)****First Reading : Hosea 2:16-17b.21-22 (14-15b.19-21)****Second Reading: Second Corinthians 3:1-6****Gospel Reading: Mark 2:18-22**

First Reading: One of the finest passages of the entire Old Testament on God's love for his People, presented under the image of marriage. From his own sad marriage. Hosea gradually learned the immense love and mercy of God for sinful man. In the new era of salvation, Yahweh invites to a reconciliation in a new Covenant of love. Israel must withdraw into the desert anew, this time spiritually, symbolizing sincere inner renewal with all entanglements involving false lovers (gods) removed, and with the voice of her true Lover hearkened to earnestly. He himself takes the initiative for this new and permanent union, sealed by bridal gifts which he lavishes upon her: righteousness and justice, love and mercy, coupled with constant fidelity. These are the qualities that characterize the Lover and hence must also characterize the one who enters into marriage-covenant with him. The entire passage is a vivid picture of Christ's unbounded mercy and love toward his spouse the Church. Merciful love and fidelity are key-words in Hosea.

Gospel Reading: In answer to the question why his disciples did not fast, Jesus drew the allegory of a wedding feast in Israel, which lasted a week, and all participants were exempted from any obligations of fasting. His disciples did not fast at present for he, the Bridegroom, was in their midst, and they were celebrating the divine wedding feast with joy. After his departure, they will fast, but no longer motivated by observance of the Law. Their fasting and penance will be Christocentric in motivation, for he has ushered in the eschaton, the new era in which not the Law but the Person of Christ is the center and goal of man's aims. To show the incompatibility of the Old Covenant prescriptions and those of the new era, Jesus used two parables. It would be foolish to patch an old garment with a perfectly new piece of "raw" cloth, fresh from the loom. It shrinks when washed and thus draws up and tears the old, weaker cloth around it, so that the rent is worse than before, and the very purpose of the patch is frustrated. Leather bags made of the skins of goats and sheep afforded excellent containers for wine. Such skins on being removed were kept intact as much as possible and then cleaned. All the openings were closed except one. The pressure of carbon-dioxide generated by new wine, with the fermentation process still going on, expanded somewhat the new skins. After longer use, the skins became brittle and lost their power of expanding under internal pressure.

If new wine is poured in, the skins burst, and both wine and skins are useless. The new era ushered in by Jesus would have new rites and institutions compatible with the new Spirit given by Jesus. They do not revolve around the Law but the Person of Christ.

Second Reading: Paul does not need any letters of recommendation. He founded the Corinthian community and the fact that it is flourishing is recommendation enough. In a bold but telling metaphor he calls his beloved Corinthians his "letters" (of recommendation), able to be "perused" by anyone. Though it was the Spirit of God who "wrote" it, that is, who brought about their thorough inner conversion to Christ, yet Paul was the Spirit's instrument. "Tables of stone" refer back to the Law given to Moses (Ex. 24:12) and the "tables of flesh in the heart" allude to the new Spirit promised by Ezekiel for messianic times (35:26). This brief polemic of Law and Spirit is taken up again in v. 6. The Law was merely preparatory for Christ. Of itself it did not offer the power to live the life of virtue it demanded, and thus was the occasion of death for anyone who relied on it alone. It is the Spirit that imparts that power, and by the Spirit man lives the fulness of the Christ-life. Paul takes every occasion to drive this home. Of this new covenant he is a qualified minister, but the boast is not his. He owes everything to God who made him thus. The entire passage is Trinitarian, but how well the Apostle knows how to treat of the three divine persons existentially! The Trinity is not merely a doctrine he preached, but living persons active at all times in man's salvation.

II. HOMILIES

THE REIGN OF GOD IS AT HAND

February 1, 1976: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Human Situation: In the movie "The Exorcist", those who endeavor to expel the evil spirit fail utterly at first, no matter what they try, and only seem to succeed through a tragic turn of events. How different with the Lord: with one word he commands the evil spirit and it instantly obeys. There are no wild gestures, no shouting, no long drawn-out prayers. Just a word, a command, and Jesus is master of the situation. What a contrast!

The Good News: Why did Jesus drive out demons, cure all manner of diseases, and raise the dead to life? Was it always in the first place to prove his divine mission? If that were so, why should he refuse the

Pharisees when they demanded a sign (Mt. 12:38)? Why lose himself in the crowd as soon as the miracle had been wrought (Jn. 5:13)? Why impose secrecy on those he had cured (Mk. 5:43)? No, the main purpose of his miracles was not to offer credentials for his divine mission. They were primarily intended as the means to establish the reign of God among men.

At the very outset Jesus had proclaimed that the reign of God was at hand (Mk. 1:15). By word and deed he had set about establishing it. He himself was the embodiment of its perfect realization, he who, full of the Spirit of God, was the perfect image of divine Love. But there was one great Adversary to God's plan for man: Satan, whose influence over mankind from the very beginning had been disastrous (Gen. 3:1-7). From those earliest times, mankind had come more and more under Satan's sway, and Satan was not going to give up his domain without a mighty struggle. So Jesus met him head-on at the beginning of the public ministry in the forty days in the desert. He met the Adversary and came out victorious (Mt. 4:1-11).

From then on his ministry was greatly taken up with driving out demons as he himself declared: "Today and tomorrow I cast out devils and perform cures, and on the third day my purpose is accomplished" (Lk. 13:32). If he is to establish the reign of God, he must first dethrone Satan from his hold on man, in order to enthrone instead in the heart of man the God of love. Well could he state: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I expel demons, then the reign of God has overtaken you" (Mt. 12:28). He knew that he was dealing with an archenemy of great acumen and malice, who would concentrate all his forces before yielding his domain. But he also was aware that he, Christ, was the Stronger One (Lk. 11:22).

His cures of sickness and disease are seen in the same light. In general, they are the consequences of mankind's sinfulness and fall under Satan's hold on man. Jesus came to liberate man from Satan's hold, and thus deliver him from sin and sickness, abject poverty and disease, though this would not fully be accomplished till the consummation. "It was to destroy the devil's works that the Son of God revealed himself" (1 Jn. 3:8). Hence the cures of Jesus are seen as manifestation of his power over the evil spirits. The evangelists do not describe scientifically the nature of the cures, but regard them as the triumph of Christ over Satan. Death was the final thrust against God's plan for man, and Satan would inflict not only physical death but everlasting death in the loss of God. So the primary significance of Jesus raising the dead (the widow's son, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus) is the ultimate triumph of Christ over Satan. Though the restoration of integral beauty intended by God for man would come about only in the end-kingdom, when the reign of God reached its perfection with the resurrection of man and the transforma-

tion of the universe, Jesus began it then and there with dynamic energy: he forgave sins, drove out demons, restored health, raised the dead to life, and gave the heart of man the Spirit of God. The works of darkness were on the wane. The kingdom of light and love and peace was at hand.

Our Response: There is still much to be done. The forces of evil grow apace day by day. Yet, in the same Spirit of Christ, which each has received at baptism, and in whom so many are renewing themselves today, the members of Christ can carry on the work of the Master. With energetic undertakings they can offset corrupt practices, refuse to patronize immoral movies, campaign against obscence literature, and oppose neo-pagan standards. They can lay bare social injustice crying to heaven, the misery of the underdog, the living conditions of those in slum areas. They can join the noble band of those who scientifically fight diseases, or those who use their time and means to come to the help of the needy. One with Christ they continue to establish Christ's reign of justice and love, of harmony and peace among their fellowmen. Christ in his members is continually waging war against all the forces of evil today. Some do not realize that they are no longer members of Christ but of Satan. But victory is on the side of Christ, who said: "The Prince of this world is at hand. He has no hold on me" (Jn. 14:30), and again: "You will suffer in the world. But take courage. I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33).

WORK AND PRAYER

February 8, 1976: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Human Situation: Man at all times has affirmed that reflection and consultation before engaging in serious matters or making important decisions is the surest way of proceeding successfully. Business managers devote a great deal of time to planning new projects. Army generals do the same for their next strategic moves. Any one putting up a new home or an important structure will give it much consideration and preparation beforehand. Prayer is like that: reflection on one's needs, turning to God for guidance and help, learning from the prayer-experiences of others.

The Good News: An itinerant preacher like Jesus did not have the commodities of travel that we have today. Though the distances between towns were comparatively short, yet putting in a full-day's work of teaching and preaching, curing the sick, walking from place to place, giving advice where advice was needed, can be very tiring. This was the daily routine of the Lord during the three years of his public life. Yet he always found time for prayer. From the gospels it is evident that he had, so to say, two needs: the need to be among people in order to

establish the reign of God, and the need to commune with the Father in the silent hours of the night or in the early morning hours, because there was a vital relation between these two needs.

Some years ago it was a fad to boast that one's work was one's prayer; so all special time given to silent prayer with God was considered a waste of time, out-moded, no longer "in". You were supposed to find God totally in your work, to encounter him in your doings with your fellowmen, to build up a better world by throwing yourself completely into your work, for, it was said, God is working in us to build a better mankind. It is certainly ideal and praiseworthy to find God in our fellowmen and in our work, or to give ourselves up to him so that he act through us to build a better world. This was foremost in the mind of Jesus too. But Jesus always took time out to commune with God alone: "He went out to the mountain to pray, spending the night in communion with God" (Lk 6:12). Again we are told that "rising early in the morning, he went off to a lonely place in the desert; there he was absorbed in prayer" (Lk. 1:35).

From this example of Jesus we learn that his prayer was intimately bound up with his active work. It was, so to say, the fuel he needed to keep his ministry running smoothly. St. Luke brings this out many times in his gospel: He prayed before choosing his twelve apostles (6:12); before teaching them the excellent summary of all prayer in the Our Father (11:1); at the last supper he prayed that Peter's faith would not fail (22:32). He prayed before great events in his ministry such as the theophanies or divine manifestations, like at his baptism (3:21) and again at the Transfiguration (9:29) and similar events (21:37). Not only was his prayer one of petition, but also one of thanksgiving and praise (10:21).

All this shows amply that Jesus always combined his intense day of work in the ministry of the word and in the establishing the reign of God with frequent prayer, often of longer duration, first of all because he was like us in all things, sin excepted, and his sacred humanity felt the need of divine help to carry out well the duties of his career. In the fearful hour of the agony of the garden his prolonged prayer won for him the heavenly strengthening he stood so much in need of (Lk. 22:43). This example of the Savior is the most forceful argument that our work will be blessed in proportion that we combine it with a spirit of prayer, and besides making our work itself a prayer, to take time out before important decisions and undertakings to turn to God relying on him in every need. "Ask and you shall receive" promised the Savior (Mt. 7:7).

Our response: Modern man may not often find the time for long protracted prayer, on account of the many circumstances encroaching upon his time. But he can without much difficulty train himself to utter short

ejaculations which express his need of God, his love, his trust in God's fatherly care, or even his sorrow for failings and shortcomings. More important still is an attitude or spirit of prayer that has learned to turn to God in odd moments and leisure times to refresh the inner man. Many have also discovered that if they devote a somewhat longer period of prayer at a definite time of the day or the evening, life flows on much more smoothly, business is more successful, trials can be borne more patiently, the outlook on life in general is more meaningful. For God is a God of peace and love, and prayer unites man to his God. Jesus has given us an eminent example by combining all work and activity, no matter how important and sacred, with prayer alone with God.

YOU CAN HEAL ME

February 15, 1976: Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Human Situation: People are willing to undergo a great deal of trouble and expense in order to have their health restored. They submit willingly to a physician, undergo frequent treatments, take expensive medicines, in fact, anything if only they can regain physical health, even though they be at an advanced old age. How many are equally concerned with regaining the health of the inner man, which may have been brought low by the poison of sin, paralyzed by evil habits of long standing, or jeopardized by willful carelessness in thoughts and actions? Yet, what is more important when man stands before his God at the gate of eternity, physical health or the integrity of the inner man?

The Good News: Everything in today's gospel seems to bring before our eyes the penitent sinner who seeks reconciliation and healing from Christ, the great Sacrament of God's love. Not as if leprosy were necessarily connected with personal sin, but today's gospel vividly conjures up to the mind the dispositions required of the penitent sinner, aware of his great need of the Savior, the loving and willing action of that same Savior in the sacrament of penance which he instituted for the express purpose of healing man's inner spirit, and the effects as well as the requirements of the sacrament.

First of all, the leper approaches Jesus in person. This is unusual because lepers were supposed to keep at a distance so as not to contaminate anyone. But see how he approaches close to the Lord, with great confidence and utter simplicity, relying entirely on the help of the One from whom he knew help could come. This is the disposition required of the penitent who seeks to be renewed in spirit. Aware, of this utter need of the Savior, he seeks a personal encounter with him, moved by faith in his saving power, and placing his utter trust in the love of the Savior for him, that he could heal him no matter what wounds infect his spirit,

no matter what the number and gravity of his offenses. Though sinful, he will not stay away, but come close to Jesus who became man precisely to be man's Savior.

The goal of the sacrament of penance is to return to Christ in love. Emphasis shifts in the new rite of penance from merely seeking remission of sin to reconciliation with God in Christ. Christ is the Way God wants to encounter all men. He instituted the sacrament of penance so that this encounter take place through the ministers of his Church: "Receive the holy Spirit. If you forgive men's sins, they are forgiven them" (Jn. 20:22). Through Christ and the ministry of the Church, the sinner is reconciled to God. So the heart of this sacrament is meeting Christ personally, as the leper in the gospel. For Christ is present in his sacraments, and by means of this sacrament he reaches into the heart of man to heal it of its wounds and defects, and fill it with his love. Thus Jesus reached out to touch the leper, though the leper was himself one of the untouchables! With what promptness and willingness Jesus responds to the desire of the leper! "Of course I want to heal you. Be healed!" The Savior is far more eager for the love of the penitent than the latter is for forgiveness and reconciliation. Again we are reminded of the good shepherd who sought out the lost sheep until he found it, and then carried it back home close to his heart.

Like the leper who is totally renewed in bodily integrity and can live an entirely new life not admissible for him before, so the repentant sinner, renewed in God's love, walks in the newness of the Christ-life, all his actions and motivations taking on a renewed direction. His aim is now to be more conformed to the image of Christ, his Savior, and that will mean a thorough conversion from sinful ways. Even though the conversion brought about by the reception of penance may not have had to do with serious sin, there is always need of a constant and progressive orientation toward walking with Christ the Way to the Father. Furthermore, the Savior's admonition to go to the priest and carry out the prescriptions of the Law also reminds us that the penance imposed by the priest is to be carried out an integral part of the sacrament. Often-times too, one who is renewed in Christ's love demonstrates his joy in zealous sharing of his experience with others, bringing them to the same encounter with Christ that he himself experienced.

Our Response: The faithful should become aware of the renewed theological aspects of the new rite of penance (Feb. 1974). The entire rite is now personalistic, concentrating on the return to God's love with a complete inner renewal or metanoia, change of heart and life-style. The work of each person of the Trinity is beautifully expressed in the new formula of absolution: "God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself, and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins: through the ministry

of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Penitent answers: Amen!). It is God, Father Son and Spirit, who takes the initiative in man's renewal of love. Let man merely avail himself of God's loving action. (Cf. Bol. Eccles. Mar. 1975. 210ff).

BRINGING OTHERS TO CHRIST

February 22, 1976: Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Human Situation: Everyone knows how important it is to have "connections" if we wish to obtain an audience with certain important personages, and enlist their help for some project, or to obtain a possible position for one of our relatives. A father or an uncle will bide his time and wait for a favorable opportunity to put his "case" before the man of importance, so that the desired favor is granted. These human considerations in our social conditions are quite prevalent, and without the help of such "patrons" many would not get the help needed or the position desired.

The Good News: Today's gospel shows us how some individuals come to Christ and experience his saving power only through the instrumentality of others. Of himself the paralytic could not approach Jesus. He needed others to carry him to Jesus for he was paralyzed and unable to walk. But even when four persons were found to carry him, a new obstacle presented itself which at first seemed unsurmountable. The crowds were so great that no one could get anywhere near the door, let alone entering the house where Jesus was. Yet, "where there's a will, there's a way". Undaunted, a solution was found. So great was the desire of the paralyzed man to come to Jesus and experience his power, that he begged them to find a way, even if it meant letting him down through the roof from above, (a thing easily done in the thatched roofs of Palestine). And that is exactly what they did. It showed real ingenuity, and it manifested strong faith in Jesus of Nazareth. That faith pleased the Lord, and he granted their request. He conferred on the man a cure of both body and soul.

In the spiritual realm, there are many who would like to come to Christ, either in faith for the first time, or in genuine conversion of heart, turning away from sinful ways. But they need someone to help them make that step. Some are lacking in courage, others do not know how to go about it. How often a newly baptized person testifies after his conversion that he would gladly have come into the Church long before, but no one had invited him to do so, none of his Catholic friends made any least suggestion to accompany them for some special service such

as midnight mass on Christmas, or during Holy Week, or during a mission in the parish. Some have simply drifted away from the Church through neglect and now find it hard to return, fearing the confessional, and not knowing just what to do to become once more a practicing Catholic. All that is needed at times is an encouraging word or a helping hand, so that they make their peace once more with the Lord.

There may be obstacles in the way and there is needed much prayer at times as well as continued effort to gain our objective. It is no small loss for Satan if one is gained for Christ, and he will certainly try to upset our plans, and put obstacles in the way. Our faith is the answer. Christ was pleased with the strong faith of those who brought the paralytic to him. Nothing kept them from carrying out their designs. So too, faith and concerted effort will win out, though it may take time and tact before our efforts are blessed.

Our Response: The faith is the greatest treasure we have. Others ought to benefit by it. As a Christian, we share the responsibility of the whole Church to fulfill her mission of bringing mankind to Christ and Christ to mankind. No one expects of us to go beyond the confines of our own circle of activities, but in that very circle there are surely some whom we could bring to Christ if we were willing to make the effort. A kind word, a word of advice, accompanied by earnest prayer, will go a long way in bringing a lost sheep back to the arms of the Good Shepherd.

I WILL ESPOUSE YOU TO MYSELF FOREVER

February 29, 1976: Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Human Situation: Love is the greatest force on earth as well as in heaven, and it is only genuine love when it is given without reserve to the one who is the object of one's love. The beauty and strength of marriage, as intended by the Creator, is both the total and mutual gift of the spouses, and the fact that it is permanent and lasting. They are one (Gen. 2:24) both in body and soul, in a sacred act that marks them as totally belonging to each other. Divorce is thus the cancer of society which in the end brings dissolution and death.

The Good News: If God had not revealed his immense love for us, it would be difficult to believe. Though it was already manifested in the covenant-ideal, the prophets as time went on began to depict God's longing for union with his People under the attractive image of love between spouses, the nuptials of husband and wife in the closest union of the

marriage bond, Yahweh as husband and Israel as bride. It rushes upon us in the flaming words of Hosea where God's love for Israel is a searing love, outraged at her infidelities, hurt as any husband would be hurt by a wife's unfaithfulness, yet enduring, never giving up, beseeching and endeavoring with endless patience to recapture the love of his bride. So tender is the love of Yahweh for his bride that her unfaithfulness violates the Heart of God so full of love. Not only had Yahweh imposed his will on Israel by giving her the Law, but he also imposed on her his love. What greater compliment can a man pay a woman than to ask her to marry him? What more could Yahweh offer Israel than his love, which is himself? No human mind would have dared to depict God as a rejected lover, pursuing his faithless beloved, had not the Holy Spirit himself revealed it through the mouth and the very life experiences of Hosea, the prophet.

Israel is the blueprint for mankind of all times. Everyman can see himself in that picture, for we are the People of God of the New Covenant, and God has become one of us to be the Bridegroom in the Person of the Son, as today's gospel emphasizes. St. Paul too tells his Christian community: "I have given you in marriage to one husband, presenting you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). He came as Savior to reconcile us to the Father. He enters into the closest union with his spouse, the Church. And we make up the Church. To everyone who truly seeks the Lord in sincere repentance, he speaks again the words of today's first reading: "I will allure her and speak to her heart... I will espouse you to me forever. I will espouse you in love and mercy, and in permanent fidelity. And you will know the greatness of your God." You will grasp his infinite tenderness and know that he is a God of love who longs for your return of love.

Our Response: In Cincinnati, Ohio, there is a large group of teenagers, many of whom had tried all manner of ways (even the worst) to get meaning and enjoyment out of life, but ended up in utter frustration. Then they found that someone really loved them, and that Someone was Jesus himself. In returning love to him not only individually but in the community of the "New Jerusalem", as it is called, they have found real peace and joy. Now they experience the love of their God, and their response is whole-hearted. Let our response be likewise, once we experience the greatness of his love.

SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Chauchard, Paul: *Fuerza y Sensatez del Deseo*. Editorial Herder, 1974 — 176 págs. — 250 pesetas.

Paul Chauchard is a doctor of medicine and sciences, and is a well-known neurologist. Presently he is the director of neurological studies on "excitability" in the *École pratique des hautes études* of Paris. Over 60 works carry his byline. He is a Catholic.

His main contention is that desires should both be based on, and lead to, sanity. "Eros" is not to be repressed but sublimated. Desires have their centers or registers in the cerebrum and cerebellum, both of which should not be tampered with by the abuse of alcohol, drugs, porno and vice in general. Though the mind is not an organic but rather a spiritual faculty, it is influenced by the brain in the measure that the latter furnishes the mind with its grist — memories, phantasms and other sensations external and internal. The aim of the author is to utilize medical and other scientific discoveries to aid in sublimating all but especially erotic desires.

Main contents: Introduction; desire and the cerebrum; our basic desires; how to desire "in full"; desires of spirituality and spirituality of desires; conclusion.

Dartigues, André: *La Fenomenologia*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 200 págs. — 300 pesetas.

Phenomenology is one of the important philosophical movements of contemporary times and pervades many currents of thought. Were it compared to a chicken, then existentialism is an egg. Which came first, is of no existential importance.

The real founder of phenomenism is Husserl; but this system ever continues to undergo changes and adaptations without, however, departing from the fundamental imprint of Husserl. Indeed phenomenology leads in any specific discussion different answers which, though divergent, do not always contradict each other. Husserl's inspiration is like a big spring and source of a river which banches out in its race towards the sea.

The author of this book under consideration is a distinguished professor at the Catholic Institute of Toulouse.

Levesque, Georges: *Bergson. Vida y muerte del hombre y de Dios*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 152 págs. — 240 pesetas.

Levesque, who occupies a professorial chair at Rouen, presents without taking sides the thought of Henri Bergson, and does it with liveliness, clarity and scholarship. The book makes for pleasant and interesting reading.

He arranges Bergson's ideas in accord with the backdrop and milieú of our times, pointing out all their divergences and convergences and ramifications. The existence of God is not postulated *a priori*, but shown to us scientifically or clinically — inductively, as the Schoolmen would say.

Bergson, breaking away with all philosophical tradition, tried to grapple with, and reconstruct, the concept of time, which for him is merely a creation or figment of our phantasy. Hence follows his forceful critique of the God that represses all social religions, the indictment of the unchanging absolutes taken for granted by most philosophers, and masterly exposition of the nature of God that knows and can do all. The result is a new concept of God: a God who featernizes with men, a God of life and love, a true and living God. While some of Bergson's ideas are controversial or off at the tangent, he still is a shining example of the well-intentioned, honest and sincere inquirer of truth who gropes intellectual darkness, but is eventually rewarded with the discovery of a bright glimpse of Eternal Truth.

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