

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

## **LENTEN MESSAGE**

**Paul VI**

## **ALAY KAPWA 1975**

**Philippine Bishops**

## **DECLARATION ON PROCURED ABORTION**

**S. Cong. for the Doctrine of the Faith**

## **THE ABORTION MOVEMENT**

**Cormac Burke**

## **FORM CRITICISM AND GOSPEL**

**Basilio P. Balajadia**

## **MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN ASIA**

**Carlos H. Abesamis, S.J.**

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS, Official Interdiocesan Organ, is published monthly by the University of Santo Tomas and is printed at U.S.T. Press, Manila, Philippines. Entered as Second Class Mail Matter at the Manila Post Office on June 21, 1946.

Subscription Rates (Effective January, 1974). Yearly subscription in the Philippines ₱25.00; Two Years, ₱45.00; Three Years, ₱65.00; Price per copy, ₱3.00. Abroad, \$10.00 per year. Back Issue, \$2.50. Subscriptions are paid in advance.

Communications of an editorial nature concerning articles, cases and reviews should be addressed to the Editor. Advertising and subscription inquiries should be addressed to the Business Manager. Orders for renewals or changes of address should include both old and new addresses and will go into effect fifteen days after notification.

Address all communication to:

**BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS**

Father's Residence  
University of Santo Tomas  
Manila, Philippines

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EDITORIAL</b>	82	THE RISE AND FALL OF ABORTION
	83	IN THIS ISSUE
<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>		
• Paul VI	85	LENTEN MESSAGE
• Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines	86	PASTORAL LETTER ON ALAY KAPWA 1975
• Sacred Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith	88	DECLARATION ON PROCURED ABORTION
• Mons. Jerome Hamer	101	DECLARATION ON ABORTION: A RELIGIOUS, NOT POLITICAL ACT
• Archbishop Jaime, L. Sin, D.D.	103	PASTORAL LETTER ON ABORTION
• Bishops of Western Visayas	105	PASTORAL LETTER ON FAMILY LIFE
• Paul VI	109	ARCHDIOCESE OF TUGUEGARAO
<b>FEATURES</b>		
• Dexter Irisari	110	CAPSULE HISTORY OF ABORTION
• Cormac Burke	112	THE ABORTION MOVEMENT
<b>BIBLE STUDY</b>		
• Basilio P. Balajadia	131	FORM CRITICISM AND GOSPEL
<b>DIALOGUE</b>		
• Carlos H. Abesamis, S.J.	137	TOTAL SALVATION: KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN ASIA TODAY
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	144	ON THE VALIDITY OF GENERAL ABSOLUTION
<b>HERE AND THERE</b>	145	PHILIPPINE AND FOREIGN NEWSBRIEFS
<b>OUR MOTHER</b>	148	FACTS RELATED TO THE VENERATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE PHILIPPINES — I
<b>HOMILETICS</b>	150	I. BIBLICAL NOTES
	155	II. HOMILIES FOR MAY
<b>BOOKS</b>	159	SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

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Partial Statistics on Family Planning Methods in Western Visayas 107 • Clarification of the Bishops' Referendum Statement 100 • Radio Veritas Seeks Your Cooperation 111 • Manifesto on Torture 143 •

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## EDITORIAL

# The Rise and Fall of Abortion

The tug of war on abortion in the Philippines is starting to heat up. We are catching on in a deadly "game" that is being "played" all over the world in different stages of advance, retreat, truce or deadlock.

In past years, morally minded leaders have banked on the law of the land and the traditional filipino love for children and respect for life to check the social cancer of abortion. But the ineffectivity of law and custom is becoming more and more evident. Daily, the fetuses thrown into hospital garbage cans pile up. There are some more in garbage drums elsewhere. More and more women submit to a treatment called "interruption of pregnancy" or to a "regularization of the menstrual flow", without ever facing the question whether such treatments involve abortion or not.

Clearly, even where strict laws against abortion exist, it is easy enough to get around the law. Even where moral norms against abortion are generally accepted insidious practices cosmetized by "nice language" undermine resistance to immorality.

Why is abortion getting wider support? Sometimes it is the last-ditch stand of birth-control propagators who see their methods (which initially did not include abortion), fall much short of expectations. Sometimes it is the forefront of women liberationists, who claim that a woman has an absolute say on what to do with her body (of which, they claim, the fetus is just a part).

Most of the time — for people who are afraid of a child out of wedlock, or evidence of infidelity, or financial hardships, or the end of a carefree life — abortion is simply the easy way out of a personal problem that threatens to diminish or destroy the meaning of one's life.

If, therefore, we want to combat abortion, it is not enough to insist on law and custom. We must go to the roots of the problem. On one hand we must minimize the factors responsible for unwanted pregnancies: the poverty of the masses; deficient education on sex, love, courtship and marriage.

On the other hand, we must maximize our efforts to instill a christian sense of values, of discipline and responsibility among our people, especially the young. In a word, we must go all out to uplift Christian life.

The rise of abortion is only a symptom of the fall of Christian life. Perhaps we should thank the abortion movement for waking us up to the real situation of Christian life today: it is far from that "abundant life" that Jesus Christ came to give mankind (John 10:10).

The only way to ensure the fall of the abortion movement is to give a strong witness to the fullness of life that the Risen Christ has made possible for us.

## In This Issue

Lent, Abortion, Form Criticism, Total Salvation, may seem to be disparate themes. But they all have the common thread of CRITICISM taken in the good sense of the word.

Lent, according to the **Address of the Holy Father**, is the appropriate time for us to take a critical look at our relationship with the poor. Do we simply accept the fact that they are "with us" — like a burden we have to carry? Or do we try to be "with them" — in the sense of becoming their partners in a fight against injustice? The presupposition of this question is the truth, arrived at after a critical look at the distribution of wealth today, that the poor masses of the modern world are the victims of institutionalized injustice established and sustained by the greed of the rich. The Pope refrains from speaking in such strong terms. He takes a more conciliatory course. But he clearly exhorts Christians to be with Christ, in the side of the poor, in the effort "to build a better world — a more just world". To the rich, the Pope speaks of "self-denial". The rich man must give "of his substance rather than of his surplus" in order to give witness to solidarity with Christ and the poor.

The Philippine Bishops invite our attention to the fact that "our average per capita income is only about P3.00 a day" and that "for 70% of our people poverty has become a way of life". They call on each Christian to "analyze the root causes of misery — not only in terms of individual selfishness, but in terms of socio-economic, political and religious structures that may be causing, or maintaining, these injustices." To provide an appropriate remedy to these ills, the Bishops have launched **ALAY KAPWA 1975**.

The **Abortion Issue** today deserves a critical look. The modern advances of anthropology and health sciences are being mustered against the Church's stand on the inviolability of life from the moment a human ovum is fertilized by a sperm.

We take this opportunity to thank Auxiliary Bishop Alberto Piamonte, of Jaro, for making the **Pastoral Letter on Family Life** available to our readers. For the excellent article on **The Abortion Movement** by Cormac Burke we thank the Makiling Conference Center of Calamba, Laguna.

**Form Criticism** of the Gospels warns us not to adopt the naiveté of those who think of the evangelical accounts as journalistic or simply descriptive narratives. In fact, in the process of transmitting the episodes of Christ's works and the collections of his words, the early Christian communities adapted them to their situations. It is in this form, further modified by redactional touches, that the Evangelists make known to us the life and doctrine of Jesus Christ. Professor Balajadia helps our readers adopt this critical standpoint.

Last but not least, we mention as worthy of special interest the article of Fr. Abesamis on **Total Salvation**. He invites us to a critical rethinking of our idea of salvation, so that we would strive not only for partial salvation (of the soul; from sin), but for total salvation (of man as a person; from all evil including disease, hunger, poverty, etc).

The ability to make sound judgments is indispensable in our search for truth. We hope this issue of the Boletín will help our readers exercise and improve this ability.

## ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH AT THE BEGINNING OF LENT 1975

Dear sons and daughters,

"The poor you always have with you" (Jn 12:8). These words of Christ to the Apostles are full of meaning. It almost sounds as though the efforts of Christian charity and human justice were destined to be always defeated. And would not an overall view of our times seem to confirm this? Even though we appear to have all the means of fighting poverty, we still hear of wars, famines and disasters. But for the Christian the fact that such situations continually recur does not mean that they are inevitable. The Christian rather understands the words of Jesus in the sense that none of his followers can ignore the fact that Jesus identified himself with the poor. Until the end of time, the poor are "with" Jesus. They are his partners, his companions, his brothers and sisters. The Christian, precisely because he is a Christian, must take his place beside the destitute. He must give of himself to assist them in their immediate needs. He must commit himself to helping, in many different ways, to build a better world — a more just world.

Lent is an appropriate time for this exercise of self-denial, because it reminds Christians who they are. It puts them on their guard against the satisfaction of a comfortable existence and against the temptations of living in abundance. In this Holy Year, which is dedicated to reconciliation, each individual is challenged by what reconciliation implies: giving and sharing within the human family. If each one lets his brothers and sisters come into his own life, if he shares with them of his substance rather than of his surplus, then he overcomes many obstacles to reconciliation and attains renewal through real detachment.

This Year of Jubilee requires of us a witness of complete solidarity with those with whom Jesus particularly identified himself. It will be one of the most significant proofs that we can give to our brothers and sisters that this year is "Holy" for all mankind.

Yes, this is what we ask of you today at the beginning of Lent — a genuine solidarity, a practical solidarity with Christ's poor — and we ask it of you in the name of Jesus. And with deep affection for all of you, our sons and daughters throughout the world, we bless you all: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

# **LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES**

## **ON ALAY KAPWA 1975**

To the People of God:

This year we shall celebrate Lent with something new. We are launching, for the first time in the history of the Philippines, a National Lenten Action Program. It is called: **ALAY KAPWA** — offering to our neighbor.

Of course not everything will be new. Every year we have been celebrating Lent in a spirit of intensified self-sacrifice. This has been of value. But perhaps we tend to emphasize self control for its own sake. Often we are gloomy about making sacrifices.

This Lenten Action Program, in 1975, is a nationwide, intensive renewal. It reminds us that sacrifice finds its fullest meaning in service to our fellowmen.

Christ our Lord taught the love of God through love of neighbor. When he was asked: "Who is my neighbor?" — he told the story of a man left in a ditch by the road. A kindly stranger came to his rescue.

Christ taught this lesson also by coming into this world, by his suffering and death, that we may live.

He came among us not to be served, but to serve! And it is on our service to others that he will judge us on the last day.

We in the Philippines are grateful for the privilege of being the only Christian nation in the East. Yet we suffer from a serious inequality in the distribution of land, of wealth, and of power. Unemployment and underemployment stare us in the face.

The City of Manila alone has more than a million squatters. Our average per capita income is only about ₱3 a day. For 70% of our people poverty has become a way of life.

Thus, we have to admit personal and collective failure to share our goods among our people.

For this reason, our Lenten Action Program has been called: **ALAY KAPWA** — offering to our neighbor. It asks us to look around and identify our neighbor. Who are the people who most need our help?



From this awareness we are asked to reflect on the reasons for this. Why are they poor, lonely, homeless, jobless, hungry, in rags, beggars, squatters?

This is a call to analyze the root causes of misery — not only in terms of individual selfishness, but in terms of socio-economic, political and religious structures that may be causing, or maintaining, these injustices.

Finally, we must ask the personal and challenging questions: "What should I do about this? What can I share, with my neighbor, of God's gifts to me — my time, my talent, my treasure. Am I not merely the steward, the caretaker, the manager of God's gifts? Do I have the right to have more than I need when others around me are in dire poverty? Is it not a duty of love to share with others?"

We invite everyone — rich and poor, old and young, employers and employees — to turn our Lenten penance, this year, into occasions to serve our neighbor. And let us do so in joy, not in sadness, "for it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned, in dying that we are born to eternal life." Lent culminates not on Good Friday, but on Easter Sunday — not in death, but in resurrection!

To respond to the Church's call for Renewal and Reconciliation during this Holy Year, let us renew our Christian commitment to love our neighbor — not merely in words but in deeds — by sharing our time, talent and treasure with others.

May this Lent bring reconciliation between hostile and opposing factions, between the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor. May it bring us to share in the new life of the risen Christ, for "if we die with him, we shall also live with him."

May the example of Mary who "stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord (Vatican II L.G. 55) be our inspiration in loving Christ her Son in the "least of his brothers and sisters". Mag-Alay-Kapwa tayong lahat!

God bless you!

Your Pastors in Christ,

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines

(Sgd.) + JULIO CARDINAL ROSALES  
President

# **DECLARATION ON PROCURED ABORTION**

**By the Sacred Congregation for the**

**Doctrine of the Faith**

## **I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The problem of procured abortion and of its possible legal liberalization has become more or less everywhere the subject of impassioned discussions. These debates would be less grave were it not a question of human life, a primordial value, which must be protected and promoted. Everyone understands this, although many look for reasons, even against all evidence, to promote the use of abortion. One cannot but be astonished to see a simultaneous increase of unqualified protests against the death penalty and every form of war and the vindication of the liberalization of abortion, either in its entirety or in ever broader indications. The Church is fully conscious of the fact that it belongs to her vocation to defend man against everything that could disintegrate or lessen his dignity to remain silent on such a topic. Because the Son of God became man, there is no man who is not his brother in humanity and who is not called to become a Christian in order to receive salvation from him.

2. In many countries the public authorities which resist the liberalization of abortion laws are the object of powerful pressures aimed at leading them to this goal. This, it is said, would violate no one's conscience, for each individual would be left free to follow his own opinion, while nobody would be allowed to impose his own on others. Ethical pluralism is claimed to be a natural consequence of ideological pluralism. There is, however, a great difference between the one and the other, for action affects the interests of others more quickly than does mere opinion. Moreover, one can never claim freedom of opinion as a pretext for attacking the rights of others, most especially the right to life.

3. Numerous Christian lay people, especially doctors, but also parents' associations, statesmen, or leading figures in posts of responsibility have vigorously reacted against this propaganda campaign. Above all, many episcopal conferences and many bishops acting in

their own name have judged it opportune to remind the faithful without ambiguity of the traditional doctrine of the Church.<sup>1</sup> With a striking convergence these documents admirably emphasize an attitude of respect for life which is at the same time human and Christian. Nevertheless it has happened that several of these documents here or there have encountered reservation or even opposition.

4. Charged with the promotion and the defence of faith and morals in the universal Church,<sup>2</sup> the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith proposes to recall this teaching in its essential aspects to all the faithful. Thus, in showing the unity of the Church, it will conform by the authority proper to the Holy See what the bishops have opportunely undertaken. It hopes that all the faithful, including those who might have been unsettled by the controversies and new opinions, will understand that it is not a question of opposing one opinion to another, but of transmitting to the faithful a constant teaching of the supreme Magisterium, which teaches moral norms in the light of faith.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore clear that this Declaration necessarily entails a grave obligation for the consciences of the faithful.<sup>4</sup> May God deign to enlighten also all men who strive with their whole heart to "act in truth" (Jn. 3:21).

## II

### IN THE LIGHT OF FAITH

5. "Death was not God's doing, he takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living" (Wis 1:13). Certainly God has created beings who have only one lifetime and physical death cannot be absent from the world of those with a bodily existence. But what is above all willed is life; everything in the visible universe has been made for man, who is the image of God and the world's crowning glory (cf. Gen 1:26-28). On the human level, "it was the devil's envy that brought death into the world" (Wis 2:24). Introduced by sin,

<sup>1</sup> A certain number of bishops' documents are to be found in G. Caprile, *Non Uccidere. II Magistero della Chiesa sull'aborto*. Part II, pp. 47-300, Rome 1973.

<sup>2</sup> *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, III, 1 29. Cf. *ibid.*, 31 (AAS 59 [1967], p. 897). "On the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith depend all the questions which are related to faith and morals or which are bound up with the faith."

<sup>3</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 12 (AAS 57 [1965], pp. 16-17). The present Declaration does not envisage all the questions which can arise in connection with abortion; it is for theologians to examine and discuss them. Only certain basic principles are here recalled which must be of Catholic doctrine for all Christians.

<sup>4</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, 25 (AAS 57 [1965], pp. 29-31).

death remains bound up with it: death is the sign and fruit of sin. But there is no triumph for death. Confirming the truth of the Resurrection, the Lord proclaims in the Gospel: "God is God, not of the dead, but of the living" (Mt 22:32). And death like sin will be definitively defeated by resurrection in Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-27). Thus we understand that human life, even on this earth, is precious. Infused by the Creator,<sup>5</sup> life is again taken back by him (cf. Gen 2:7; Wis 15:11). It remains under his protection: man's blood cries out to him (cf. Gen 4:10) and he will demand an account of it, "for in the image of God man was made" (Gen 9:5-6). The commandment of God is formal: "You shall not kill" (Ex 20:13). Life is at the same time a gift and a responsibility. It is received as a "talent" (cf. Mt 25:14-30); it must be put to proper use. In order that life may bring forth fruit, many tasks are offered to man in this world and he must not shirk them. More important still, the Christian knows that eternal life depends on what, with the grace of God, he has done during his life on earth.

6. The tradition of the Church has always held that human life must be protected and favoured from the beginning, just as at the various stages of its development. Opposing the morals of the Greco-Roman world, the Church of the first centuries insisted on the difference that exists on this point between those morals and Christian morals. In the *Didaché* it is clearly said: "You shall not kill by abortion the fruit of the womb and you shall not murder the infant already born".<sup>6</sup> Athenagoras emphasizes that Christians consider as murders those women who take medicines to procure an abortion; he condemns the killers of children, including those still living in their mother's womb, where they are considered to be already "the object of God's care".<sup>7</sup>

7. In the course of history, the Fathers of the Church, her Pastors and her Doctors have taught the same doctrine — the

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<sup>5</sup> The authors of Scripture do not make any philosophical observations on when life begins but they speak of the period of life which precedes birth as being the object of God's attention: he creates and forms the human being, as it were moulding him with his hand. It would seem that this theme finds expression for the first time in Jr. 1:5. It appears in many other texts. Cf. Is. 49:13; 46:3; Jb. 10:8-12; Ps. 22:10, 71-6, 139:13. In the Gospel we read in Luke 1:44: "For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy".

<sup>6</sup> *Didaché Apostolorum*, V, 2: ed. Funk. *Patres Apostolici*, I, 17; *The Epistle of Barnabas*, XIX, 5 uses the same expressions (cf. Funk, *o. c.*, I, 91-93).

<sup>7</sup> Athenagoras, *A Plea on behalf of Christians*, 35 (PG 6, 970; S. C. 3, pp. 166-167). One may also consult the *Epistle to Diognetus*, V, 6 (Funk, *o. c.* I, 399; S. C. 33, 63), where it says of Christians: "They procreate children, but they do not reject the foetus".

various opinions on the infusion of the spiritual soul did not introduce any doubt about the illicitness of abortion. It is true that in the Middle Ages, when the opinion was generally held that the spiritual soul was not present until after the first few weeks, a distinction was made in the evaluation of the sin and the gravity of penal sanctions. Excellent authors allowed for this first period more lenient case solutions, which however they rejected for the following periods of pregnancy. But it was never denied at that time that procured abortion, even during the first days, was objectively a grave fault. This condemnation was in fact unanimous. Among the many documents it is sufficient to recall certain ones. The first Council of Mainz in 847 reconsiders the penalties against abortion which had been established by preceding Councils. It decided that the most rigorous penance would be imposed on women who "kill their offspring or who procure the elimination from the womb of the fruit conceived".<sup>8</sup> The Decree of Gratian reports the following words of Pope Stephen V: "That person is a murderer who causes to perish by abortion what has been conceived".<sup>9</sup> Saint Thomas the Common Doctor of the Church, teaches that abortion is a grave sin against the natural law.<sup>10</sup> At the time of the Renaissance Pope Sixtus V condemned abortion with the greatest severity.<sup>11</sup> A century later Innocent XI rejected the propositions of certain lax canonists who sought to excuse an abortion procured before the moment accepted by some as the moment of the spiritual animation of the new being.<sup>12</sup> In our days the recent Roman Pontiffs have proclaimed the same doctrine with the greatest clarity. Pius XI explicitly answered the most serious objections.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Canon 21 (Mansi, 14, p. 909). Cf. Council of Elvira, canon 63 (Mansi, 2, p. 16) and the Council of Ancyra, canon 21 (*ibid.*, 519). See also the decree of Gregory III regarding the penance to be imposed upon those who are culpable of this crime (Mansi 12, 292, c. 17).

<sup>9</sup> Gratian, *Concordantia Discordantium Canonum*, C. 2, q. 5, c. 20. During the Middle Ages appeal was often made to the authority of Saint Augustine who wrote as follows in regard to this matter in *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentiis*, c. 15: "Sometimes this sexually indulgent cruelty or this cruel sexual indulgence goes so far as to procure potions which produce sterility. If the desired result is not achieved, the mother terminates the life and expels the foetus which was in her womb in such a way that the child dies before having lived or, if the baby was living already in its mother's womb, it is killed before being born" (PL 44, 423-424; CSEL 42, 230. Cf. the Decree of Gratian, C. 32, q. 2, c. 7).

<sup>10</sup> In IV *Sententiarum*, dist. 31, exposition of the text.

<sup>11</sup> Constitution *Effraenatum* of 1588 (*Bullarium Romanum*, V, I, pp. 25-27; *Fontes Iuris Canonici*, I, no. 165, pp. 308-311).

<sup>12</sup> Dz-Sch. 2134 (11884). Cf. also the Constitution *Apostolicae Sedis* of Pius IX (*Acta Pii IX*, V, 55-72; AAS 5 [1869], pp. 287-312; *Fontes Iuris Canonici*, II, n. 552, pp. 24-31).

<sup>13</sup> Encyclical *Casti Connubii*, AAS 22 (1930), pp. 562-565; Dz-Sch. 371-9-21 (2242-2244).

Pius XII clearly excluded all direct abortion, that is, abortion which is either an end or a means.<sup>14</sup> John XXIII recalled the teaching of the Fathers on the sacred character of life "which from its beginning demands the action of God the Creator".<sup>15</sup> Most recently, the Second Vatican Council, presided over by Paul VI, has most severely condemned abortion: "Life must be safeguarded with extreme care from conception; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes".<sup>16</sup> The same Paul VI, speaking on this subject on many occasions, has not hesitated to declare that this teaching of the Church "has not changed and is unchangeable".<sup>17</sup>

### III

#### IN THE ADDITIONAL LIGHT OF REASON

8. Respect for human life is not just a Christian obligation. Human reason is sufficient to impose it on the basis of the analysis of what a human person is and should be. Constituted by a rational nature, man is a personal subject, capable of reflecting on himself and of determining his acts and hence his own destiny: he is free. He is consequently master of himself, or rather, because this takes place in the course of time, he has the means of becoming so: this is his task. Created immediately by God, man's soul is spiritual and therefore immortal. Hence man is open to God; he finds his fulfilment only in him. But man lives in the community of his equals; he is nourished by interpersonal communication with men in the indispensable social setting. In the fact of society and other men, each human person possesses himself, he possesses life and different goods; he has these as a right. It is this that strict justice demands from all in his regard.

9. Nevertheless, temporal life lived in this world is not identified with the person. The person possesses as his own a level of

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<sup>14</sup> The statements of Pius XII are explicit, precise and numerous; they would require a whole study on their own. We quote only this one from the Discourse to the Saint Luke Union of Italian Doctors any act directly tending to destroy it is illicit, whether such destruction is intended as an end in itself or only as a means to an end, whether it is a question of life in the embryonic stage or in a stage of full development or already in its final stages" (Discourses and Radiomessages, VI, p. 191).

<sup>15</sup> Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, AAS 53 (1961), p. 447.

<sup>16</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, 51 Cf. 27 (AAS 58 [1966], p. 1072; cf. 1047).

<sup>17</sup> Address *Salutiamo con paterna effusione*, 9 December 1972, AAS 64 (1972), p. 777. Among the witnesses of this unchangeable doctrine one will recall the declaration of the Holy Office, condemning direct abortion (AAS 17 [1884], pp. 555-556; 22 [1888-1890], 748; Dz-Sch. 3258 [1890]).

life that is more profound and that cannot end. Bodily life is a fundamental good; here below it is the condition for all other goods. But there are higher values for which it could be legitimate or even necessary to be willing to expose oneself to the risk of losing bodily life. In a society of persons the common good is for each individual an end which he must serve and to which he must subordinate his particular interest. But it is not his last end and, from this point of view, it is society which is at the service of the person, because the person will not fulfil his destiny except in God. The person can be definitively subordinated only to God. Therefore man can never be treated simply as a means to be disposed of in order to obtain a higher end.

10. In regard to the mutual rights and duties of the person and of society, it belongs to moral teaching to enlighten consciences, it belongs to the law to specify and organize external behaviour. There is precisely a certain number of rights which society is not in a position to grant since these rights precede society but society has the function to preserve and to enforce them. These are the greater part of those which are today called "human rights" and which our age boasts of having formulated.

11. The first right of the human person is his life. He has other goods and some are more precious, but this one is fundamental — the condition of all the others. Hence it must be protected above all others. It does not belong to society, nor does it belong to public authority in any form to recognize this right for some and not for others: all discrimination is evil, whether it be founded on race, sex, colour or religion. It is not recognition by another that constitutes this right. This right is antecedent to its recognition; it demands recognition and it is strictly unjust to refuse it.

12. Any discrimination based on the various stages of life is no more justified than any other discrimination. The right to life remains complete in an old person, even one greatly weakened, it is not lost by one who is incurably sick. The right to life is no less to be respected in the small infant just born than in the mature person. In reality, respect for human life is called for from the time that the process of generation begins. From the time that the ovum is fertilized, a life is begun which is neither that of the father nor of the mother; it is rather the life of a new human being with his own growth. He will never become human if he were not human already.

13. To this constant evidence — perfectly independent of the discussions on the moment of animation<sup>18</sup> — modern genetic science

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<sup>18</sup> This declaration expressly leaves aside the question of the moment when the spiritual soul is infused. There is not a unanimous tra-

brings valuable confirmation. It has demonstrated that, from the first instant there is established the programme of what this living being will be: a man, this individual man with his characteristic aspects already well determined. Right from fertilization is begun the adventure of a human life, and each of its capacities requires time — a rather lengthy time — to find its place and to be in a position to act. The least that can be said is that present science, in its most evolved state, does not give any substantial support to those who defend abortion. Moreover, it is not up to biological sciences to make a definitive judgment on questions which are properly philosophical and moral, such as the moment when a human person is constituted or the legitimacy of abortion. From a moral point of view this is certain: even if a doubt existed concerning whether the fruit of conception is already a human person, it is objectively a grave sin to dare to risk murder. "He too is a man who will be a man".<sup>19</sup>

#### IV

#### REPLY TO SOME OBJECTIONS

14. Divine law and natural reason, therefore, exclude all right to the direct killing of an innocent man. However, if the reasons given to justify an abortion were always manifestly evil and valueless the problem would not be so dramatic. The gravity of the problem comes from the fact that in certain cases, perhaps in quite a considerable number of cases, by denying abortion one endangers important values to which it is normal to attach great value, and which may sometimes even seem to have priority. We do not deny these very great difficulties. It may be a serious question of health, sometimes of life or death, for the mother it may be the burden represented by an additional child, especially if there are good reasons to fear that the child will be abnormal or retarded; it may be the

dition on this point and authors are as yet in disagreement. For some it dates from the first instant, for others it could not at least precede implantation. It is not within the competence of science to decide between these views, because the existence of an immortal soul is not a question in its fields. It is a philosophical problem from which our moral affirmation remains independent for two reasons: 1) supposing a belated animation, there already exists in the foetus an incipient *human* life, biologically detectable, preparing for and calling for a soul in which the nature received from the parents is completed; 2) it suffices that this presence of the soul be *probable* (and one can never prove the contrary) in order that the taking of life mean putting oneself in danger of killing a man, not only waiting for, but already in possession of his soul.

<sup>19</sup> Tertullian, cf. footnote 8.



## DECLARATION ON ABORTION 95

importance attributed in different classes of society to considerations of honour or dishonour, of loss of social standing, and so forth. But it must be clearly stated that none of these reasons can ever objectively confer the right to dispose of another's life, even when that life is only beginning. With regard to the future unhappiness of the child, no one, not even the father or mother, can act as its substitute, even if it is still in the embryonic stage, to choose in the child's name death instead of life. The child itself, when grown up, will never have the right to choose suicide no more may its parents choose death for the child while it is not of an age to decide for itself. For life is too fundamental a value to be weighed against even very serious disadvantages.<sup>20</sup>

15. The movement for the emancipation of women, in so far as it seeks essentially to free them from all unjust discrimination, is on perfectly sound ground.<sup>21</sup> In the different forms of cultural background there is a great deal to be done in this regard. But one cannot change nature. Nor can one exempt women, any more than men, from what nature demands of them. Furthermore, all publicly recognized freedom is always limited by the certain rights of others.

16. The same must be said of the claim to sexual freedom. If by this expression one is to understand the mastery progressively acquired by reason and by authentic love over instinctive impulse, without diminishing pleasure but keeping it in its proper place — and in this sphere this mastery is the only authentic freedom — then there is nothing to object to. But this kind of freedom will always be careful not to violate justice. If, on the contrary, one is to understand that men and women are "free" to seek sexual pleasure to the point of satiety, without taking into account any law or the essential orientation of sexual life to its fruits of fertility,<sup>22</sup> then this idea has nothing Christian in it. It is even unworthy of man. In any case it does not confer any right to dispose of human

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<sup>20</sup> Cardinal Villot, Secretary of State, wrote on 10 October 1973 to Cardinal Döpfner, regarding the protection of human life: "(Die Kirche) kann jedoch zur Behebung solcher Notsituationen weder empfängnisverhütende Mittel noch erst recht nicht die Abtreibung als sittlich erlaubt erkennen" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, German edition, 26 October 1973, p. 3).

<sup>21</sup>Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, AAS 55 (1963), n. 267 f.; Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 29; Address of Paul VI, *Salutiamo*, AAS 64 (1972), p. 779.

<sup>22</sup>*Gaudium et Spes*, 48; AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1048-49: "Indole autem sua naturali, ipsum institutum matrimonii amorque coniugalis ad procreationem et educationem prolis ordinantur, iisque veluti suo fastigio cononantur". Also paragraph 50: *l. c.*, p. 1070: "Matrimonium et amor coniugalis indole sua ad prolem procreadam et educandam ordinantur".

life — even if embryonic — or to suppress it on the pretext that it is burdensome.

17. Scientific progress is opening to technology — and will still more open — the possibility of delicate interventions, the consequences of which can be very serious, for good as well as for evil. These are achievements of the human spirit which in themselves are admirable. But technology can never be independent of the criterion of morality, since technology exists for man and must respect his finality. Just as no one has the right to use nuclear power indiscriminately for every possible purpose, so no one can legitimately manipulate human life in every possible direction; all use of technology must be at the service of man, so as better to ensure the functioning of his normal abilities, to prevent or to cure his illness, to contribute to his full human advancement. It is true that the evolution of technology makes early abortion more and more easy, but the moral evaluation is in no way modified because of this.

18. We know what seriousness the problem of the regulation of births can assume for some families and for some countries. That is why the last Council and subsequently the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* of 25 July 1968 spoke of "responsible parenthood".<sup>23</sup> What must be said again with emphasis, as we pointed out in the conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* and in other papal documents, is that never, under any pretext, may abortion be resorted to, regulating births.<sup>24</sup> The damage to moral values is always a greater evil for the common good than any disadvantage in the economic or demographic order.

## V

### MORALITY AND LAW

19. The moral discussion is being accompanied more or less everywhere by serious juridical debates. There is no country where legislation does not forbid and punish murder. Furthermore, many countries had specifically applied this condemnation and these penalties to the particular case of procured abortion. In these days

<sup>23</sup> *Gaudium et Spes*, 50-51 AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1070-73; Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, 10 (AAS 60 [1968], p. 4873. Responsible parenthood supposes the use of only morally licit methods of birth regulation. Cf. *Humanae Vitae*, 14 (*ibid.*, p. 490).

<sup>24</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 87, AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1010-11; Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, 37: AAS 59 (1967), pp. 275-6; Address to the United Nations AAS 57 (1965), p. 883. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, AAS 53 (1961), pp. 445-448.

## DECLARATION ON ABORTION 97

a vast body of opinions petitions the liberalization of this latter prohibition. There already exists a fairly general tendency which seeks to limit as far as possible all restrictive legislation, especially when it seems to touch upon private life. The argument of pluralism is also used. Although many citizens, in particular the Catholic faithful, condemn abortion, many others hold that it is licit, at least as a lesser evil. Why must the latter be forced to follow an opinion which they do not accept especially in a country where they are in the majority? In addition it is apparent that, where they still exist, the laws condemning abortion appear difficult to apply. The crime has become too common for it to be punished every time, and the public authorities often find that it is wiser to close their eyes to it. But the preservation of a law which is not applied is always to the detriment of authority and of all the other laws. It must be added that clandestine abortion puts women who have recourse to it in the most serious dangers for their future fertility and also often for their very lives. Even if the legislator continues to regard abortion as an evil, may he not propose to restrict its damage?

20. These arguments and other in addition that are adduced from varying quarters are not valid for the legalization of abortion. It is true that civil law cannot cover the whole field of morality or punish all evils. No one expects it to do so. It must often tolerate what is in fact a lesser evil, in order to avoid a greater one. One must, however, be attentive to what a change in legislation can represent. Many will take as authorization what is perhaps only the abstention from punishment. And, in the present case, this very renunciation seems at the very least to admit that the legislator no longer considers abortion a crime against human life, since murder is still always severely punished. It is true that it is not the task of the law to choose between points of view or to impose one view or to impose one rather than another. But the life of the child takes precedence over all opinions. One cannot invoke freedom of thought to take life away from the child.

21. The role of law is not to record what is done, but to help in promoting improvement. It is at all times the task of the State to preserve each person's rights and to protect the weakest. In order to do so the State will have to right many wrongs. The law is not obliged to punish everything, but it cannot act contrary to a law which is deeper and more majestic than any human law: the natural law engraved in men's hearts by the Creator as a norm which reason clarifies and strives to formulate properly, and which one must always struggle to understand better, but which it is always wrong to contradict. Human law can abstain from punishment, but it cannot make right what would be opposed to the natural

law, for this opposition suffices to give the assurance that a law is no longer a law.

22. It must in any case be clearly understood that whatever may be laid down by civil law in this matter, man can never obey a law which is in itself immoral, and such is the case of a law which would admit in principle the liceity of abortion. Nor can he take part in a propaganda campaign in favour of such a law, or vote for it. Moreover, he may not collaborate in its application. It is, for instance, inadmissible that doctors or nurses should find themselves obliged to cooperate closely in abortions and have to choose between the law of God and their professional situation.

23. On the contrary it is the task of law to pursue a reform of society and of conditions of life in all milieux, starting with the most deprived, so that always and everywhere it may be possible to give every child coming into this world a welcome worthy of a person. Subsidies for families and for unmarried mothers, grants for children, a statute for illegitimate children and reasonable arrangements for adoption — a whole positive policy must be put into force so that there will always be a concrete honourable and possible alternative to abortion.

## VI

### CONCLUSION

24. Following one's conscience in obedience to the law of God is not always the easy way. One must not fail to recognize the weight of the sacrifices and the burdens which it can impose. Heroism is sometimes called for in order to remain faithful to the requirements of the divine law. Nevertheless, it must be clearly stated that the path of true progress of the human person passes through this constant fidelity to a conscience maintained in uprightness and truth; it is likewise necessary to exhort all those who are able to do so lighten the burdens still crushing so many men and women, families and children, living in very difficult and almost desperate conditions.

25. A Christian's outlook cannot be limited to the horizon of life in this world. He knows that during the present life another one is being prepared, one of such importance that it is in its light that judgments must be made.<sup>25</sup> From this viewpoint there is no

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<sup>25</sup> Cardinal Villot, Secretary of State, wrote to the World Congress of Catholic Doctors held in Barcelona, 26 May 1974: "Por lo que a la vida humana se refiere, esta no es ciertamente unívoca; más bien se podría decir que es un haz de vidas. No se puede reducir, sin mutilárlas

## DECLARATION ON ABORTION 99

absolute misfortune here below, not even the terrible sorrow of bringing up a handicapped child. This is the contradiction proclaimed by the Lord: "Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted" (Mt 5:5). To measure happiness by the absence of sorrow and misery in this world is to turn one's back on the Gospel.

26. But this does not mean that one can remain indifferent to these sorrows and miseries. Every man and woman with feeling, and certainly every Christian, must be ready to do what he can to remedy them. This is the law of charity, of which the first pre-occupation must always be the establishment of justice. One can never approve of abortion; but it is above all necessary to combat its causes. This includes political action, which will be in particular the task of the law. But it is necessary at the same time to influence morality and to do everything possible to help families, mothers and children. Considerable progress in the service of life has been accomplished by medical science. One can hope that even greater progress will be made, in accordance with the vocation of doctors, which is not to suppress life but to care for it and favour it as much as possible. It is equally desirable that, in suitable institutions, or, in their absence, in the outpouring of Christian generosity and charity every form of assistance should be developed.

27. There will be no effective action on the level of morality unless at the same time an effort is made on the level of ideas. The way of thinking or, still more, the attitude of mind which considers fertility as an evil cannot be allowed to spread without contradiction. It is true that not all forms of culture are equally in favour of large families. Such families come up against much greater difficulties in an industrial and urban civilization. Thus the Church has in recent times insisted on the idea of responsible parenthood, the exercise of true human and Christian prudence. Such prudence would not be authentic if it did not include generosity. It must preserve awareness of the grandeur of the task of cooperating with the Creator in the transmission of life, which gives new members to society and new children to the Church. Christ's Church has the fundamental solicitude of protecting and favouring life. She certainly thinks before all else of the life which Christ came to bring: "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full." (Jn 10:10). But life at all its levels comes from God, and bodily life is for man the indispensable beginning. In this life on earth sin has introduced, multiplied and made harder to bear suffering and death.

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gravemente, las zonas de su ser, que, en su estrecha dependencia é interacción están ordenadas las unas a las otras: zona corporal, zona afectiva, zona mental, y se transfiere del alma donde la vida divina, recibida por la gracia, puede desplegarse mediante los dones del Espíritu Santo" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 May 1974).

But in taking their burden upon himself Jesus Christ has transformed them: for whoever believes in him, suffering and death itself become instruments of resurrection. Hence Saint Paul can say: "I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us" (Rom 8:18). And, if one wishes to make this comparison, one may add with him: "Yes, the troubles which are soon over, though they weigh little, train us for the carrying of a weight of eternal glory which is out of all proportion to them" (2 Cor 4:17).

The Supreme Pontiff Pope Paul VI, in an Audience granted to the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on 28 June 1974 has ratified this Declaration on Procured Abortion and has confirmed it and ordered it to be promulgated.

Given in Rome, at the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 18 November, the Commemoration of the Dedication of the Basilicas of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the year 1974.

**Franjo Card. Seper**  
Prefect

**Jérôme Hamer**  
Titular Archbishop of Lorium  
Secretary

### **CLARIFICATION OF THE CBCP REFERENDUM STATEMENT**

Reactions to the Statement issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines on the February 27 Referendum prompted the following clarification. "The CBCP Statement neither advocates nor condemns a Poll Boycott. As a matter of fact, the Bishops, in their Statement, took cognizance of those who are sincerely convinced that under martial law no referendum can be truly free adding that: 'Those who thus respect and follow their conscience to the point of being ready to suffer for it, deserve our respect in turn, however much we may disagree with their views.' On the other hand, the Bishops stated the view that in the present situation the coming referendum and participation therein can be meaningful 'with certain safeguards.'"

The clarification also stated that the CBCP Statement was not interference in politics. The Bishops spoke on a moral problem, namely, can participation in the February 27 referendum be a meaningful, moral act? The question admittedly has political implications but the Bishops had to take a stand because "churchmen are among the conscientious objectors to the referendum" and "conscientious objection to a government decree is a moral problem".

Interview with the Secretary of S. Congregation for the  
Doctrine of the Faith

**DECLARATION ON ABORTION:  
A RELIGIOUS, NOT POLITICAL ACT**

*Commenting on the interpretations given by some press organs of the recent Declaration of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on abortion, the Secretary of the Congregation, Mons. Jerome Hamer, spoke of the nature of the document and stressed its importance in the course of an interview broadcasted by the Vatican Radio on 6 December. The text is as follows:*

**Some newspapers have written that the declaration on abortion was an interference of the Church in a political discussion.**

This is completely wrong. The Declaration is essentially a religious act. It is a forceful reminder of the teaching of the Church on respect for life, a teaching founded on Scripture and Tradition. It is a question of respect for the life of the weakest and the most defenceless against the egoism of the strongest. We are here in the living essence of the Gospel. This religious act does, of course, have political repercussions. The Christian, whom we address in the first place, lives simultaneously in the Church and in the World. I would also add that it implies economic consequences. A doctor, for example, who refuses because of his convictions to practice abortion, deprives himself of a considerable income.

**The Declaration was approved at the end of June last but was made public only on 25 November. Some people have seen in this delayed publication the desire to intervene in the political debate that was going on at that moment in the French Parliament.**

To complete your question I would like to add that when the Declaration was published one debate was drawing to an end in a European country, two others were in progress elsewhere, one of which is still going on. Finally it is already announced that other debates are due to take place in the next few months. This shows how difficult it would have been to choose a date if such had been our intention. The Declaration, in fact, was published as soon as

it was ready, neither a day before or a day afterwards. Approved on 28 June last by the Holy Father with a precise list of amendments to be made, it was impossible to complete its finalization during the summer months when our collaborators — based in Rome and around the world — nearly all University lecturers, were scattered in so many places. The work further delayed by the postal crisis, was therefore ended after the University holidays and in part after the Synod. To this must be added the time needed to make translations and then for sending it to the various countries. I repeat then that the coincidence between the publication of the document and any political debate, is not intentional. I would like to add further, however, that if this non-intentional coincidence has led to greater interest in the Declaration in certain countries in which public opinion has become more sensitive to the problem, I do not regret it at all. What matters is that the voice of the Church should gain a hearing.

**One reads sometimes in the press that if the Church wishes to avoid abortion, she should permit the use of contraceptives.**

This argument does not stand up to examination. Those who practise abortion are often the very people who usually practise contraception but with unsuccessful results. Since no contraceptive is absolutely effective, in the case of a negative result recourse to abortion becomes almost normal for persons with what we might call a contraceptive mentality, that is, a firm resolution to avoid fecundation at all costs. It is this contraceptive mentality that must be combatted if it is intended to study the common problem of contraception and abortion in depth. This contraceptive mentality is a worrying phenomenon. It threatens, in fact, to destroy man by inverting the order of values in him. Willed by the Creator, sexuality has its place in any balanced view of man. But its place is not the first one. The public authorities have immense responsibility in this sector when they permit the development of a social atmosphere that is more and more erotic and consequently less and less human. Personally I am of the opinion that the Declaration on abortion is a contribution to the protection of man and his real dignity.



## PASTORAL LETTER ON ABORTION

My dear People of God in the Archdiocese of Manila:

Today is the first Sunday of Advent. And today, we start joyously awaiting the birth of the Child Jesus. Our joy is justified, for birth is a renewal of life.

But the joy we feel over the coming of the Christ Child is marred by reports that there is now a concerted effort by some groups to make the Filipino people accept abortion as a way to solve the population problem of the Philippines.

I need not tell you, my dear brothers and sisters, how disturbed I am over these reports. And I need not remind you that the Church has always had a deep respect for human life. That is why she has always condemned the practice of induced or procured abortion. That is why, Pope Paul VI declared not too long ago his stern opposition to abortion. He said: "Life must be safeguarded with extreme care; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes."

On the 18th of November, the Vatican issued another declaration reiterating its vigorous stand against procured abortion. The declaration has come at a very opportune time. For many nations of the world, in a determined attempt to limit the rate of population growth, are resorting more and more to induced or procured abortion. In many countries, abortion has been legalized, and there are indications that other countries, which still regard human life as sacred, are tending to reverse their position to permit the easy and legal termination of pregnancy.

As a Christian country, the Philippines has managed to preserve a respect for human life and most Filipinos quite properly condemn the practice of abortion. But our people are being subjected to an increasing pressure from advocates of abortion on the ground that it is the most effective way to control our population growth.

To counteract the natural abhorrence of our people against ending an innocent human life, they claim—even though they cannot prove it—that the unborn baby is not human yet. So it

can be killed with the same lack of compunction that we display when we kill an insect.

But I must tell you now, my dear People of God, that there is good scientific ground to assume that, from the moment of fertilization onwards, the life of a baby is human life. It is, from its very beginnings, distinctly and identifiably human. And it contains within it all it needs to reach adult human form.

Indeed, human life is like a continuous thread from conception to death, from the womb to the tomb. To deliberately break that thread and end that life is to arrogate unto ourselves a power that belongs only to God. To terminate a pregnancy is to put an end to innocent human life. And this must be condemned for what it is.

There are people, even though they would not dream of killing a person, who would unhesitatingly end the life of an unborn child. Why? Is it because the unborn child has no voice to raise in protest, no face on which to register pain, no identity it can claim, and no personality that can leave its imprint on our lives?

Is it less criminal to do away with the life of someone simply because that someone is not yet real to us because we have had no contact with him? It is the same human life, cut short at an earlier stage, but no less valuable and worthy of respect.

The common experience of mankind shows that societies which accept contraception — whether or not such contraception is recognized as licit by the Church — eventually undergo a change of values. And that change subsequently leads them to accept induced abortion also. And the acceptance of abortion eventually prepares the ground for the acceptance of euthanasia.

My dear People of God: We cannot, we must not, allow this to happen. As Christians, our duty is clear: it is to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. And the unborn children whose very existence is threatened by the advocates of abortion, are our neighbors.

As Christians, we recognize God's dominion over human life and we have an obligation to respect human life. These are some of the principles that the Vatican Declaration on Procured Abortion reiterates.

To all of us, let it be a warning and a reminder. A warning against the horrible consequences of killing innocent human life. And a reminder that we should have the courage and the vision to uphold our Christian values against the challenges that confront us.

As the document points out: "Life, at all its levels, comes from God, and bodily life is for man the indispensable beginning." Thus,

as Christians, it is our duty to protect life and to cherish it as the most precious gift from the Creator. Christ Himself said that He came "to give life, and to give it abundantly."

It is not ours — it can never be ours — to take away.

God bless you all. And remember, I love you very dearly.

† JAIME L. SIN, D.D.  
Archbishop of Manila

Manila, November 29, 1974

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## **JOINT PASTORAL LETTER OF THE BISHOPS OF WESTERN VISAYAS**

### **ON FAMILY LIFE**

Dear People of God in Western Visayas:

As your guides in the formation of your conscience, We wish to alert you to serious happenings in Western Visayas. We ask you to analyze and judge them in the light of your faith.

#### **Church's concern**

A sacred duty of married couples, among others, is to transmit life. This is a source of great joy. We realize this is accompanied with problems and difficulties. We cannot ignore these.

We wish to repeat very strongly that the basic concerns of the Church are:

1. Respect for life
2. Improvement of the quality of human life
3. Care of peoples
4. Respect for conscience, freedom and moral integrity.

#### **Government's concern**

We note these concerns are also shared by the government. Presidential Decree 79 and the acknowledged law of the country state in effect the following:

1. Respect for religious beliefs and values
2. Abortion is illegal and rejected.

The above principles are therefore our clear guidelines in solving the Population Problem in Western Visayas.

**Facts**

In their Pastoral Letter of Dec. 8, 1973, the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines noted, among other things, that there is going on in the country today in extensive and massive drive for population control to solve the population problem; that certain features of this program are dangerous; that the pills and IUD's are being promoted even if people consciously object; that government workers are required to meet a quota of acceptors under threat of salary decreases; that this tempts them to tamper with reports; relevant medical information on contraceptives is suppressed; and no sufficient medical protection and medical norms in the giving of pills and IUD's are provided; but that the most dangerous evil is that recently the Department of Justice has removed all legal impediments to contraceptive sterilization.

These conditions, according to statistics gathered, prevail in the Western Visayas. Added to these are the abominable crimes of sterilization and abortion which are openly endorsed, committed and sanctioned.

We notice that of late, there has been a subtle move to control the church program in the guise of integration and unification of all family planning programs in the country.

**Bishops' Reaction**

These are serious and disturbing signs. They militate against the dignity of the human person and the family. We cannot ignore these. We cannot, in conscience, allow them. We cannot be silent.

Therefore, with the full force of our moral authority, we deplore, we denounce and we condemn such practices as abominable, inhuman, unChristian and unFilipino.

**Endorsement**

While we lament this sad situation, we call your attention to the existing Family Life Programs in Western Visayas. Our Diocesan and parish Family Life Centers are offering these programs with emphasis on christian principles and values. We strongly endorse these Centers and its Regional Commission. We exhort the clergy, the Religious, the seminarians, and our lay people, especially doctors, nurses and midwives to participate in these programs and give their full support. We urge that sub-Centers be established in all parishes throughout the Region through the Diocesan Family Life Centers. This is the church's contribution to promote a truly human life among our people.

**Integration**

To be of greater benefit to our people, the Family Program should be integrated, when possible, with other diocesan-wide program, such as the Holy Year and the Alay Kapwa.

**Family Life Week**

To intensify Regional awareness and support for the Family Life Program, we endorse the holding of a Family Life Week in each diocese.

We earnestly pray that St. Joseph, Patron of Workers and Protector of the Holy Family, be the model for husbands; that Mary, the loving mother be an inspiration for wives; and that Jesus, the center of their mutual love and devotion, be our source of strength to value and respect all human life.

**THE BISHOPS OF WESTERN VISAYAS**

ARTEMIO G. CASAS, D.D. Archbishop of Jaro	ANTONIO F. FRONDOSA, D.D. Bishop of Capiz
ANTONIO Y. FORTICH, D.D. Bishop of Bacolod	CORNELIO DE WIT, D.D. Bishop of Antique
NICOLAS N. MONDEJAR, D.D. Bishop of Romblon	ALBERTO J. PIAMONTE, D.D. Auxiliary Bishop of Jaro

Feast of Our Lady of Candles 2 February 1975

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**Partial Statistics on Family Planning Methods Gathered by  
The Family Life Centers of Antique, Bacolod, Capiz  
And Iloilo, submitted by The Regional Family  
Life Commission to the Bishops of Western  
Visayas in preparation for their Joint  
Pastoral Letter on Family Life**

A. From two non-catholic clinics:	Pills	7,288	IUD	1,431
	IUD	684	Condom	834
	Rhythm	1,933	Foam Tabs.	351
	Condom	2,608	Aerosol Foam	31
	Foam	239	Diaphragm	1
	Others	38	Jelly	1
			Withdrawal	3
			Vasectomy	7
			Abdominal ligation	113
			Laprosopic Tubal ligation	11
T O T A L		17,789	Rhythm	44
B. From A Non-Catholic Hospital:			Injectables	3
	Pills	608	T O T A L	3,442

## C. From A Public Health Center:

Pills .....	177
IUD .....	23
Rhythm .....	59
Condom .....	204
Foam .....	2

TOTAL ..... 465

## D. Abortion (Unclassified — Induced, Procured, therapeutic, spontaneous) from a government hospital in Iloilo:

January .....	21
February .....	18
March .....	28
April .....	25

May .....	29
June .....	25
July .....	18
August .....	23
September .....	15
October .....	26
November .....	33
December .....	21

TOTAL ..... 282

## E. From the same Hospital:

Ligation .....	20
Hysterectomy .....	43
Pills .....	537
IUD .....	151
Condom .....	75
Neosampoon .....	24

TOTAL ..... 850

**PAULUS EPISCOPUS  
SERVUS SERVORUM DEI**

**AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM**

Maximopere optantibus ut christianorum fidelium coetibus quam aptissime consuleretur, visum est Nobis precibus esse accedendum Venerabilis Fratris Ioannis C. Sison, Archiepiscopi Novae Segobiae, qui, audito quid sentiret Episcoporum conferentia Insularum Philippinarum ab Apostolica Sedi petiit, ut e sua perampla alia excitaretur provincia ecclesiastica. Sententia igitur hoc super negotio accepta sive Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigliani, Archiepiscopi titulo Malianensis et in Insulis Philippinis Apostolici Nuntii, sive Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Praefecti Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, apostolica Nostra potestate haec, quae sequuntur decernimus et iubemus. **Dioecesim Tuguegaraoanam a provincia ecclesiastica Novae Segobiae separamus eamque ad gradum metropolitanarum Ecclesiarum attollimus**, factis iuribus et privilegiis congruis; cuius sacrorum Antistitem, Venerabilem nempe Fratrem **Theodulphum Domingo et Sabugal, Archiepiscopi dignitate decoramus**, item iuribus datis atque impositis obligationibus, quae ad Metropolitam pertinent. Constituta autem provincia his circumscriptionibus constabit: Tuguegaraoana tamquam metropolitana Sedes, tamquam vero suffraganeis dioecesi Ilaganensi, praelatura Batanensi et Babuyanensi ac praelatura Bayombongensi, quas ab ecclesiastica provincia Novae Segobiae subtrahimus. Haec, quae praescripsimus ad effectum adducat Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem diximus, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos, et congrua perfecti negotii documenta ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittat, de more signata sigilloque impressa.

Hanc vero Apostolicam Constitutionem nunc et in posterum efficacem esse et fore volumus, contrariis nihil obstantibus.

Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die vicesimo primo mensis Septembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

**JOANNES CARD. VILLOT**

Secretarius Status

**SEBASTIANUS CARD. BAGGIO**  
S. Congr. pro Episcopis Praefectus

Josephus Del Ton, Proton, Apost.  
Joannes Coppa, Proton, Apost.S.n.

# CAPSULE HISTORY OF ABORTION

by

Dexter Irisari

Abortion is as old as history. It is so widespread that few societies, past or present, have not known it.

Abortion may have originated in China. Its practice may be gleaned from a Chinese prescription for an abortifacient dating from approximately 2700 B.C. A Chinese herbal written five thousand years ago refers to mercury as an effective means of birth prevention.<sup>1</sup>

In ancient Greece, the Hippocratic Oath abjured abortion. In his writings, however, Hippocrates noted that he instructed a harpist to jump up and down violently — to get rid of her pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

Aristotle, the greatest of the Greek thinkers, favored abortion. He urged it on social and economic grounds. He once commented: "If it should happen among married people that a woman who already has the prescribed number of children become pregnant, then before she felt the life, the child should be driven from her."<sup>3</sup>

In the glorious days of the Roman Empire, abortion was preponderantly practiced. There were no legal enactments against it. The Romans had the option of ordering it for their wives and slaves. It was they who determined whether pregnancy was to be hindered or not. This attitude of the Romans must have stemmed from their belief that the fetus is part of the body of the woman and that she has the right to have it removed.

There were Roman personages, however, who were against abortion. Seneca, for one, extolled his mother, Helvia, for refusing to follow the Roman fashion of staving off birth to preserve a youthful figure.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Rosen (ed.), *Abortion In America*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> W D. Ross (ed.), *The Works Of Aristotle*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 1336b.



At the twilight of the Roman power, the Judeo-Christian ethics dominated man's attitude towards God, towards his fellowman, towards himself. It had all of the Western nations under its standards. It ruled the actions of the people. It provided for the ideals of their laws.

The Judeo-Christian ethics upheld the sanctity of human life. It considered abortion a crime, branding it as a pagan practice.

The Jews, it must be noted, were commanded by God to multiply. God promised to bless Abraham, their father, by making his seeds as numerous as the stars in the heavens.<sup>4</sup> Thus, women who induced abortions were severely punished by Jewish laws.

Nowadays, there are three essential types of abortion laws in the world. Their interpretations, however, vary from country to country. In Japan, Russia and in most of the socialist countries, abortion is allowed due to social conditions. For practical purposes, then, abortion is practiced on demand in these countries. In Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Iceland, the laws are liberalized. Even then, the problem of illegal abortion persists. In England, Western Europe and in South America, the laws remain stringent. But the practice of criminal abortion is rampant.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Herbert G. May and Bruce Metzger (eds.), *The Oxford Annotated Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> David T. Smith (ed.), *Abortion And The Law*, (Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 233.

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## RADIO VERITAS SEEKS YOUR COOPERATION

Father George Dion, O.M.I., new Director of Radio Veritas Home Service, makes the following appeal: "Radio Veritas, both the Overseas and Domestic broadcasts, are now being reactivated at quite some expense. We will soon be broadcasting full power, 17 hours a day. We cannot do this alone. We need teamwork, cooperation, involvement, dedication and sacrifice: yours as well as mine. It is not only a pleasure but a Christian obligation of those in authority (Bishops, Pastors, Superiors of Congregations, Rectors of Universities, Colleges, Directors of Schools, Heads of Catholic Organizations) to contribute."

"One might volunteer to send news material, interviews (with a local tape recorder), recorded events like ordination of a bishop, recorded excerpts of a seminar, conference or symposium, press releases. One could post or have posted in every church, school or college the program schedules or notices we will be sending out eventually. One might even preach in the pulpit, mention in the classrooms the advantages of listening to a thought-provoking program once in a while, or a religious program that brings one closer to Christ, programs on social action, human development and the like. One might take it upon himself to give us ideas (encouragement???) constructive criticisms."

Radio Veritas (DZRV) broadcasts at 860 KHZ. Letters to Fr. Dion may be sent to P. O. Box AC-373, Quezon City.

# THE ABORTION MOVEMENT\*

By Cormac Burke

The campaign for **legalized** abortion has assumed world-wide dimensions. There is probably not a single country that has not felt its impact in the past few years. Where abortion was already **legal**, on restricted grounds, the campaign has been aimed at removing these restrictions. And those countries where abortion is still illegal (countries like Ireland or Spain) are under growing pressure to **legalize** it: perhaps on restricted grounds, to begin with, but the campaign, here too, is evidently aiming at the ultimate goal of abortion "on demand."

## LEGALITY IS NOT THE SAME AS MORALITY

It would be good to make one point clear, from the very start, which is that **legality** and **morality** are not synonymous. An action is legal or illegal insofar as it is, or is not, in accordance with the civil law, i.e. with the particular laws that a country or government maintain or introduce at any given moment. An action is moral or immoral, insofar as it is, or is not, in accordance with the

law of human nature, which is part of the eternal law of God.

It is curious, but some people today do not seem keen on admitting this distinction. They seem to believe—or at least to suggest—that a human law can, of itself, create or change the morality of an action. They believe—so it seems—that once an action has been declared legal, it may be carried out without any possible scruple of conscience. One does not need to reflect very much to realize that this is just not so. If a government, for example, introduces some measure of racial discrimination, does this mean that its citizens are without fault if they practice discrimination? If the sale of marijuana or pornography is legalized in a country, does this mean that the selling or buying of such merchandise is a **morally** solved question? Those who maintain that actions find their only source of morality in the laws of the state could have no complaint against the doctors in Nazi Germany who signed the certificates that sent millions of Jews to the gas

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\* Courtesy of the Catholic Truth Society, London, and the Catholic Position Papers (Makiling Conference Center, Calamba, Laguna).

chambers. Their action in signing the certificates was a legal action, envisaged and approved by the legal decrees of the state. The positivists, in virtue of their own principles, would have to approve of such actions since, being legal, they were necessarily moral...

No. Morality and legality do not necessarily coincide. There are actions that have their intrinsic morality or immorality which no positive human law can affect or change. Therefore, if abortion is immoral before God and before the natural law, all the legislations of all the countries in the world cannot make it moral. They can make it legal, in such a way that if a person commits an abortion he will not commit a crime or civil offense. But he will continue to commit a grave sin against God and a crime against human nature, a crime against humanity.

### THE NEW "MORALITIES"

We will return to this point of the relation between morality and legality, since it is a point on which it is essential to have clear ideas. It is a grave matter if the civil laws depart from morality, from the principles of the natural law. It is worse if (as is usually the case) this departure is backed up by an attempt to create a new "morality" to justify these laws, if it is sought to base these laws on new "moral" principles (which

would really imply basing them on a new concept of human nature, a concept which, as is logical, would be false). And it would be much graver still if, in criticizing these new laws as immoral, we were not able to uncover and criticize the principles of false morality by which it is sought to justify them. Let us try to do just this in relation to our present subject. We can begin our attempt by simply asking What is abortion?

### WHAT IS ABORTION THE POSITION 30 YEARS AGO

The answer to this question, until about 20 or 30 years ago, was very simple. Abortion meant killing an unborn child, killing a human being whose peculiar weakness consisted in its inability to survive outside its mother's womb. And there were two moral evaluations of this action:

1) that it was a justifiable homicide—in certain cases. This was the position of many non-Catholics, although not by any means of all;

2) that it was an unjustifiable homicide, i.e. that it was always murder, and therefore could never be licit. This was the Catholic position, shared by the Greek Orthodox Church and by many other religious and non-religious groups.

The reasons behind the first position—justifiable homicide—

were simple: that in the extreme case (the only one contemplated) of conflict between the life of the mother and life of the child, the mother's life is more valuable, and the child's life should be sacrificed so that the mother can survive. The extreme case would be a pregnancy such that, if let come to term, the mother—and perhaps the child too—would die.

What is one to think of this position? Two things: a) one can easily accept that it was inspired by a sincere humanitarian feeling; b) that the principles on which it was based—that one human life is worth more than another, and that one can kill an innocent person in order to save another—opened the door inevitably to the position on abortion that is rapidly becoming generalized today: the position of those who campaign for abortion “on demand,” with no more justification than the fact that the mother—or perhaps the state—demands it.

As regards the Catholic position it is enough to say for the moment that it is based on the clear principle that every human being receives its life directly from God, and only God can take that life away, unless a person forfeits his right to life by a voluntary criminal aggression. It is not possible to imagine a more innocent person than an unborn child; therefore one cannot

directly kill him for any cause whatever.

## **POINTS OF AGREEMENT AND POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT**

Such was the situation as regards abortion not very many years ago. An overall situation where it was easy to describe and itemize the points of agreement. There was agreement, between both sides, as to the nature of abortion: that it meant killing a child, that it was homicide, that the being in the mother's womb was a human being, a human person. And there was disagreement as to the licitude of this homicide: for some it was always illicit; for others it was in certain grave cases, justifiable and licit. It is worth adding that even in the countries where this latter viewpoint prevailed and the civil law recognized the legality of abortion (in such extreme cases), the same legislation forbade and punished abortions performed in the absence of such exceptional cases or circumstances.

## **WHAT IS ABORTION? THE POSITION TODAY**

Now, if we examine the present day situation, it so happens that to this question—what is abortion?—we find not two but **three** answers:

- 1) that is a non-justifiable homicide; i.e. the Catholic posi-

tion, reaffirmed, be it noted by Vatican Council II—in the strongest terms—which says (in the **Constitution on the Church in the Modern World**, no. 51) that abortion is an “abominable crime”;

2) that it is a justifiable homicide, in certain circumstances; i.e. the position—already commented on—of certain non-Catholics;

3) that it is **not a homicide at all!** This is the position with which I wish especially to deal, for it is generally the position of the modern campaigners for the so-called reform or “liberalization” of the laws on abortion, and it is the ideological position—the new “moral” basis—by which they seek to justify what cannot be justified.

### REFORMULATING THE PROBLEM

Abortion, say the new liberal reformers, is not a homicide at all, for a very simple reason: that what is killed is not a human being, that what is in the uterus **is not human**.

It is obvious that this supposition means a complete reformulation of the abortion problem. The reformulation is in fact so complete that, if the supposition on which it is based is accepted, the problem-aspect of abortion practically disappears for many people, and abortion becomes a matter

—so they suggest—almost devoid of any difficulties of a moral nature.

### WHY THE REFORMULATION?

Perhaps the first thing to do in relation to this new position is to ask why and how it should have arisen in such a few years. It is not difficult to find the answer.

Everyone likes to feel humanitarian. The “liberals” of today’s moral positivist school like not only to feel humanitarian but also to be able to proclaim themselves such.

The liberal humanitarian sense of non-Catholics of 30 years ago found no excessive difficulty in accepting that the life of an unborn child should be sacrificed to save the life of a mother. The years have passed and, with the years, two main factors have intervened. One is that the advance in medicine has practically eliminated the extreme case of **either the mother’s life or the child’s**. Despite this—and here is the second factor—the demand for abortions has increased. There are many motives behind this increase. They include some “indications” of a more or less medical nature; the mother’s poor health, the strain which a pregnancy represents on her nerves, etc. The main motive, however, is simply the growing birth-control mentality. Despite their being wrapped up in apparently disinterested refer-

ences to world population problems, the motives for abortion in one individual case after another—at least in the more developed countries—can almost always be reduced to an **inability to look on the child with love**. It is, after all, an incapacity to love which makes a couple think of their unborn baby as no more than a burden: the burden of the pregnancy and of the care it will require after. It is an incapacity to love which makes a family dwell on the fact that, if the child is born, they will have to give up some material comfort. It is an incapacity to love which makes a mother not want to bear and give birth to the child she has conceived.

### TURNING THE FETUS INTO A "THING"

To kill a child in order to save the life of a mother was not repugnant to the humanitarian sense of some liberals of 30 years ago. To kill a child in order to save the **convenience** of the mother—her reluctance to go through with an existing pregnancy— or to save the **well-being** of the other children or the **financial position** of the family: to accept this is to ask a lot of the humanitarian sense of anyone, however liberal he or she may be.

Since, however, our contemporary liberal-humanitarians have no lack of resources to save (?) their reputation (though

perhaps not their conscience), there has been no great difficulty in finding the solution. So it is too much to sacrifice a child's life for the sake of a mother's caprice, or a family's standard of living, or a society's welfare? . . . Then let it not be the life of a child which is sacrificed; let it be no more than the life of a fetus. Let us conclude, moreover (according to someone's happy theory), that the fetus is not human (let us conclude it, I say, because we certainly cannot prove it), and what we are left with after all that is neither homicide nor infanticide, but only feticide—which (let us be persuaded) is no more significant in the moral order than the killing of some microbes (also foreign and unwanted bodies) by means of an injection of penicillin.

Here is the new moral view of ~~the~~ abortion question. We are going to have to face the objection (so they would seem to have reasoned) that abortion is homicide; and certainly, at least in the new cases we are interested in, it ~~would~~ be difficult to justify a homicide . . . Let us not waste time trying to justify it. Let us say, in all simplicity, that it is not a homicide, because what is aborted has not a human nature; it is therefore not a **person**, it is a **thing**. And since things possess no rights, the problem quite disappears.

## TWO-STAGE ABORTION

What this view offers us is, so to speak, a two-stage abortion: a physical operation preceded by a metaphysical operation; a physical abortion with a metaphysical pre-requisite: that of suppressing the human identity of the living being in the womb. Once this metaphysical operation has been performed (a truly painless operation—provided one applies a little anaesthesia to one's conscience . . .), the surgical or pharmacological operation necessary to suppress what "remains" in the uterus offers no special difficulty, since this "remainder"—duly disenfranchised from among the race of men and deprived of its human status and rights—is no longer a person, it is no more than a non-human thing.

Let us grasp this clearly. The essential argument of the modern abortionists is not (except in two cases which we will examine later on) that new indications or reasons for abortion have been discovered, new reasons of note which were hitherto unknown. Their argument is different and it is important, I repeat, to grasp it. They are not mainly saying that there are more reasons than those formerly known, in order to kill what is in the womb. They are saying that what is in the womb has less importance than what was formerly believed; it has less value. It

has no human value and possesses no human rights.

## THE CATHOLIC ARGUMENT

The whole of the Catholic argument—and I would maintain that from whatever angle one may consider the matter, it is the only truly rational, truly scientific, and truly humanitarian argument—is that the unborn child is already a human being or person, and enjoys all the natural rights of every human being, among which the main right is the right of life and moreover, that his particular situation as a defenseless human being confers on him the right to special protection from the civil law.

It is interesting to recall that the United Nations, in plenary session in November, 1959, unanimously approved a declaration of the rights of the child in the following terms: "the child, in virtue of his lack of physical and intellectual maturity needs special protection and care, including adequate legal protection, both before and after birth." This declaration was renewed later on in the International Human Rights Conference, in Teheran, in May, 1968.

## EMBRYOLOGY GIVES SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

From a theological viewpoint, specifically human life begins with the infusion, by God, of

the soul into the new embryonic organism. Although there has been no dogmatic declaration on this point, the constant teaching of the Church is that the beginning of this personal human life should be computed from the moment of conception: the moment in which the ovum has been fertilized. This teaching is reflected in the relation between certain liturgical feasts—the Annunciation (March 25) and Christmas; the Immaculate Conception and the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lady (September 8)—and is supported by the dispositions of Canon Law (vid. canon 747). Much more significant and interesting is the fact that this constant teaching of the Church is supported and fully borne out by all the scientific advances in modern embryology. So true is this that one can affirm that, **from a scientific viewpoint, the truth of the Catholic teaching on this point has been placed beyond all doubt.** Modern embryological research has shown that the human being, organically speaking, is fully constituted by the fertilization of the ovum, and that everything that follows is simply the process of development of an already existing human organism without it being possible to indicate any subsequent datum or fact on which one could reasonably base the supposed beginning of a personal human life.

### THE ARBITRARINESS OF THE ABORTIONIST POSITION

It is significant that the new abortionists never speak of an unborn **child**. They rigorously use the term “embryo” or “fetus.” If they are asked (a question which is not much to their liking) to define what is a fetus, they define it as “potential human life,” speaking of it on occasion even as “potential life.” And if they are obliged to pursue their pseudo-philosophical or pseudo-juridical (legalistic) line, they maintain that this potential life does not become real and actual human life—with its corresponding rights—until birth, or at least until *the fetus is viable*. This, as anyone can see, is pure arbitrariness. It is impossible to advance any rational or scientific principle or fact on which it can be based. It is simply the product of prejudice. Is anyone prepared seriously to maintain that what is born today is human, but that what was in the womb yesterday was not? If one tries to make an argument out of viability, can one say that a newly born child is significantly more viable than a child still in its mother's womb? If anything, he is definitely less viable. One has to put more care, and not less, in feeding him. One has to take greater precautions to make sure, for example, that he does not fall down the stairs, precautions that his mother guaranteed him far more effec-



tively when he was still in womb.

If human personality and human rights are not acquired until one is really viable, until one can get by and survive by oneself, it is doubtful than any child less than 6 or 7 years old is really a human person.

I repeat: all the scientific arguments are against the position of the abortionists and in favor of the Catholic position. If someone wants a practical test of this, then let him simply ask a non-Catholic doctor who has performed an abortion whether what he has extracted from the womb is no more than a thing; or whether it is a living being. And if it is a living being, of what species is it? No; the abortionist position is not based on science or on reason; it is based on prejudices and interests, neither of which have anything very humanitarian about them.

### THE LEGALITY COMPLEX

Those who seek to "liberalize" our modern legislations (and not just in relation to abortion) are characterized by a curious combination: a marked complex about legality without the least concern for morality; a complex that the actions they wish to perform or see performed, whatever their moral nature, simply must be permitted by the civil law. One does not have to analyze this complex very deeply in order to see in it an ultimate expression of hypocrisy, decadence, and impotence. It

is to rebel at seeing one's own interests or caprices restricted externally or threatened with legal compulsion or punishment, without the least movement of indignation or rebellion against one's personal incapacity to regulate these caprices or to control them **internally**, from within; an incapacity which is due, in the last analysis, to not really listening to the voice of one's conscience, or to no longer being able to obey it (bearing in mind that one's conscience is not a servile appendix of our selfishness which is already to say "Yes," but an exacting voice of God that often tells us "No").

It is a poor hypocrisy which, when it sees it can no longer count on an interior approval, thinks that it is enough to remove the exterior prohibition.

### DOES "LIBERALIZATION" REALLY FAVOR LIBERTY?

Given this basis, it is no wonder that the legality complex of the liberalizers pushes them along curious paths. If an action is to be legal, there must obviously be agreement between the action and the law. Formerly, this normally meant that the action had to agree with the law. The solution that our present-day liberalizers are trying to generalize is the much handier solution of making the law agree with the action... When one reflects that this has been the favorite resort of some of the biggest tyrants of his-

tory — Nero, Henry VIII, or Napoleon, for instance — one begins to wonder if this resort, this process, is really one of liberation, if it really favors liberty.

### **BACK TO NINETEENTH CENTURY LIBERALISM**

No one, I should hope, wants to have more laws. We already have more than our fair share of them. But a minimum of laws is necessary if there is to be any civilized society. If there are fewer laws, or if the laws prohibit fewer things, it is obvious that there will be fewer illegal actions. Does this mean that there will be more freedom? For some people, undoubtedly. But history proves that a state of affairs where there is little or no legal control over personal actions, tends to favor a minority precisely the most powerful. The majority — and above all those who are weakest — suffer; their freedom is lessened. It should scarcely be necessary to recall all that has been said and written about the effects, in the economic and social fields, of a nineteenth century capitalism which also styled itself *liberal*... Well, the philosophy preached by the abortion liberalizers is also a nineteenth century philosophy, and it is not rendered any less calculating or self-seeking by their efforts to hide it under the banner of freedom.

With a little bit of juggling practically any action can be

made legal. It is just a matter of changing the laws, and for that all that is needed is a vote in parliament or a governmental decree. But morality cannot be subjected to the same juggling, for morality — the norm of morality — does not lie in men's hands nor does it fall under the power of parliaments or governments; it depends on God.

Therefore, even if one were to imagine the extreme and absurd case of all civil laws being abolished — in such a way that there would no longer be any illegal action — the morality of actions would not be in the least affected, for it is governed by another order of things.

### **THE EFFECTS OF ABORTIONISM**

The attempt to justify abortion can be worse than abortion itself. I am thinking especially of the efforts of modern abortionists who having first presented abortion as an indifferent action, afterwards make it out to be a benefit, a right, and a positive good. The effect of these attempts to justify the unjustifiable are disastrous as much in the case of the advocates or practitioners of abortionism as in that of the poor women who are led by the abortionist propaganda to yield to the temptation to abort.

### **ABORTERS VERSUS ABORTIONISTS**

Let us consider, in the first place, the case of the advocates

of the new abortionism. I have had the occasion to know quite a number of non-Catholic doctors who accepted abortion — in extreme cases — and had practiced it. They regarded it, however, with absolute repugnance and were quite clear in their minds that what they had aborted — what they had killed — was a human being. For them, abortion was always a tragic event, even though they regarded it as a necessary and justified tragedy. I was able to understand their reasons, although I was unable to accept them — simply because they seemed mistaken to me, as some of them have in fact since come to acknowledge. In any case, their reaction in the face of the “liberalizing” campaign of these past years gives grounds for thinking that their previous attitude towards abortion, however mistaken, was held in good faith. These same doctors have been the founders and promoters of the “Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child,” a society founded precisely in order to fight against the proponents of “liberal” abortion, against the attitude of those for whom abortion is a trivial event, justifiable for any or for no reason whatsoever.

#### **ARE THE NEW ABORTIONISTS SINCERE?**

As a priest I have learned to distinguish between the sin and the sinner. I have also learned that, although one can and

at times one must judge actions and facts, it is difficult and risky to judge persons. My training and natural instinct lead me to believe in the good faith of others. It is not hard for me to accept, for example, that many non-Catholics can, in good faith, believe that divorce is licit. Even in the case of contraceptives, I can see how a non-Catholic can in good faith maintain that their use in marriage may be licit in certain circumstances. I believe that these non-Catholics are mistaken in both cases, and that it is possible moreover to **prove** that they are mistaken. I acknowledge, however, that the process of reasoning, by which their error can be demonstrated, is delicate, and I can see how a non-Catholic may not follow this reasoning and sincerely maintain the contrary opinion.

But I cannot see this **at all** in the case of the new abortionists. The nature of the act — i.e. the killing of a living and innocent human being — is so evident (and all modern scientific research bears out the fact that it is a human being that is killed) that I cannot see how a normal person can sincerely go wrong on this point. I am sorry, but if someone argues that what is killed in an abortion is not a human being — is not a member of our human race already constituted in its own existence and personality — I simply cannot believe him. I cannot be-

lieve in his sincerity. Or if I am pushed, I am prepared to say that I can believe in his sincerity, but only at the cost of not believing in his intelligence. Either he is lying or else he is stupid. I see no further alternatives.

### THE WOMAN WHO ABORTS...

Let us now think for a moment about the woman who procures an abortion. I repeat that we cannot judge persons. Only God can do that properly. In a moment of temptation, a pregnant woman — who does not want to have her child — can have been swayed by countless factors: factors of personal formation, of the influences coming from her environment, her relatives or friends, factors of loneliness, or fear, of nervous strain . . . We cannot judge the degree of blame which may rest on a woman in such a situation. Only God, who takes everything into account, can judge this. We can however judge something else, or at least form a good opinion about it, i.e. what will become of this woman, in human terms, according as she repents or not of what she has done.

Let us not fool ourselves. The woman who has procured an abortion **knows** that she has procured the death, the murder, of her own child, the fruit of her own womb. And she remains with a deep wound in her conscience. A permissive society

may find no difficulty in forgiving her. The worst of it is that **she** will not be able to forgive herself, or to forget. And my experience is that in the exceptional cases where a woman does succeed silencing her conscience, she does so at the cost of moral suicide: she destroys her very conscience and her sense of values, she de-feminizes and dehumanizes herself. Her maternal instinct in particular, and her whole capacity of loving, suffer enormous and irreparable damage.

The Church never wants to condemn persons. If it condemns sin, if it condemns wrong actions, it is in order to help people have clear ideas, to help them look into their conscience (which, if they have done wrong, will also accuse them) so that, **by repenting**, they can find pardon and peace. It is those that condone immoral actions who may be condemning a person to a terrible life of mental anguish.

### PERSONALIZATION AND DEPERSONALIZATION

This leads us to touch on another pseudo-argument of the abortionists, according to which the determination that the unborn child is a **person** should depend not on biological facts, nor even on time-factors (viability or birth), but on a psychological factor. Playing with concepts drawn from modern psychology — concepts that em-

phasize the importance of inter-subjective relationships in the process of "personalization" — some abortionists have suggested that the unborn child cannot properly be regarded as a person before he has been **accepted** by his parents: if this acceptance is lacking — so the argument runs — he cannot be considered a person nor does he possess personal rights.

This argument runs into the same sort of trouble as the "viability" argument. It "proves" too much. On its basis, a one year old child or a five year old would not be a person either, if his parents have not "accepted" him. Obviously it is **before**, and not after, begetting a child that the parents have to decide if they want him or not. Before, he was a possibility, precisely no more than a "potentiality". After, he is a reality, and that reality is a person just as much as the one day old or the one month old baby. He is a person who therefore possesses his personality in the fullest human sense, a personality that makes him the subject of rights. (We might note here that to the arguments given earlier, taken from embryology, we can add an argument taken from juridical science. All ancient and modern jurisprudences attribute to the unborn child full juridical personality expressed, for example, in his capacity to inherit or the beneficiary of a will.)

There is, of course, an ambiguity in the personalization

argument. But it is an ambiguity which, when brought to light, rebounds back against the very proponents of the argument. Evidently, if one asks whether the unborn child has his own "personality" in the **popular** sense — in the sense of possessing a whole personal manner of being: of thinking and speaking and acting — the answer is No. In this sense the unborn child is not "personalized," nor is the one day old, nor the one month old, child; just as, in this same sense, the three year old, or the five year old child, is only very slightly personalized.

Since "personalization" really means the process of the **development** of one's individual personality, this is evidently a process that takes years: all the years of one's life, in fact. Only with the years — with all that the years bring in terms of human experience: of generosity or selfishness, of virtues and sins, of learning to respect and love-others or of failing to learn to love, of having faced up to just responsibilities or of having rejected them — does a person develop his distinctive personality.

#### **SELF-REALIZATION FOR "LIBERATED" WOMEN?**

The personalization argument — which has no application to the case of the unborn child (what personality can be **developed** by a person who is killed?) does however apply very

clearly precisely to the case of the mother who aborts. For here one can ask, and largely foresee, "What sort of personality is going to be developed by a **person who kills?**"

Modern psychology insists that men and women "realize" themselves above all in their relations with other people, and that one of the clearest proofs of the presence or absence of personality is the capacity or incapacity of establishing interpersonal relationships.

What personality is going to be developed by a woman who, before the most intimate interpersonal relationship imaginable — the relationship between her own person and the person of the child she has conceived; the (truly unique) relationship between her own body and the body of the child in her womb —, rejects and destroys that relationship, killing her child and having his body consigned to a hospital incinerator?

Through what type of later relationships will a woman be able to "realize" herself, if her reaction to this sacred mother-child relationship has been to extirpate her most intimate instincts of motherhood and pity from her heart, by extirpating her child from her body?

It is sad to see the abortionist propaganda present abortion as a "right" of every woman, claiming this right precisely in the name of women's "libera-

tion." It is a sad propaganda that can only turn the women who use this "right" into sadder and embittered women. Who is going to liberate them afterwards from the awareness of what, in violation of their most intimate human instincts, they have done?

## TWO NEW "INDICATIONS"

I would now like to examine two points: two new "indications" or arguments that tend to make ever more frequent appearances in the pro-abortion campaign. I will consider them briefly, not because these arguments are less important — they are terribly significant and important — but simply because space does not permit any more extensive treatment.

## THE "EUGENIC" ARGUMENT

The first argument is that of the so-called "eugenic" indication; in other words, the probability that the already conceived child may be born with some physical or mental defect. All modern abortion law reform includes a clause legalizing an abortion carried out for eugenic reasons. The clause containing the eugenic indication tends to be very short, and many people probably look on it as one indication more, more or less of the same order as the others.

**. It is no such thing!** If the philosophy of life that underlies the other indications is re-

pellent the ideology underlying this clause is of an infinitely worse order. Let us state it very clearly: this indication is the fruit of no mere selfish hedonism; nor is it the product of an individualistic materialism that has lost its sense of direction and values . . . By means of this little clause, a clear, powerful, and repugnant philosophy is opening a way for itself — a legal way — into our western countries. The philosophy, or rather ideology, of this clause is that of racial purity and has little or no essential difference from the Hitlerian ideology. For eugenicism, after all, simply means this: we don't want any inferior stock, we don't want any "sub-standard" specimens who could disturb the tranquil contemplation of our Brave New World, demanding compassion, appealing for charity or affection, or simply reminding us that there is a God to whom we ought to be grateful for the good things we enjoy.

### LIVES NOT WORTH LIVING

Let us not forget what this clause means in practice. It means, each time it is applied, that one or several persons are making the following judgment: "In our opinion, this life" — and they are speaking of another human being already in existence — "this life is not worth living. It is (or rather, it may later turn out to be) so defective that it is better for it to die now."

This criticism, it should be noted, is valid even for those who maintain that the fetus is **not yet** a human person. They are making the same judgment: "This life which — unless we kill it — will develop into a human person, will develop into a human life unworthy of being lived. Therefore, let us kill it.

The essential and only basis to what we call democratic rights is that every human being is an inviolable value; and that no one — no state, no authority, no person — can decide that anyone else's life is useless and **dispensable**.

One can make the judgment that someone is living in conditions unworthy of a human being, and then make every effort to remedy those conditions. That is humanitarian.

What one cannot do — in the name of humanitarianism — is to make the judgment that someone is not worthy to live — **even if he may have to live in conditions unworthy of a human being**. That is not a humanitarian, but a totalitarian, judgment. When one makes that judgment one has put an end to humanitarianism.

### CONSEQUENCES OF EUGENICISM

The eugenic argument is subject to many further criticisms. I will limit my self to two:

a) The prognosis that the child may possibly be born de-

fective cannot be made with absolute certainty. If abortions are performed on this ground, the result will be that in a high percentage of the cases (some estimates say that it could be as high as 50 per cent) quite normal children will be killed. It would be much more logical, from the eugenicist viewpoint (and if the eugenicists consider themselves humanitarian, it would also be, for them, much more humanitarian) to let all these pregnancies come to term and once the children have been born, kill those, who in fact prove defective. If anyone says that this would be too repugnant, I could not agree more; but it is the logic of eugenicism that is repugnant.

b) If, in virtue of the principle that defective lives are not worth living, it is humane to kill in order to prevent a person being born who may turn out to be defective, it is unquestionably more humane still to kill a person who has already turned out to be defective, to kill a defective person already born, whether one day old or one year, or 20 or 40 or 60. And that person can be killed because (it is a point inherent in the same principle) he is not possessed of human life by a sufficiently good title. His physical or mental defect has made his very right to life defective. He can be killed not perhaps for the "defect" of being a Jew, but for that of being crazy, or disabled,

or chronically ill, or simply aged.

The acceptance of eugenicist abortion means — **whether the public at large is aware of the fact or not** — the acceptance not only of the principles underlying euthanasia, but of all of the principles of the politics of racial purity; the policy of the elimination of the unfit, of those unworthy of life, of those who do not measure up to the quality standards laid down — by the controllers that be — for the human stock...

#### **WHAT SORT OF WORLD ARE WE HEADING FOR?**

But surely — I hear the objection — all of this is rather exaggerated? No. It is not exaggeration. It is simply a **projection**. It is simply to follow out the logical consequences of the new abortionist philosophies, and to project them on to the practical life of a perhaps not very far-off future.

Tomorrow's world will be the product of the tendencies and ideologies that have prevailed in the world of today. What will that world be like? It is something to think about, while there is still time to think. This is not the moment to play the ostrich, burying our heads in the sand. It is an elementary responsibility to read the signs of the times, to see where a large part of our modern civilization is heading and to ask ourselves if we too want to go



in that direction. To prefer not to ask oneself the question is the surest way of finding oneself eventually dragged in that very direction.

And I would therefore re-emphasize what I have said earlier. Abortion — tolerated or legalized; look on with indifference or with approval—represents an extreme of barbarity that is hard to surpass. One could well see in it a symbol of how our civilization seems bent on destroying the very seeds of survival that it bears within itself.

It is difficult to imagine a more inhuman or more dehumanizing act than that of a mother who permits or procures the killing of the child to whom she has given life and whom she bears within. Seven or eight years ago, when the proposal to "liberalize" the abortion law in England was being debated, I recall seeing a television program which included interviews with a series of women who had each had a number of abortions. The interviewer's questions were evidently aimed at "proving" one point: that neither physically or psychologically had they suffered any adverse effects from the abortions. What the women said, in answer, corroborated the thesis fully. However, I still retain a vivid memory of their hardened faces, their way of answering, their evident concern to justify themselves, their insistence that they had never been troubled by the least feeling of repugnance or remorse,

their air of proud and sad loneliness in a word, the impression of what I have mentioned earlier: a brutal de-feminization and dehumanization.

### EXCOMMUNICATING ONSELF FROM HUMANITY . . .

It is understandable that the Church should wish to emphasize the gravity of this "abominable crime," by decreeing an *ipso facto* excommunication not only for the woman who seeks an abortion, but also for all who have effectively intervened in the abortion, even though this has been no more than by simply advising it (Code of Canon Law canon 2350).

An abortionist — again I am thinking above all of those who try to justify this crime — **excommunicates himself** from the most elementary human community, the community of those who strive to respect the human rights of others, whatever their religion, race, color, social position, state of physical or mental health, or age.

### TIME TO WAKE UP

It is time to wake up. And it is time to speak clearly. I have no doubt that the Catholic Church is going to draw on to itself the resentment of many because of its clear and inflexible attitude in defense of the life of the unborn. And those who see and feel the truth of this teaching of the Church, and

are ready to defend it and proclaim it, should be prepared to become objects of mockery, ill will, and perhaps physical persecution. After all, if there exist people who are ready to kill an innocent child for no more reason than that it will be a burden on their material or financial position, one may well suppose that they would be more than ready to eliminate those who, by their insistence on the truth, create or maintain a burden on their conscience. It is true that, in order to eliminate them, they might find one factor wanting, which is legality. But, as we have seen, that need be no insurmountable obstacle for them. With another campaign...

### THE DEMOGRAPHIC ARGUMENT

The second new argument which is used (although not yet very openly) to support abortion is the demographic argument. The cases in which abortion is recommended as a means to solve the demographic problem are still few. For the moment, the matter rather works the other way round; i.e. the constant propaganda about overpopulation acts as a factor in favor of abortion. As public opinion is "mentalized" so as to think that it is not quite right to have more than one or two children, that one ought not to have more than one or two, that this is an urgent and imperative duty, that its non-observance must be regarded,

initially, as a total lack of responsibility, and, next, as a flagrant crime against society... then it becomes progressively easier to persuade the public that abortion is not a crime at all; that, far from being a crime, it may be the best and most appropriate means to fulfill a strict duty.

It is logical that those to whom this "argument" appeals should be attracted also by the fact that abortion is, without the slightest doubt, the most effective means to check population growth. It requires no exceptional degree of intelligence to realize that the best means to ensure that there is no excess population is to kill the "surplus." This, in all its true crudeness, is the way of thinking of some people, although they do not—as yet—dare to present it quite so bluntly. But it is as blunt as that; so much so that one could well ask those who think this way to explain if there is any real difference, as a means to their end, between the scalpel and the machine-gun.

It is, in fact, because of demographic considerations that many individuals and not a few politicians support the legalization of abortion on demand. It comes as a nasty shock to most people to learn that the number of abortions in Japan in recent years has been over one million annually, equalling or exceeding the number of live births, or that in Hungary, in

1964, for each 100 children born there were 140 abortions.

## **HUMANITARIANISM AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT**

The campaign to abolish capital punishment has been one of the major expressions of the modern human rights movement. I understand the arguments advanced, and I respect the movement. I cannot, however, fail to remark on one striking inconsistency: those who defend the abolition of capital punishment are very often the same people who campaign for the legalization of abortion.

It is curious, and much more than curious, that those who want to get rid of the death penalty for criminals (or for those whom the law courts have declared to be criminals) should want to introduce it for those who are undeniably innocent.

All this compassionate and humanitarian striving in favor of criminals, or of presumed criminals, is admirable. I have absolutely nothing to object to it. But, I ask, do the innocent not also deserve some compassion?

The fact is that I find it hard—very hard—to believe in the sincerity (or in the intelligence) of those who get indignant about the death penalty and do not get indignant—ininitely more indignant—about legalized liberal abortion. It seems a

pretty example of what Arnold Lunn, in another context, calls “selective indignation.”

## **SELECTIVE INDIGNATION**

I have, I repeat, nothing whatsoever against those young or not so young people who get indignant at the application of the death penalty in the few countries where it still exists. I may or may not join them, but I will defend their right to go on strike, organize protest marches, distribute leaflets, and chalk up street signs as they please. If, however, they do not get much more indignant each time the subject of abortion comes up, if they do not rise up in anger whenever they think of the thousands of defenseless children who are killed all over the world—not once or twice a year, but **every day**—then I confess that I cannot take their sensitivity or concern about human rights seriously. They are being too selective. And I would apply to selective indignation the alternatives I mentioned earlier on: if it is not a sign of lack of sincerity, it is at least a sign of little depth and lesser intelligence; and I feel not the slightest respect for it.

If someone objects that I am—once more—exaggerating, I would deny it. If the objection is that these and previous arguments are emotionally-charged, I would concede the point, but would ask to be shown their

**falsehood.** This is what matters: to know which of the different positions in this question corresponds to truth; and which to falsehood, to vested interests, prejudice, or hypocrisy. It is only logical that one should feel moved by the truth. And it is logical that one should feel even more moved by the spectacle of the truth being warped, sold, prostituted, and betrayed.

### **THE CHURCH REAFFIRMS HER TEACHING**

The present Pope, echoing the teaching of his predecessors, has repeatedly condemned abortion in these past few years. Of particular note was his address of December 9, 1972, to a congress of jurists assembled in Rome.

The worldwide pro-abortion campaign has drawn forth pronouncements from practically all the hierarchies of the western countries, reaffirming the Catholic position particularly in view of the new attitudes or philosophies of the abortionist. Since 1971, the hierarchies of France, West Germany, East Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Austria, Switzerland, United States, and Canada have issued declarations drawn up in the clearest possible terms, emphasizing that the Church has not changed her position in this matter, nor will she change it; that abortion

continues to be, for her, what it has always been: murder.

### **THE CALL TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

In February, 1973, the United States hierarchy responded to a decision of the Supreme Court—legalizing abortion—with a particularly strong declaration. The subsequent advice given to the U.S. Catholics has been just as strongly **practical**. The legalization of abortion necessarily brings in its wake a tremendously increased pressure on Catholic nurses and doctors to practice, or help in, abortions. Facing up to this situation, the American bishops have issued a call to **civil disobedience**, in virtue of the clear principle that when the laws of the state are opposed to the law of God, one has the right and the duty to disobey those laws.

In many countries this is what is being asked of Catholics: an open and fearless attitude of resistance—and, if needs be, of rebellion—against unjust and inhuman laws. Their firmness and fearlessness in so acting may be, humanly speaking, the only thing capable of stirring the drugged consciences of so many, and of saving a civilization which seems blindly bent on rejecting the few truly human values left to it, and sinking into barbarism.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

**Ninth of a Series**

### **FORM CRITICISM AND GOSPEL**

**by**

**Basilio P. Balajadia\***

Our discussion of the synoptic gospels, therefore, points to the gospel of Mark as the earliest of the gospels to have been written. But as mentioned earlier, there exists the possibility of a pre-literary stage of the gospel which could have influenced the form as well as the content of the written gospels, starting even with Mark. The next stage therefore in the inquiry for the historical Jesus is the oral gospel. Can the oral gospel introduce us to the real Jesus? The form criticism of our 20th century have contributed much to our knowledge of this oral stage of the gospels. It is for this reason that we are going to discuss Form Criticism, its method and its proponents.

#### **Assumption of Form Criticism**

The basic assumption of Form Criticism which makes it both necessary and possible is that the pre-literary traditions or the oral gospels consist mainly of individual sayings and narratives joined together by the gospel editors or so-called evangelists. This does not preclude, however, the possibility that there could have been earlier existing collections even during this oral period.

These various saying and stories about Jesus are the oldest traditions that the community of Christians possessed. These were used in relation to the community's apologetic, didactic and missionary needs. As such, they do not have an inherent unity, but were only edited and arranged by the individual gospel writers who gave them a semblance of chronology and order.

Although Hermann Gunkel was the first scholar who made an effective application of this study to the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, it was Karl Ludwig Schmidt who first did a compre-

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\* This is section III of "The Christian Biblical Sources for the Life of Christ". See our January issue.

hensive study of the gospel traditions according to form critical method. However, the people who popularized its use was Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Dibelius, who wrote their works on it in 1919 and 1921, respectively.

### **Martin Dibelius' Classification of Forms**

The field in which Dibelius poured his interest was the narrative portions of the gospels although he also had something to say concerning the sayings of Jesus. Aside from the Passion narrative, he classified the individual narrative units of the gospels into three: paradigm, tale (nouvelle) legend and the myth.<sup>12</sup>

The Passion narrative is the earliest writing concerning Jesus. Its aim was to answer the vital question of how come, the people whom Jesus blessed with signs and wonders could have crucified him. This must have been the earliest connected account of Jesus last days.

**1. Paradigm.** — After this, the paradigm must have developed. These are short stories, concerning some isolated events in the life of Jesus which could have been used by the disciples for the sermons because of the edifying elements in them. These narratives were intended to illustrate and support the message of the sermon. An example of paradigm would be Mark 12:13-17, the story of how Jesus bluffed the pharisees' question of whether it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not. Other examples would be Mark 2:1-12; 18-22, 23-28; 3:1-5, 20-30. 31-35; 10:13-16; 12:13-17; 14:3-9. Less pure paradigm would be Mark 1:23-27, 46-52; 11:15-19; 12:18-23; Luke 9:51-56, 12:1-6.<sup>13</sup>

Some of the characteristics of paradigm are: independence from the literary context, brevity and simplicity for use as examples, religious rather than artistic coloring and style, didactic style such as making the words of Jesus stand out clearly and an ending that provokes thought which is useful for preaching, such as a wise saying or act of Jesus or the reaction of the listeners or onlookers.<sup>14</sup>

**2. Tale.** — Then a story about Jesus is recounted just for the pleasure of it, and not necessarily to edify or teach as in the case of paradigms, then it is a tale. An example would be Mk. 1:40-45. Just like any story told by a storyteller the tale is usually longer, more colorful and less heavy in doctrinal content. Tales originated

<sup>12</sup> Edgar McKnight. *What is Form Criticism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22

either by extending paradigm of introducing foreign motif to it or by borrowing foreign material. Mark 6:45-52 or Matthew 14:22-33 may have been result of the introduction of an epiphany motif, i.e. the manifestation of the divine. At times non-Christian stories were simply taken up in its entirety. Examples of tales are Mk. 1:40-45; 4:35-41; 5:1-20; 5:21-43; 6:35-44; 6:45-52; 7:32-37; 8:22-27; 9:14-29; Luke 7:11-16.<sup>15</sup>

3. **Legends.** — Legends for Dibelius are religious narratives of saintly men in whose works and fate are of popular interest. They arose in the Church as a result of the early Christians' religious desire to know more of the virtues and lot of holy men and women associated with Jesus, and later, of Jesus himself. The story of Jesus when he got lost in the temple when he was twelve years old is an example of this.<sup>16</sup>

Dibelius recognized the possibility of the religious interest growing out of proportion with the historical reality due to the accentuation of the miraculous so that the end result would be the transfiguration of the personality of the saintly man himself. Yet it cannot be denied that the narrator is also concerned with historical content passed on by tradition in the legend.<sup>17</sup>

4. **Myth.** — Dibelius believed that the gospels do not give us a mythological hero. That there are some elements of mythological persons interacting in the stories of Jesus, he, however, accepted. But these are minimal. Examples of this would be the baptismal miracle (Mark 1:9-11), the temptation of Jesus by the devil (Mark 1:12-12) and the transfiguration.<sup>18</sup>

### Rudolf Bultmann's Classification of Forms

Bultmann took to task both the narrative and discursive materials of the synoptic gospels.

#### A. Narrative:

1. **Miracle stories.** — The miracle stories of Bultmann correspond to the tales of Dibelius. They are stories of healings and miracles. What Bultmann notices in these, however, is its striking similarities to the Jewish and Hellenistic miracle stories. Those that bear similarities with the Jewish miracle stories such as the stilling of the storm of Jesus (Mark 4:35-41) and Mk. 6:34-44; Mk.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Loc. cit.*

1:40-45 can be said to be closer to the earliest Christian traditions than the other stories which are similar to Hellenistic miracles. By and large, however, miracle stories do not belong to the oldest strata of Christian tradition.<sup>19</sup>

**2. Legends and Historical Narratives.** — Legends for Bultmann are religious and edifying narratives which are not properly miracle stories although they may include the miraculous, and are not basically historical although they may have some historical basis. Stories, like the devil's temptation of Jesus which reminds one of great men like Buddha and the later Christian saints, can be said to belong to this. As such, legends can be classified under two headings: biographical legends, when it is concerned with the life of the religious hero, and faith or cult legend, when the story is in the context of the faith and worship of the community such as the story of Jesus Baptism.

Historical narratives are so dominated by legends that they are better included among legends.<sup>20</sup>

## **B. The Sayings of Jesus**

Bultmann divided the sayings of Jesus into Apophthegms and dominical sayings. In addition, however, he also discussed the "I sayings" and parables although in content they belong to dominical sayings.

**1. Apophthegms.** — This is basically the same as Dibelius paradigms. For Bultmann, however, these did not arise from preachings alone. Other causes can be given which give rise to various kinds of apophthegms:

- (i) controversy dialogue which the early Christian community had with their Jewish opponents such as the one in Mk. 3:1-6 on Sabbath healing.
- (ii) Scholastic dialogue from which arises a question, e.i. the chief commandment in Mk. 12:28-34.
- (iii) Biographical apophthegm, which attempts to give information concerning Jesus especially in relation to the message in a sermon.

All these apophthegms are not historical reports but constructions of the Church at its early stage to meet certain needs. It is also possible, according to Bultmann, that the early Christians could have easily given into the temptation to expand what the apop-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33



the gms give, such as making an unspecified questioner as opponent or a disciple of Jesus.<sup>21</sup>

**2. Dominical Sayings.** — These can be classified into three: Proverbs, which show Jesus as a teacher or wisdom; prophetic and apocalyptic sayings, which has to do with the proclamation of the coming of the kingdom of God with a call for repentance; statements regarding the Law and Jewish piety and regulation of the early Christian community. Example of proverbs are: Mt. 12:34; 6:34; 22:14; of prophetic and apocalyptic sayings: Mk. 1:15; Luke 10:23-34; Luke 6:20-21; and statements on behaviour: Mk. 7:15, Mk. 3:4; Mt. 18:15-17.<sup>22</sup>

**3. "I Sayings"** are those which are attributed to Jesus in speaking about himself and his mission: Mt. 5:17; Mk. 10:45. Parables are simple stories taken from everyday common human experiences and later related to the realm of the spiritual. It aims to call forth a judgement on the part of the hearer.

Although Jesus himself might have actually uttered these sayings and parables, Bultmann thinks that the Church might have given them new directions, expanded them or even incorporated similar Jewish sayings in them.<sup>23</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

**A Dead End?** From what has been said concerning the Form Criticism of Bultmann and Dibelius it would seem that the quest for the historical Jesus would reach a dead end, since if we follow the line of thinking of these critics, the written gospels would be nothing more than the collection of sayings and deeds of Jesus which had undergone a process of evolution so that it would be difficult if not impossible to ever be able to filter what is genuinely of Jesus from what is of the community, both as to form and to content.

#### **Bultmann's Emphasis on the Existential Value of the Gospels**

At this point, it will not be out of place to mention the attitude of Bultmann towards the gospels. For him, the value of the gospel should not be sought on the historical level but on the existential level. What Jesus actually did and taught two hundred years ago is irrelevant to man's salvation here and now. It is what one reads now in the gospels that really matters. Hence, one's

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

attention should not focus on the historical Jesus as reconstructed from exegetical and philological investigation of the gospels, but on the Lord whom Christians adore and whom one meets in the gospels.

### Recent Views Concerning the Problem

Since Bultmann and Dibelius, however, not a few scholars, the former students of Bultmann included, contributed their insight into the problem of the historical Jesus. The view that seems to prevail at present in biblical circles is the one which accepts the fact that although it is an impossibility to reconstruct fully from the gospels the historical life and teaching of Jesus, yet considers it possible to make contact with the historical Jesus through the gospels since the gospels were basically faithful to the historical Jesus. The figure of Jesus loomed so great in the early Christian Community that it would be quite arbitrary to attribute everything concerning Jesus to the creative power of the early Church. The early Christian community were as concerned about the historical Jesus as they were concerned about his real personality. Consequently, the distinction made between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is now being thought of as rather a fundamental error that had deluded many in the quest for the real Jesus. History can only provide facts and raise questions. Ultimately it is the faith which provides the interpretation to the facts and the answer to the question. Incidentally, the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith started at the turn of the 20th Century, a time when historians believed that absolute objectivity and total impartiality was possible.<sup>24</sup>

### Date of Composition of the New Testament

1	Thessalonians	—	c. 51	2	Timothy	—	c. 67
2	Thessalonians	—	c. 51		Apocalypse	—	c. 67/68
1	Corinthians	—	c. 54/57		Hebrews	—	c. 70
2	Corinthians	—	c. 57	2	Peter	—	c. 90
	Phillipians	—	c. 56/57		James	—	c. 90
	Jalatians	—	c. 57		Jude	—	c. 90
	Romans	—	c. 57/58	1-3	John	—	c. 100/150
	Philemon	—	c. 61/63		Mark	—	c. 65/70
	Colossians	—	c. 61/63		Matthew	—	c. 70
	Ephesians	—	c. 61/63		Luke	—	c. 70
1	Peter	—	c. 64		Acts	—	c. 70
1	Timothy	—	c. 65		John	—	c. 100/150
	Titus	—	c. 65				

<sup>24</sup> Xavier Leon-Dufour. *The Gospels and the Jesus of History*. New York: Doubleday and Co. Inc., 1968, pp. 296-298.

## DIALOGUE

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We invite readers to study this article and send comments to the editor.

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### TOTAL SALVATION: KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN ASIA TODAY

*(A talk to Priests and Seminarians)*

by

**Carlos H. Abesamis, S.J.**

Each of you is or wants to be a dedicated priest, with a great concern for the glory of God and the service of men. Let this be our premise. You are Asian; Filipino. And you are christian; a priest. You are asking yourself the question: "How can I best be God's priest for my people today? I belong to the Christian community not only in my parish, but also in my diocese, in my country, in Asia. Now, what is the mission of the Church in Asia today; and what role am I to play, as a priest, in this mission of the Church?"

The Church in Asia today has experienced growth in the last six to seven years. It is a growth in awareness or consciousness of its mission. In arriving at this stage of growth, we, the Church, have had to overcome some of our backwardness, superficiality, indifference, our fear and cowardice,

even our pharisaism. We had to learn to listen to the world in which we live; to other men, who in religion or ideology are non-Christian; to the ordinary masses of our people who experience the real life of the Asian.

What is this new consciousness of the Church? What is this new awareness of its mission? It is expressed in the Final Statement of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, held in Taipeh 22-27 April 1974.

According to this statement of our Asian Bishops, the mission (of evangelization) of the Church in today's Asia comprises three tasks:

(1) To build the local Church, i.e., to make the Church native, "indigenous". For us, this means that our Christian community must become Filipino, not only

in its external expressions (e.g. the forms of liturgy or worship) but also in its articulation of the Faith (i.e., theology) and in innermost act and life of Faith (i.e., Christian existence).

(2) To be in dialogue with the non-Christian religions of Asia. This second task is more real for other Asian communities where the religion of the many is Buddhism or Shintoism or Taoism or Islam or Hinduism or some other Asian religion. For us in the Philippines, this means specially dialogue with our Muslim brothers. This dialogue with the non-Christian religions is a mutual learning and enrichment between them and us.

(3) To be in dialogue with the people, specially the poor. This means that, if we open our eyes and ears and hearts, we will discover that the multitudes of our brother-human beings in Asia live a dehumanizing and dehumanized life. A serious investigation will further lead us to see that this massive dehumanization among millions in Asia is not caused by God's will or men's laziness but rather by material poverty or the lack of access to material goods and resources; that, in turn, this material poverty is caused by unjust political-economic structures by which the multitudes of Asia, Latin America and Africa are oppressed. "Most of Asia is made up of multitudes of the poor. Poor, not in human values, qualities, nor in human

potential. But poor, in that they are deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to create a truly human life for themselves. Deprived, because they live under oppression, that is, under social, economic and political structures which have injustice built into them." (**FABC Statement**, no. 19). The task is "to bring about social justice in our societies," that is, to seek "the change and transformation of unjust social structures." (no. 21).

The three tasks are briefly:

(1) to create a Christianity and a Church that is truly Filipino.

(2) to live and work in mutual respect and enrichment with the non-Christian religions.

(3) to preach and work for the liberation of the oppressed from unjust systems and structures.

This is the mission (of evangelization) of the Church in Asia today.

But in order to fully appreciate the mission of the Church in Asia today, we must have in our hands the key that will open the doors to an understanding of contemporary Christian reflection as it is developing in the Third World today. That key is **SALVATION**, or, the proper understanding of salvation.

What is salvation?

Salvation means salvation of the soul from sin so that after death the soul may go to heaven. Is this a correct understanding? Yes — within a certain historical context (i.e., the historical context of the Greco-Roman world and at a time when the first and second generations of Christians have passed away). But it remains an incomplete understanding, or rather, salvation itself is incomplete and PARTIAL if it is to be understood as the salvation of the soul merely, from sin merely, for heaven merely.

The more complete and more biblical understanding of salvation is TOTAL salvation. This means it is a salvation **not just of the soul**, but the totality of the whole man, mankind, of the whole created universe. It is a salvation **not just from sin**, (although sin remains the most important of all human evils to be liberated from), but from all human evils such as disease, hunger, poverty, death, corruption, weeping, mourning. Positively salvation means those blessings of the transfigured world to come: indestructible life, peace, joy, resurrection, a reborn and transformed cosmos, the Spirit of God regenerating and transforming the hearts of men. Further, salvation does **not simply mean heaven**, i.e., that place or state up there, where the disembodied soul rests in the blissful contemplation of God; it is rather a "world to come", a transformed cosmos, a "new heaven and a new

earth," where there will be no more mourning nor tears nor pain nor death and where all things will have been made new.

Total salvation means salvation of myself, mankind and the universe (not just the soul) from all evils and afflictions (not only from sin) to be consummated in a "new heaven and a new earth" (not just heaven).

How can we show that this is salvation biblically understood? Let us go through a brief historical and biblical consideration of the following questions: What did salvation mean to the Hebrews or Israelites (roughly 2000 BC-586 BC)? To the prophets (roughly 750-400 BC)? To the apocalyptic writers (200 BC-200 AD)? To Jesus? To the Early Church (30-100 AD)? To the post-apostolic age (100-today)? To us today in 1974?

The most fundamental insight of the **Israelitic Faith** is that God works in the events of Israel's and the world's history as a saving God. Their religious and national literature, which we call the Old Testament, is basically a record of Yahweh's saving actions or Yahweh's deeds of salvation. And such salvation was not the salvation of the soul from sin but the bestowing of the blessings that affect the totality of the life of an Israelite and of the Israelitic nation. Thus the blessings promised by God: I will give you your rains in their season,

and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit; you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land securely; I will give peace in the land, I will remove evil beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land; I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people. (See Lev. 26:3-13)

All the **prophets**, of course, shared this basic and traditional insight regarding salvation; they believed in God's salvific actions that bring blessings to Israel in the totality of its needs. But many of the prophets went further and spoke about a future Saving Action of God, or rather, the Saving Action of God in future which would bring to Israel (and to the world) a final and definitive salvation. In speaking about this definitive and final salvation, these prophets meant total salvation. For example, Deutero-Isaiah (Is 40-55) announced that this saving action of God would bring about another liberating Exodus for the exiled Jews in Babylon, and, Jeremiah said that this saving action of God will bring home the scattered sons of Israel so that they will sing aloud in the heights of Jerusalem, radiant over the goodness of the Lord, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be a watered garden, and they shall languish no more; the maidens shall rejoice in the dance, the young men

and the old shall be merry; Yahweh will turn their mourning into joy, Yahweh will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow (see Jer 31:10-13). And Ezechiel adds: Yahweh will cleanse his people, he will give them a new heart and will put in them a new spirit (Ez 36:25). The prophets thought in terms of total salvation.

But it is specially among the **Jewish apocalyptic writers** (200 BC-200 AD) that we see clearly the meaning of total salvation. They too announced the future (and imminent) exercise of God's final Saving Action, and for many of them this action would bring the end of time, the end of history and the beginning of a transformed universe, a new heaven and a new earth where there will be no more mourning nor tears nor pain nor death — because all things will have been made new. (Cf. Rev. 21:1-5). It was the apocalyptists who really spoke about a salvation that is really final and really total.

What about Jesus? Did he find the foregoing tradition defective and so changed or corrected it? Did he "spiritualize" salvation so that now he was concerned with what really mattered, the salvation of the soul from sin? No. Salvation for Jesus was also total salvation. His works — his acts of forgiving sins, his exorcisms, but also his healings of diseases and afflictions — were meant to be actualizations and manifesta-

tions of God's final Saving Action through him: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Mt 11:4-5). Jesus also pointed to the coming of the Son of Man who in the future would come in judgment and salvation for men and the universe. Thus for Jesus, salvation was also total; and it is already inaugurated in him though still to be consummated in the final coming of the Son of Man.

And how did the **Early Church** (30 AD - 100 AD) understand salvation? It too spoke about total salvation. Leaving aside for now a more differentiated description of the Early Church's growth in consciousness, we can describe its belief with approximate accuracy as follows: We believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the bringer of final salvation. Now? During his ministry he brought the blessings of forgiveness to sinners, liberation to the possessed, food to the hungry, healing to the sick. Jesus died and his death gave the blessing of forgiveness of men's sins. Jesus rose and he gave men the great blessing of the final age: the Spirit among men. Thus we, the Early Church, look back and see total salvation already begun in Jesus, the Christ. Moreover, we also look to the future and pray for the speedy return of the Lord Jesus so that he might

bring to completion, through the transformation of all things, the salvation he had already begun.

What result did we get from our rather hurried journey through historical and biblical theology? The result should be the realization that salvation, biblically understood, means total salvation.

It was after the biblical age, i.e., after 100 AD, that salvation began to be understood as partial salvation, i.e., the salvation of the immortal soul from its sin so that after death it may enter heaven. Briefly, the more significant factors that account for this shift are the following: (1) the diminution of the hope that the Lord would come again soon for the final consummation, and, the passing away in death of the first and second generations of Christians (2) the moving away of the Christian Church from its Jewish cradle to the Greek world where man is understood as composed of perishable body and immortal soul.

And today? Clearly we are heirs to the heritage of partial salvation. But we must try to recapture today something of the original and biblical meaning of salvation as total salvation. We, as we stand today in 1974, are basically in the same situation as the Early Church. We look back to the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and we see total salvation

already begun. We look forward to the future and we wait for total salvation still to be completed. But the following consideration is what is more useful for us today: between the first and "second coming", we have the active presence of the Spirit of God or the Spirit of the Risen Christ, who, we may presume, is concerned even today with the total and integral fulfillment of men and the created world.

I said that the proper understanding of salvation as total salvation is the key to the understanding of contemporary Christian reflection and of the three tasks of the Church in Asia today. Let us briefly recall the three tasks; first, the indigenization of the Church, second, dialogue with non-Christian religions, third, human liberation from unjust and oppressive structures. Of these three tasks, the most important and most indispensable is the third. Indigenization without human liberation is a spurious sort of indigenization; for, this would mean, for example, creating native songs, architecture or liturgy without facing up to the human problem which is most indigenous to Asia and the Philippines, i.e., structural injustice and massive poverty. Similarly, to dialogue with non-Christian religions about doctrine, spirituality or metaphysics without touching what we and they do about salvation and human liberation would be

a superficial dialogue. In the brief space and time we have, then, let me just show the connection of total salvation with the third task.

To be accurate, this is what we gather from Scripture: what we have called final and total salvation has begun in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and it will be consummated in his "second coming". Nothing much is said about the time between his **first coming and his "second coming"**. (This is due in large part to the outlook or perspective of the Early Church, i.e., its hope that the "second coming" and final consummation would dawn upon them soon.) We ask: What about today? Well, the most significant characteristic of this time between the two comings of Christ is the active presence of the Spirit of God in the world. What will prevent us from saying that this Spirit of God is at work today for our salvation from sin and from other afflictions and evils? And what is the most significant human evil in our world today? According to the ever clearer discernment of even the Christian community, it is the dehumanization of millions caused by unjust and oppressive systems and structures. If so, then the human events, movements, efforts to transform these unjust systems and structures for the liberation of the oppressed are where we principally find God's saving



action in our world today. Salvation for our day is in great part the liberation of the oppressed.

We can more fully appreciate the key sentence in the statement of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1971: — action for justice or (which is the same thing) participation in the transformation of the world, is an essential part of the preaching of the Gospel and of the mis-

sion of the Church for the redemption of the human race. (Cf. Introduction, **Justice in the World**).

Such are some reflections, for us Filipino priests and seminarians, on the mission of the Church in Asia, as we preach God's good news to our people, and, as we lead our Christian community in worship and in life.

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## MANIFESTO ON TORTURE

Bishops Jesus Varela (Ozamis), Antonio Nepomuceno (Cotabato) and Francisco Claver (Bukidnon), head a group of signatories who sent a Manifesto on Torture to the national leadership on January 9, 1975.

They said, in part: "In the wake of the repeated and well-documented incidence of TORTURE by the Military, we raise our voice in strong protest against such inhuman practices. The national leadership must put a stop to these crimes against human integrity and dignity".

"We ask that the Department of National Defense issue, if it has not done so already, a formal circular to all branches of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, down to the municipal level, warning them that the use of TORTURE of any kind, on any person for any purpose, is NOT justified under any conditions; that it constitutes a serious crime; and that it will be severely dealt with. And we want the national leadership to apply the full force of the law to enforce this order, and to show proof of sincerity by prosecuting those found guilty of this crime...."

"This is not the first time that we have raised a protest against acts of torture. We have from time to time made this the subject of our CMLC dialogues both on the local as well as on the national levels. And yet, despite promises and assurances from the Military Authorities, TORTURE continues...."

"If, despite all our appeals to the national leadership, tortures of arrested suspects or detainees will continue we shall feel constrained TO ELEVATE THE MATTER TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES LIKE THE WORLD COURT AND THE PONTIFICAL COMMISSION ON JUSTICE AND PEACE".

# COMMUNICATION

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

## ON THE VALIDITY OF GENERAL ABSOLUTION

Dear Editor:

In one of the last issues of the highly respected magazine for priests PALABRA, I have come across a consultation of one of the subscribers to the editorial staff that might be of interest to the readers of the BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO.

The above mentioned subscriber asks the editors of PALABRA their opinion regarding the following procedure in the administration of the sacrament of reconciliation: The priest sits in the confessional and hears the confessions without giving the absolution. After a while, he comes out and gives general absolution.

The editors of PALABRA answer that this kind of collective absolutions are **not allowed**, under the circumstances cited in this case. They point out the recently promulgated Ritual which states that both the confession and the absolution are to be given **individually** for the valid reception of the sacrament. Furthermore, they add that this is so by divine right and, therefore, unchangeable. "Si quis dixerit absolutionem sacerdotis non esse actum iudiciale, anathema sit. Dz 919.

Now, this **actum iudiciale** requires: a) auctoritas iudicialis, b) cognitio causae, c) sententia iudicialis, d) **absolutio iudicialis**.

Finally, the editors of PALABRA state that those confessions are **invalid** and the penitents ought to confess again their sins.

A while ago, I learned that in various dioceses of the Philippines some priests have been following that particular way of hearing confessions, especially during Lent.

I am certain that they act with good faith and will, but I thought they need to be enlightened regarding this matter.

Sincerely yours.

(Sgd) RICARDO ENRIQUEZ  
Baguio City

# HERE AND THERE

## PRIEST'S DENOUNCEMENT EFFECTIVE

Fr. Edicio de la Torre's denunciation of torture inflicted on detainees at Camp Olivas, Pampanga, has resulted in the filing of charges against five officers of the armed forces and in the summary dismissal of seven enlisted men involved in the case.

Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile, on February 3, ordered the filing of charges against the five officers in accordance with the findings of investigators headed by Col. Jose O. Sta. Romana, AFP deputy inspector general.

The following officers were ordered charged: Lt. Col. Laurel R. Valdez, 1st Lt. Cesar R. Garcia, 2nd Lt. Alejandro Flores Jr., 2nd Lt. Arturo Lumibao, and 2nd Lt. Clifford Noveras.

Enrile directed the immediate designation of a pre-trial investigating officer to conduct the investigation of charges against the five officers, and if warranted by the findings of the investigation,

to refer the cases to a general court martial.

Those ordered summarily dismissed from the military service were M-Sgt. Cirilo Batingal, T-Sgt. Lucio Valencia, T-Sgt. Fajardo Cayetano, S-Sgt. Samson Rafer, C2C Bernabe Detecio, C2c Eddie Abalos and Cpl. Salvador Canillas.

Six other enlisted personnel were ordered administratively reprimanded. They were 2nd Lt. Amado Espino Jr., S-Sgt. Sabiano Hastela, S-Sgt. Placido Toringan, S-Sgt. Ernesto Cabanlit, CIC Severino Painlan and CIC Baylon Calinawan.

The inspector general's office reported that in a series of line-ups conducted at Camp Olivas early last month, 16 complaining detainees and witnesses positively identified the military officers and personnel as those responsible for their maltreatment while they were under detention.

## SACRED HEART FETE

The third centennial of the revelation of the Heart of Jesus was marked in Manila and Quezon City on February 15 and 16.

Principal speaker on the occasion was Rev. Francis Larkin, SS.CC., US national director of the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the Home.

On February 15, a national congress of the Apostleship of Prayer, attended by promoters and delegates of the organization was held at the Manila Cathedral. Julio Cardinal Rosales, DD, archbishop of Cebu, celebrated Mass.

A public manifestation of devotion to the Sacred Heart was held

posely for the bamboo organ by Gunther Braun, and Bach's "Wenn ich einmal soll scheiden" and Miguel Lopes' "Versos sobre el pange lingua."

The concert was televised live here and will be replayed throughout Germany.

A delegation headed by Fr. Mark Lesage, parish priest of Las Piñas, through the sponsorship of Sabena Airlines, came all the way from the Philippines to witness the event. Father Lesage said, he was deeply touched by the interest Europeans have shown in the bamboo organ. He noted that media gave unsolicited coverage to the bamboo organ.

The bamboo organ has helped project the Philippines in Europe, Fr. Lesage said, adding that he is

anticipating the same enthusiasm and interest from peoples all over the world.

The Las Piñas bamboo organ was brought here in July 1972 to be restored in the organ factory of Johannes Klais. Now completely restored, it is unsurpassed in its tonal quality.

Europeans have been coming to Bonn just to see the bamboo organ. Those who have heard it are amazed at the uniqueness of the different sounds emanating from it. Some have been moved to tears.

It will be flown back to Manila in March via Sabena Airlines, the official carrier of the bamboo organ. A big celebration and welcome awaits the return of the world's only bamboo organ.

## OUR MOTHER

### Tenth of a Series

## FACTS RELATED TO THE VENERATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE PHILIPPINES — I\*

- \* We Filipinos are religious. Thousands of churches, all over the Islands, from Batanes to Jolo, testify that Christianity has become part of our life. We are the Christian country of Asia.
- \* *Our practice of religion has taken on a color that makes it all our own — specifically, Filipinos. It springs from our very life.*
- \* Our devotion is deep. It is not based on emotion, nor on credulity. It proceeds from faith.
- \* Four hundred and sixty-three parishes, in the Philippines, are dedicated to the Mother of God.
- \* *One hundred of our parishes are named in honor of the Immaculate Conception. Sixty are dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Thirty are consecrated to Our Lady of Lourdes, twenty-four to Our Mother of Perpetual Help, and twenty-three to Our Lady of Carmel.*
- \* Filipino shrines to the Blessed Virgin Mary are focal points of national pilgrimages:

*Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in Antipolo, Rizal*

*Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City*

*Our Lady of Charity and Our Lady of Badoc in Ilocos*

*Our Lady of Piat in Cagayan Valley*

*Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan*

*Our Lady of Salambao in Obando, Bulacan*

*Our Lady of Candelaria of Mabitan, Laguna*

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\* Summary of the First Part of "Ang Mahal na Birhen," Pastoral Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary by the Bishops Conference of the Philippines. First Installment. Reprinted from "The Communicator" published by the National Office of Mass Media.

*Our Lady of Caysasay in Taal, Batangas*  
*Nuestra Señora Virgin de Regla, in Lapulapu City*  
*Nuestra Señora del Pilar, in Zamboanga*

- \* One of the three ships that reached the Philippines in the first voyage of Magellan, in 1521, was the **Concepcion** — named after the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
- \* **February 6, 1578, Pope Gregory XIII decreed that the Manila Cathedral should be dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bishop Domingo de Salazar, the first Bishop of the Philippines, erected the Cathedral under this title on December 21, 1581.**
- \* *On the 13th of August, 1595, Clement VIII decreed that the Cathedrals of Nueva Segovia and of Caceres be erected under the same title: The Immaculate Conception.*
- \* A Confraternity of the Rosary existed in 1588.
- \* **In 1749, Father Murillo Velarde, one of the great historians of the early Philippines, portrays the popular recitation of the Rosary as a remarkable feature of the devotion to Mary in these Islands.**
- \* *In our own day, the weekly novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help causes traffic problems every Wednesday.*
- \* **In the ordinary Filipino home, even when their income is modest, there is a family altar, with a statue of the Virgin.**
- \* **You find a picture of Mary in the poorest shack, in the slums of the cities, in buses, in jeepneys. Grottoes dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes are in private gardens and in public places, along the highways and in tiny homes.**
- \* *In many towns, civic ordinances provide that all traffic should stop during the recitation of the Angelus.*

# HOMILETICS

By

**Regino Cortes, O.P.**

## I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES

### SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 4, 1975

**First Reading : Acts 8:5-8. 14-17**

**Second Reading: I Pt. 3:15-18**

**Gospel Reading: John 14:15-21**

A. The incidents mentioned in the **First Reading** happened after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, the first martyr, who in a way gave his life for the universal spread of the Gospel. Two important consequences immediately followed during the persecution of the Christians after Stephen's death: the development of the Church and the conversion of St. Paul.

The spread of the Gospel to Samaria was especially associated with Philip, one of the first seven deacons (Acts 6:5). His work of evangelization in that region was extraordinarily fruitful. The region mentioned does not necessarily mean the city of Samaria which at that time was known as Sebaste but the whole Samaritan province. Many accepted the faith and were baptized. For the first time in biblical records a distinction was made here between "baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus" which the deacons were able to administer and the "reception of the Holy Spirit by the laying of hands" which was reserved to the Apostles. This has been considered as the basis for the proper ministers of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. Deacons can baptize but not confirm which is reserved to the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles.

B. **The Gospel Reading.** The coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Christ is in fact the fulfilment of His promise made to the Apostles during the Last Supper discourse. "I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you for-

ever." This first happened at Pentecost and afterwards during the administration of baptism and confirmation. "Another Advocate" exactly means that the one to be sent by the Father would be different from the Person of Christ — the Trinitarian image is here implicit. Up to this point Jesus had been acting as Advocate; the moment he goes up to heaven he will send the Advocate to us (Jn. 16:7).

C. The Second Reading from Peter is a great consolation for those who suffer persecution for the sake of Christ. These consoling words should be borne in mind by every suffering Christian: "if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong."

### SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION (May 11, 1975)

**First Reading : Acts 1:1-11**

**Second Reading: Eph. 1:17-23**

**Gospel Reading: Mt. 28:16-20**

A. The First Reading. In the first chapter of the Acts, St. Luke gave an important notice that the risen Lord appeared to his disciples many times during a period of forty days before his definitive Ascension into heaven. This is a precision from a mistaken impression which could be gathered from his gospel (Lk. 24:36-50) which seems to place the Ascension immediately after Christ's apparition to his apostles. This is not in any way against the theological doctrine that our Lord after his resurrection is "seated at the right hand of the Father." According to St. Peter in Acts 10:41 these apparitions had the objective of raising convinced witnesses of the resurrection. "Three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses — we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead."

With the promise of sending the Holy Spirit our Lord again reminded the Apostles of their mission as His witness not only in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria but to the ends of the earth. After this the visible contact of Jesus with the world came to an end. Before the eyes of his disciples he was lifted up and vanished from their sight.

B. The weight of attention in the text of the Second reading is on the Father that even the greatness of Christ proclaimed on vv. 20-23 is presented as the work of the Father.



Paul speaks first on the irradiation of God's glory on the Christians to let them have full knowledge of Him. This cannot in any way be penetrated by the natural light of reason but by the "spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed." (The Apostle does not speak of any private revelation but the openness of man's spirit to perceive the revelation made once and for all by Christ.)

Next Paul enumerates that which God has done in Christ. He raised him from the dead and exalted him giving him the position of sitting at his right hand which indicates equality.

C. The first verses from St. Matthew taken as the Gospel reading in today's Mass conclude the narration of the first evangelist. It does not narrate the ascension but gives a summary of Christ's final instructions to his apostles. According to the text this apparition happened in Galilee reporting the command of our Lord to preach "making disciples of all the nations; baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Spirit," with his promise of perpetual assistance.

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 18, 1975

**First Reading :** Acts 2:1-11

**Second Reading:** 1 Cor. 12:3b-7. 12-13

**Gospel Reading :** Jn. 20:19-23

A. **The First Reading.** The sending of the Holy Spirit which Jesus had promised so many times to his disciples (cf. Jn. 14:16; 16:17; Acts 1:4,8; Lk. 24:49) happened during the Jewish feast of Pentecost which was celebrated 7 weeks or the 50th day after the Pasch. In Hebrew it is called **Shavu'ot** or feast of weeks. "They," mentioned in the first verse does not mean the hundred and twenty who were present during the election of the successor of Judas but rather the group mentioned in Acts 1:12-14.

The coming of the Holy Spirit was accompanied by sensible signs: something which sounded like a powerful wind filling the whole house (cf. Jn. 3:8; 20:22) and something like tongues of fire, separating and coming to rest on each of them.

The result of the descent of the Holy Spirit was an extraordinary spiritual transformation of the Apostles: they began to speak foreign languages, they were filled with courage. Since it was a great feast in Jerusalem, many Jews from the Diaspora were present being amazed to find men from Galilee speaking their own tongues.

**B. The Second Reading.** The Holy Spirit's presence in the Church has been experienced in various ways and at the Church of Corinth to which St. Paul was writing various spiritual gifts became manifest. St. Paul wanted to make it clear to the minds of the Corinthians that these various gifts or charismata come from the same Spirit. Though there are many parts of the body they are unified by the same Spirit. The Spirit, therefore, is the source of unity in the Church.

**C. The Gospel reading** narrates the appearance of the Risen Christ on the evening of the first day of the week, which in Jewish week corresponds to our Sunday.

His appearing to them in spite of the doors being closed showed that he possesses that glorious form of existence not subject to the laws of space. This could make them believe that he was only a kind of ghost or spirit. To dispel this doubt he showed them the wounds of his hands and sides.

At this apparition Jesus gave to his apostles the power to forgive sins once promised to Peter in Mt. 16:19 and to all the apostles in Mt. 18:18. Jesus confers to the Apostles and their successors that power over sin which he himself had exercised during his lifetime.

## SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

May 25, 1975

**First Reading :** Ex. 34:4b-6:8-9

**Second Reading:** 2 Cor. 13:11-13

**Gospel Reading:** Jn. 3:16-18

**A.** The episode in the **First Reading** is part of the renewal of the Covenant which, according to the sequence of the biblical narrative was broken by the people with the construction of the golden calf whom they worshipped and to whom they offered sacrifice in consequence of which Moses broke the tablets of the Law because of his anger (Ex. 32:1-24). In ch. 34 Moses was ordered by Yahweh to "cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, come up on the mountain and He will inscribe on them the words that were on the first tablets which Moses broke." Moses did as Yahweh has told him and was privileged to witness the divine theophany. Moses heard the name of Yahweh from God himself: a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness. Then Moses makes a threefold request: 1) to let the Lord go with them; 2) to forgive them their faults; 3) to adopt them as His heritage.

**B.** The text of the **second reading** is taken from the conclusion of the second canonical epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians. The

concluding phrase is being constantly used as our greetings during the Eucharistic celebration; a greeting in the Blessed Trinity. Greeting each other with the "holy kiss" seems to refer to the kiss of peace during liturgical celebrations especially during the Eucharistic Sacrifice. This passage is the shortest text in St. Paul where the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity is very clearly enunciated.

C. God's sending his only begotten son was an act of love for the world or for men of whom he wills salvation. All men receive the possibility of acquiring eternal life believing in the Son of God and fulfilling His demands.

The objective of this most wonderful expression of love was not certainly the judgment of the world but its salvation, "so that through him the world might be saved." Later Judaism as expressed for example in the book of I **Henoch**, 45-64 would consider the Messiah above all as an eschatological Judge. Even for John the Baptist the Messiah would be he who would lay the axe to the roots of the trees, "so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire." (Mt. 3:10). In contrast with this assertion, v. 17 of St. John underlines that God has sent his Son to save the world, which again was expressed by the Samaritans; "Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard him ourselves and we know that he really is the savior of the world." (Jn. 4:42).

## II. HOMILIES

May 4, 1975: Sixth Sunday of Easter

### TRUE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

**THEME:** I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate.

**OUR CONDITION:** It is surprising how ingenious people can be wanting to escape reality, a reality which they think to be oppressive, unbearable, cruel. They resort to every kind of artificial trappings like alcohol drinks, drugs, or simply day-dreaming, building castles in the air. They think they are escaping reality while in fact they are only trying to mask their cowardice in confronting their problems. What may perhaps be alright is when the reality from which they want to extract themselves is only the pseudo-reality, the reality which they have built in their minds, or the reality created in them by the movies or TV sets, or their high-walled homes and thick carpeted offices. But lacking any reliable guide they might easily fall into another false reality much worse than the first.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Our Lord promised to send an Advocate not only to plead our cause before the Father in as much as he knows perfectly well our limitations as creatures but also to aid us to live our true life. The Advocate is the Spirit of truth who would show us our real existence, how to merge ourselves with reality without flinching, without escaping, because the moment we escape it we fall into another terrible reality outside the compass of God's love.

**Our Response:** Christians have the noble mission to bring the world to its senses by presenting to it what real life should be. Sometimes the real truth is far from what the world expects of it that is why our Lord cautioned that the world can never receive the Spirit of truth "since it neither sees nor knows him." Knowing truth and acting according to its demands, being docile to the Spirit of truth, is that which makes Christianity a real honest to goodness religion of life.

May 11, 1975: Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension

### REBIRTH IN THE SPIRIT

**THEME:** All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

**OUR CONDITION.** Statistics show that Christians are still a minority as far as the world population is concerned, that millions and millions of people are still waiting to be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Christian love demands, in compliance with the command of our Lord before his ascension, that we, his followers, should share this great gift of salvation to all men. We are rich in graces, the others are poor or have none at all. If the condition for being with the Risen Christ is supernatural life, and this supernatural life is given to us through baptism, then this sacrament is indispensable for salvation. Supernatural life grows and develops in analogy to physical life. Actual graces and the other sacraments of the Church are indispensable aids for this development in spiritual life. It does not however mean that God could not give supernatural life to an individual without passing through the sacrament of baptism, but ordinarily it is through this sacrament by which divine life starts in a person.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** Many times in the gospels and in the writings of St. Paul this rebirth to a new life has been insistently inculcated. So much is clear from the words of our Lord to Nicodemus: "I tell you most solemnly, unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:5). Again in St. Paul we read these words: "when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life." (Rom. 6:4).

**OUR RESPONSE:** With the Ascension of our Lord into heaven the history of salvation has entered into a new phase. Individual Christians are now called to apply the salvific graces merited by Christ to themselves and to other men under the action of the Holy Spirit. Far should it be for Christians to keep these means of salvation only to themselves. That would be tantamount of betraying the trust our Lord has given to them. The Church must needs shine to all men as the image of the Risen Christ.

**May 18, 1975: Pentecost Sunday**

## **RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**THEME:** As the Father sent me, so I am sending you: receive the Holy Spirit.

**OUR CONDITION:** Since 1967 a spiritual resurgence has begun in the United States with the Holy Spirit as the singular object of concern, otherwise known as the Pentecostal Movement or Charismatic Renewal. It aims to revive the spirit of Pentecost with its accompanying charismatic manifestations. These charismatic renewal groups have already been formed here in the Philippines but were accepted with diverse reactions both from the clergy and the laity. Not knowing the real demarcation line between the psychological phenomena and the strictly supernatural it is feared that the two levels could be easily confused taking a phenomenon to be an authentic manifestation of the Spirit when in fact it could only be psychological. Another point of caution may be the danger of distinction in fact of a hierarchical Church and a charismatic Church.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** The Holy Spirit promised by our Lord even before his passion and reiterated before his ascension to be sent by the Father was finally realized on that glorious Pentecost day, fifty days after his resurrection. This manifestation of the Spirit was certainly different from the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles by Christ immediately after his resurrection: "Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained," (Jn. 20:22-23). Still it was the same Spirit which the Apostles received during this occasion and the one who visibly descended on them on Pentecost day.

**OUR RESPONSE:** There could be no distinction nor confusion, therefore, between the hierarchical Church and the charismatic Church. There is only one Church which is both hierarchical and charismatic. Nor should we be surprised about the workings of the Holy Spirit in our present day Church. The same Spirit who was active during the formative years of the Church is the same Spirit who is active in the Church of today. Any charismatic group or any group for that matter which dissociates itself deliberately from the hierarchical Church could be immediately suspected of loosing that vital link from the true Spirit of Christ.

May 25, 1975: Solemnity of the Most Blessed Trinity

### TRINITARIAN LOVE

**THEME:** God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved.

**OUR CONDITION:** It is not exactly true as the lyrics of a song has expressed that "what the world needs now is love sweet love." Perhaps it would be truer to say that "what the world needs now is to love, sweetly to love." For the world has forever been the object of God's love: "Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life." But the world has always been failing in its part to love. It is just enough to scan the pages of the history books, read the daily news bulletin, to be convinced that mutual human hatred has been the order of the world's life-story.

**THE GOOD NEWS:** God made a covenant with the old chosen community of salvation, the Jewish people, to be the vehicle of his love to mankind. For a number of times this covenant of love has been broken on the part of man but never on the part of God who has forever remained faithful to his covenant, so faithful in fact that he constantly reminds the unfaithful human party through signs of affliction, withdrawal of his blessings, punishments, that His covenant cannot just be taken for granted for it would spell man's doom.

To view God in the Old Testament as a vengeful, terrible God because of stories of punishments in the Bible misses the total picture in as much as it views only the consequence of infidelity and not the infidelity itself on the part of man. But the God of the Old Testament was not the God of wrath. He has the God of "tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness" (Ex. 34:6).

**OUR RESPONSE:** A boy who gets a stomach ache for eating a half-cooked "bibingka" in spite of warnings from his mother could not blame his mother for the sickness. The mother, if she really cares should all the more give the child a medicine, however bitter it may be, to cure the stomach-ache. Pain and punishment is not exactly a sign of cruelty but could be a consequence of a love which seeks conversion, reconciliation, and renewal of heart.

## SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Hendrickx, Herman, CICM: *The Story Behind the Gospels*. The SCC Development and Research Foundation, 1974. — 118 pages. — Paperback.

*The Story Behind the Gospels* is another book to cherish and to be included in our libraries. In this book, Hendrickx, CICM, a doctor of Theology and Scriptures gives us a wide resume of the life that evolved around a people and a nation; and acquaints us with the condition of time the Gospels were written by familiarizing us with its social and historical perspective.

The scriptural touch of the author is even more fascinating to the readers as it involves the experiences and participation of the early Christian communities.

Needless to say, the book contains a systematic and exegetical exposition of the Synoptic Gospels. As there is a story behind every man and nation; there is also a story behind every book and the story behind the Gospels is quite an experience.

edd b. lleva

Anonymous: *Biblia sa mga Mayukmok*.

"THE BIBLE FOR THE OPPRESSED" is a 165-page compilation in Cebuano of Scriptural passages that direct man to give his neighbor what is due him, in other words JUSTICE. It covers the writings of the Old Testament as well as those of New Testament. Excerpts from Church teachings, and those of some of the Fathers, from position papers of Bishops' Conference and other lay congresses, and from people who have dealt with the subject help to explain these scriptural bases.

The book especially calls the attention of Church leaders and civil administrators to scan once more the pages of the Holy Writ and rediscover for themselves what was God's word concerning man's dealing with other man and with firmness pass the word around and pattern their administrative acts in accord with this virtue. On the part of the "mayukmok" the small books is a piece that fits the program of "conscientization."

The small book drives home the point that JUSTICE is a condition if one must be a Christian. Furthermore, it cannot be laid aside in the building of a Christian society, where men may live in peace.

jonathan d. lao

*AN OINTING OF THE SICK* (with *Imprimatur* by Artemio G. Casas, D. D. July 10, 1974). Available at Catholic Trade School, 1916 Oroquieta, Manila (P. O. Box 2036), at ₱5.50 postpaid.



## 160 BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO DE FILIPINAS

As the new rite of the Anointing of the Sick is now compulsory, this manual, in the officially approved english text, is a most welcome addition to every priest's library or sick-call kit. The text of the Ordinary rite of anointing; rite of anointing during mass; celebration of anointing in a large congregation; continuous rite of penance, anointing and viaticum for those near death; rite of anointing without viaticum; and a highly informative appendix.

**WHEN DID WE SEE YOU?** The Weightier Things in a Christian Spirituality for Today, by Josue Mas. Available at Cardinal Bea Institute, Loyola House of Studies, P.O. Box 4082, Manila, P200.

What do the moral teachings of Jesus means today in the contemporary world? This is the question with which the booklet challenges the reader.

How shall I love my neighbor? (Mk. 12:29-31). To serve God's poor wholly and entirely: this is the contemporary way of loving one's neighbor. This love is to be lived in a world where the vast majority of humanity live under unjust systems and structures.

The past has been, to a large extent, a history of self-interest by men and societies who have gone by the name "Christian" but who have not understood Jesus' teachings. Jesus teaches one to forget one's self and one's self-interest: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, he must forget himself. . . (Mk. 8:34). Instead, Jesus directs his followers to look outwards to his neighbor: "You must love your neighbor." (Mk. 12:29-31).

It is now time to be sorry and repent (Mk. 1:15) for our self-seeking past. There is a need for a new spirituality. There is need for a re-discovered Christianity. We must revolutionize our attitudes and values. Between values of self-interest and values of selflessness — and — service there is war. The war is fought in the depths of our being.

This booklet edited in the Philippines invites the reader to reflect and meditate the sayings of Jesus. In this collection of the sayings of Jesus the reader can find **THE WEIGHTIER THINGS IN A CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY**.

### 2. Books from other countries

Bernhard, Jean et al: *Divorcio e Indisolubilidad del Matrimonio*. Controversia no. 17. Editorial Herder, 1974 — 212 págs. — Rústica 190 pesetas.

This volume about divorce, conjugal fidelity and indissolubility, and other related questions, belongs in the *Colección Controversia* published by Herder, and, as other books in this special group, of the ecumenical, "no-holds-barred" type. All opinions are expressed as in a brainstorming session, where freedom of research or academic latitudinarianism does not always bow down to orthodoxy. The partakers in such discussions are members of different religious persuasions. Book of this nature are not intended for every man of the street, but for Bishops, theologians and others who are fully qualified in engaging in dialogue with all kinds of people without danger of compromising truth and who are also endowed with an open mind readily adapt truth to different situations.

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