

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

**PRESENCE AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN
SOCIETY TODAY**

Paul VI

"ANG MAHAL NA BIRHEN"

CBCP Pastoral Letter

COMMISSION ON WOMEN

Archbishop E. Bartoletti

WOMEN'S YEAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

**THE CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION OF THE
PHILIPPINES**

Manuel Panta

THE KINGDOM OF GOD PREACHED BY JESUS

Basilio P. Balajadia

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

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EDITORIAL

Another Kind of Urgent Message

Reactions to an article entitled "Urgent Message to Mankind from the Mother of Jesus", published in a local magazine as "paid advertisement" on January 5, still appear in current issues of the same publication. Many more views on the article are exchanged in conversations that go unrecorded.

Some people have deplored the mixing of "ecclesiastically approved" apparitions and messages (those of Fatima) with those that had not yet merited the hierarchical nod. Some have been appalled by what they consider as yet one more proof of religious fanaticism or misguided religiosity. Some have resented the unflattering remarks about Teilhard de Chardin and the modernization of religion. But the majority of readers have been disturbed because they believe or feel inclined to believe the dark threats of calamity that would engulf the world unless sinners would repent and the Church would check deviations from its "original teachings" and age-old customs.

It is not our purpose to discuss the "Urgent Message" here. We simply want to point out that it serves to illustrate the fact and problem of "popular religiosity" that the Church has to face. **Popular religiosity**, according to our Bishops, "is manifested above all in a special sense of God and of His providence over our lives, of the special help and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints and in certain fundamental attitudes in the face of life and death. From these arise the popular devotions, novenas, processions, pilgrimages, fiestas, and the celebrations that surround baptism, first communion, marriage, death and burial." (Pastoral letter, *Ang Mahal na Birhen*, n. 70).

If the "Urgent Message" article has provoked so much discussion it is because it played on those very sentiments on which popular religiosity thrives: the desire to be somehow in touch with an awe-inspiring supernatural reality; the need to expiate sins and to be guarded from evil; love for traditional religious values, practices

and rituals; attachment to religion as something above the ordinary and demanding sacrifices; uneasiness with a theology and a spirituality that seek sophistication. If the article gave such a rough treatment to Teilhard de Chardin, it is because he represents those who attempt to express Christian beliefs in sophisticated terms familiar to highly scientific minds — a trend which is the antithesis of popular religiosity. And if the article is indeed disturbing, it is because it reflects a mentality that fails to distinguish between the praiseworthy and the deplorable aspects of popular religiosity.

The true "urgent message" that we can derive from the magazine write-up is that, the Philippine Church must learn to recognize the merits as well as the problems of popular religiosity in its task of evangelization today. Otherwise it risks becoming a Church out of touch with the masses or, on the other extreme, a Church out of step with modern times. It will deserve the warning directed by Christ to the Laodicean Church: "I know all about you: how you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were one or the other, but since you are neither, but only lukewarm, I will spit you out of my mouth" (Apocalypse 3:15-16).

Some people, like our friends at the Sunday Examiner of Hong Kong, have hailed the recent Pastoral Letter of our Bishops on Mary in Philippine Life Today — "Ang Mahal na Birhen" — mainly because of its emphasis on Mary and Social Justice in the concluding portion of the document (nn. 94-96). But this dimension of marian devotion will remain a program in paper until "the valid elements of an authentic faith, which are present in the profound religiosity of our people... (are) purified, interiorized, made more mature, and brought to bear only daily life" (Ang Mahal na Birhen, n. 70). The pivotal statements of the Pastoral Letter are in fact found in the section on Popular Religiosity, where our Bishops recognize that "popular religiosity in our country is a springboard as well as an invitation for the deepening of a more religious consciousness" (n. 70); that "the fundamental paschal dimension came to us through the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially through the recitation of and meditation on the mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary" (n. 72); and that "devotion to Mary is the safeguard for the preservation of our faith and the principle of deeper and fuller evangelization" (n. 73).

The true urgent message for us, then, is our Bishops' invitation to make our Christian religion, through devotion to Mary, both a popular religion and an enlightened way of life.

In This Issue

Filipino devotion to Mary is the central theme of this double issue. As promised in our January number (p. 56) we now publish our Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Mary in *Philippine Life Today*, **Ang Mahal na Birhen**. This Pastoral Letter was originally scheduled to be issued last August 15, and then the date was reset to December 8. As it turned out, February 2, Feast of the Presentation and first anniversary of Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation, "*Marialis Cultus*", is the date of issuance. Thus the Pastoral Letter not only incorporates the principles of marian devotional renewal stated in "*Marialis Cultus*", but it has proven to be an excellent opportunity for our Bishops to echo what the 1974 Synod of Bishops said about Popular Religiosity (see numbers 69-86). "*Ang Mahal na Birhen*" should be seen not so much as a peak of reflection on Filipino marian devotion, but as a middle-level height from which we can survey the past and the present. We must get our bearings and then courageously scale the heights of true religious renewal in our country.

The other theme presented in the following pages is the status of women, the focus of attention of the UN's International Women's Year. The Church's stand on this issue is stated and clarified in four articles published herein.

Women's Year in the Philippines should be an opportunity to liberate not so much the women in high society or in the middle class, but the working women in urban as well as rural areas. They are the more numerous and they are the ones who need liberation most.

As a salute to the apostolate of the Mass Media (which ecclesiastical circles prefer to call "media of social communication"), and in celebration of the Ninth World Communications Day (Sunday, May 11, Feast of the Ascension), we publish Manuel Panta's article on the Catholic Press Association of the Philippines.

POPE TO ITALIAN CATHOLIC JURISTS

PRESENCE AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY TODAY

On 7 December the participants in the 25th National Congress of the Union of Italian Catholic Jurists were received in audience by the Holy Father. The meeting with the Pope ended the Congress, which had opened on 5 December on the subject "Woman in present-day society".

Old and recent memories of your Union and even more of yourselves, illustrious and dear Italian Catholic Jurists, fill us with joy at this final meeting of your congress on "Woman in present-day Italian society". So we bid you a most hearty welcome. The subject you have tackled is such an important one that it would require far greater study and development than is possible in these short moments. We wish, however, to set forth to you some thoughts, not new to you, indeed, which

may contribute to the overall and universal view of the problem, all the more relevant today in view of the imminence of "International Women's Year", promoted by the United Nations for 1975.

You know that the Church also and in a particular way is directly interested in questions concerning the presence and role of woman in contemporary society, at all levels. We have set up a special Commission for the study of woman's problems for that very reason.

SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGES

We are in fact aware, like any other observer of contemporary events, of the process of socio-cultural transformation which has led also to considerable changes in the position and roles of woman. The rather rapid transition from a mainly agricultural society to a new type of society characterized by industrialization, with the consequent phenomena of

urbanization, the mobility and instability of the population, the changes in domestic life and social relations, has placed woman too at the centre of a crisis of institutions and morals. This crisis, which is not yet resolved, has had repercussions particularly on family relations, and on the educational mission and the very identity of woman as such and her whole involve-

ment in social life with work, friendships, welfare activities and relief. Even religious spirit and consequent practice have been affected.

Today, therefore, we are faced with some far-reaching phenomena: especially the equality of woman and her increasing emancipation with regard to man; a new conception and interpretation of her roles as

wife, mother, daughter, sister; her growing access to professional work on a wider and wider plane of specialization; her marked tendency to prefer work outside the home not without detriment to conjugal relations and above all to the education of the children, emancipated too soon from the authority of the parents, the mother particularly.

VALUES TO CONSIDER

It is clear that not everything is to be considered negative in this new state of affairs. On the contrary, it may perhaps be easier, in this context, for the woman of today and tomorrow to give full expression to all her energies. Even the erroneous experiences of these years may be useful if the wholesome principles of universal conscience are recognized in society, to arrive at a new equilibrium in domestic and social life.

The real problem consists in the recognition, the respect and, where necessary, the recovery of these principles, which are also irreplaceable values in the culture of an advanced people. Let us recall them briefly. Let us mention in the first place the functional differentiation, though identical nature, of woman as compared with man: hence the originality of her being, her psychology, her human and

Christian vocation; and also her dignity, which must not be degraded, as often happens today, in morals, work, indiscriminate promiscuity, publicity and entertainment. Let us add woman's primacy in the whole human area in which the problems of life, sorrow, assistance are most directly met with, particularly in motherhood.

These simple references to the development of woman's position in renewed society, could be summed up schematically as follows.

We certainly hope that woman will be recognized as having full civil rights, like man where this is not already the case;

That the exercise of professional, social and political functions will be made really possible for woman as for man, according to her personal capacities;

That the prerogatives of woman in married, family, educational and social life will not

be ignored; on the contrary, that they will be honoured and protected;

That the dignity of her person and of her status as a single woman, wife or widow will be

upheld and defended and that woman will be given the assistance she needs, especially when her husband is absent, disabled, imprisoned, that is, unable to carry out this function in the family.

RESPECT FOR WOMAN

These are all principles and values that, where they are respected, ensure woman her real, unique and peerless greatness. As we said on another occasion: "For us, woman is the reflection of a beauty that transcends her, the sign of a goodness that seem to us boundless, the mirror of the ideal human being, as conceived by God in his image and likeness. For us, woman is the vision of virginal purity, restoring the highest affective and moral sentiments of the human heart; for us she is the apparition, in man's loneliness, of his mate, capable of the supreme dedication of love, the resources of cooperation and assistance, the strength of faithfulness and industry, and the habitual heroism of sacrifice;

for us she is the mother—let us bow down before her! — the mysterious source of human life, where nature still receives the breath of God, the creator of the immortal soul . . .; for us she is humanity, bearing within her the best disposition for religious attraction and who when she wisely follows it, raises and elevates herself in the most genuine expression of femininity; and who therefore singing, praying, longing, weeping, seems to converge naturally towards a unique and supreme figure, immaculate and sorrowful, which a privileged Woman, blessed among all, was destined to realize, the Virgin Mother of Christ, Mary" (To the Italian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 29 October 1966; AAS, 8, 1966, p. 1168).

LOOK TO MARY

Far beyond the sphere of the conditions and problems raised at the sociological level, our apostolic ministry indicates to everyone, in theological and spiritual key, as a point of reference to solve also many worldly, family and social questions, that Creature whom Christ himself, her Son, called several times by the significant

name of "Woman". And it encourages the woman of today to look to that Type of true feminine promotion, resplendent with real beauty and spotless holiness, as tomorrow's feast indicates.

With these wishes, which spring from our heart, we impart to you our blessing.

LETTER ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN BUILDING A BETTER SOCIETY

by

Cardinal Jean Villot

On the occasion of the General Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (U.M.O.F.C.), which opened at Dar-Es-Salam, in Tanzania, on Saturday 14 September and continued until 24 September, on the subject "The U.M.O.F.C. as a factor of change for a more just society", His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State, Jean Villot, sent Miss Pilar Bellosillo, the General President of the Union, the following letter with the Holy Father's good wishes.

Madame President,

At the moment when the General Assembly of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations is opening at Dar-Es-Salam, the Holy Father charges me to convey his greetings and his cordial good wishes to you, to all the participants in this important meeting and, through them, to all the women they represent all over world.

The historic moment in which we live, and the place chosen for your Assembly, shed a highly significant light on the subject of your work, which is focused on the place and the role of woman in the building of a more just world. Does not our changing age reveal, in fact, the urgency of making better use of the specifically feminine contribution to society, while young Africa, strong in its dynamism and its centuries-old traditions of human, family and religious wisdom, presents itself as a symbol of your hopes?

SPECIFIC QUALITIES

Women are rightly more and more convinced that they have specific qualities to put at the service of the overall transformation of society which is taking place before our eyes. There is no doubt that this contribution may be of vital importance to work out a more human conception of society, thanks to a new art of living personal relations. It is the role of the Christian women you represent to imbue this action, in conformity with their own vocation,

with authentic spiritual and religious values, the source of which they find in the Gospel and which they endeavour to put into practice in their lives. It is their role, too, to educate the new generations to these values.

In this perspective, your present concern takes its place logically in the effort made by UMOFC for over half a century. Its endeavour to train, group together and represent women has enabled them to take a fuller part in the life and the mission of the Church, particularly within the Conference of the International Catholic Organizations. So the programme of your Assembly on justice must also be set in this continuity of a Church movement, always anxious about its reference to the essential, the token of its apostolic efficacy.

You know with what interest the Holy Father follows your efforts and shares your hopes. You would find a new proof of his pastoral concern, if that were necessary, in the recent creation of the study Commission on the role of woman in society and in the Church, charged with studying the specific mode of women's participation in community tasks. The Sovereign Pontiff is anxious to express to you his confidence that the work of the Assembly at Dar-Es-Salam will make a particularly qualified contribution to the work of promotion which is necessary at this moment when women are called to exercise new responsibilities in the many fields which he himself has recently recalled (cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, n. 34).

AN IMMENSE TASK

The necessary changes, varied though they may be according to countries and needs are not, however, without reference points. So the Holy Father encourages you to work in faithfulness to the Church and also in faithfulness to yourselves, that is, to the deep inner necessity through which women can make, thanks to their capacity for understanding, peace-making and self-dedication, the contribution which often turns out most effective to the building of a more just society, by improving immediately the relationships that are at hand. Concrete action, however humble it may be, has more reality than a purely ideological construction, especially when it unites an acute sense of present-day needs and their universality with deep understanding of their value for the preparation of the Kingdom of God. That is why reference to the Blessed Virgin — Christ's first and most perfect woman disciple — remains essential for any Christian conception of life, as the Sovereign Pontiff vigorously recalled once again in his Apostolic Exhortation on devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It makes it possible to

find the proper spiritual orientation and to unite all human efforts with him who alone can save them, Christ Jesus.

The task is an immense one. May the generosity of all women respond fully to the hopes placed in them. Asking the Lord to bless this desire to serve Him, the Holy Father invokes for you and all the women present at this Assembly or united in their hearts with you, the grace of the Holy Spirit so that He may enlighten you about what the world and the Holy Spirit expect of your active collaboration, and he willingly sends you his fatherly Apostolic Blessing.

Happy to transmit this message to you, please accept, Madame President, with my personal wishes for the work of the Assembly, the expression of my religious respect.

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FIRST WOMAN ENVOY TO THE VATICAN

Bernadette Olowo of Uganda has the distinction of being the first woman to serve as ambassador to the Vatican. When Pope Paul VI received from her, on January 23, the Letters by which she was accredited as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uganda to the Holy See, he buried an unwritten rule that has barred women from becoming official envoys to the Holy See for nine centuries.

"This is the year of the woman," said the soft-spoken, attractive 27-year-old diplomat. "Perhaps that's why the Pope accepted me. By this, he has opened the door for other women."

Uganda is the African state with the largest Catholic population, according to Vatican statistics. One-third of its 10.5 million inhabitants are Catholic, including Miss Olowo. The Pope said, "Uganda is particularly dear to the Catholic Church since it is one of the foremost Christian nations of Eastern Africa and one which, in its Martyrs, has given witness to the supreme values of the spirit. It is likewise especially dear to us because of our visit there some years ago."

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Quae ampliores expectantur pro christianis fidelibus spirituales utilitates, causa fuerunt praecipua cur votis et precibus accedendum esse censuerimus Venerabilium Fratrum Godefridi Pederal, Episcopi Boronganensis, et Cypriani Urgel, Episcopi Calbayogani. Ab Apostolica enim Sede, post auditam Conferentiam Episcopalem Insularum Philippinarum, petierunt, ut quadam ex eorum territorio dioecesium parte separata alia conderetur episcopalis Sedes. De sententia igitur sive Venerabilis Fratris Carmeli Rocco, Archiepiscopi titulo Justinianopolitani in Galatia et olim in Insulis Philippinis Apostolici Nuntii, sive Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, apostolica potestate Nostra sequentia decernimus et iubemus. A dioecibus Boronganensi et Calbayogana territorium separamus totius civilis provinciae vulgo Northern Samar appellatae eaque novam dioecesim condimus **CATARMANIENSEM** appellandam iisdemque terminandam finibus ac provincia illa terminatur. Constitutae dioecesis sedes in urbe vulgo Catarman ponatur, episcopalis vero cathedra in templo Deo dicato in honorem Annuntiationis B. M.V., quod ad cathedralis gradum attollimus, iustis cum iuribus. Episcopo autem, praeterquam quod iura damus, congrua etiam imponimus officia. Mensam episcopalem efficient Curiae emolumenta, a fidelibus sponte oblata pecunia atque honorum pars, ad C.I.C. canonem 1500 statuenda. Catarmaniensem dioecesim suffraganeam facimus metropolitanae Sedi Caebuanae, eius vero Episcopum eiusdem Metropolitanitae. Mandamus praeterea ut, quoadusque Canoniceorum collegium condatur per alias nempe sub plumbo Litteras, consultores dioecesani deligantur, ad normam iuris; ut, ad Seminarii extruxionem quod attinet alumnorumque educationem, serventur praescripta iuris communis, prae oculis habitis normis Decreti Concilii Vaticani II — Optatam totius — peculiaribus — que regulis Sacrae Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica; ut, his Litteris ad effectum adductis, sacerdotes dioecesi illi censeantur adscripti, in cuius territorio beneficium vel officium habeant; ceteri autem sacerdotes, clerici Seminarii que tirores ei, in qua legitime degant. Quod insuper attinet ad dioecesis regimen, Vicarii Capitularis electionem, fidelium iura et onera aliaque id genus, sacri canones ad amussim serventur. Quae denique documenta novam dioecesim quoquo modo respiciant, in eius Curiam transferantur, in tabulario religiose custodienda. Haec quae iussimus ad effectum adducat Venerabilis frater Bruno Tor-

pigliani, Archiepiscopus tit. Mallianensis, Nuntius Apostolicus in Insulis Philippinis, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos, suetaque documenta exaret ad S. Congregationem pro Episcopis mittenda. Contrariis nihil obstantibus, Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die quinto mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT
Secretarius Status

SEBASTIANUS CARD. BAGGIO
S.C. pro Episcopis Prefectus

JOSEPHUS DEL TON
Proton. Apost.

EUGENIUS SEVI
Proton. Apost.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **ANGELO T. HOBAYAN**, e clero dioecesis Borongansensis, electo Episcopo Catarmaniensi, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cupientibus Nobis ut constitutae per Apostolicas sub plumbo Litteras — Quae ampliores — diocesi Catarmaniensi ilico assignaretur Episcopus, qui tenellam quasi arborem sibi concreditam Ecclesiam foveret, aptus tu esse visus es admodum, dilecte fili, cui huiusmodi officium daretur. Spe enim optima ducti sumus fore ut, pro ingenii tui tuique animi dotibus egregiis, maxima cum fidelium utilitate gravissimo munere tuo ibidem fungereris. Audita igitur sententia Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium, qui sacro Consistorio in Aedibus Vaticanis hodie habito interfuerunt, apostolica Nostra potestate te nominamus et renuntiamus Episcopo dioecesis **CATARMANIENSIS**, datis iuribus obligationibusque impositis, ad tuam spectantibus dignitatem tuumque officium. Maiori autem commodo tuo studentes, permittimus ut episcopalem ordinationem ubi malueris a catholico Episcopo accipias, liturgicis servatis normis; non antea tamen, quam catholcae fidei professionem feceris atque iusiurandum dederis fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros, teste quovis Episcopo rectae fidei. Adhibitas autem ad hoc formulas ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittes, de more signatas sigilloque impressas. Mandamus insuper ut hae Litterae Nostrae in cathedrali dioecesis tuae templo legantur clero ac populo, die festo de praecepto; quos dilectos filios hortamur, ut non solum

te patrem pastoremque animarum suarum libenter accipiant, verum etiam tibi volentes obsecundent in iis, quae ad eorum ipsorum spiritualem utilitatem vel praeceperis vel inieris. Ceterum, dilecte fili, qui ad gravius in Ecclesia exsequendum munus hodie vocaris, fac operam tuam sic impiger impendas, ut concredito curis tuis populo exspectata bona procures. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duodecimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

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PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Ad perpetuam rei memoriam. Christi Ecclesia cum sit — columna et fundamentum veritatis — 1 Tim. 3, 14, qua universi per terrarum orbem homines collustrari debeant, omnibus modis curandum Nobis est, ut per novas etiam dioeceses conditas propius lux supernae veritatis cunctis praeferatur. Libenter igitur precibus accedendum esse putavimus Venerabilis Fratris Antonii Frondosa, Episcopi Capicensis, qui, audita Conferentia Episcopali Insularum Philippinarum, ut quibusdam Ecclesiae suae terris alia conderetur dioecesis petiit. De consillio ideo sive Venerabilis Fratris Carmeli Rocco, Archiepiscopi titulo Justinianopolitani in Galatia et tunc temporis in Insulis Philippinis Apostolici Nuntii, sive Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, sequentia decernimus. A dioecesi Capicensi territorium separamus civilis provinciae vulgo Romblon eoque novam dioecesim condimus appellandam **ROMBLONIENSEM**, cui praeterea insulam vulgo Maestre de Campo perpetuo iungimus, a Vicariatu Apostolico Calapanensi separatam, ita ut novae Sedis fines iidem sint atque illi, quibus provincia, quam diximus, limitabatur. Episcopi domicilium in urbe — Romblon — ponimus, eiusque magisterii Cathedra in templo ibidem existente, Deo dicato in honorem Sancti Joseph, B.M. V. Sponsi, quod tamquam cathedrale habebitur, iustis cum iuribus. Episcopo autem praeterquam quod iura damus,

congrua etiam officia imponimus. Mensam episcopalem efficient Curiae bona, a fidelibus sponte oblatae pecuniae et cetera bona, quae constitutae dioecesi obvenient, ad normam Can. 1500 C.I.C. Eam praeterea diocesim suffraganeam facimus metropolitanae Sedi Jarensi, eiusdem vero Episcopum iurisdictioni Metropolitanae subdimus. Consultores diocesani praeterea deligantur, usque dum Canonicorum collegium per alias sub plumbo Litteras condatur. Ad Seminarium quod attinet, eiusque alumnorum educationem, serventur praescripta iura communis, normae Decreti Concilii Vaticani II — Optatam totius — et peculiare Sacrae Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica regulae. Dioecesis Rombloniensis cum rite fuerit constituta, sacerdotes eidem censeantur adscripti, in cuius territorio legitimum beneficium vel officium habeant; ceteri vero sacerdotes, clerici Seminarique tiroes ei, in qua legitime degant. Omnia denique documenta ad novam dioecesim spectantia ab episcopali Curia Capicensi ad Rombloniensem transferantur, in tabulario religiose custodienda. Haec quae mandavimus ad effectum adducat Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, Archiepiscopus titulo Mallianensis et in Insulis Philippinis Apostolicus Nuntius, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos, qui sueta documenta exaret ad Sacramque Congregationem pro Episcopis mittat. Contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die undevicesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

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Proton. Apost.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Venerabili Fratri **NICOLAO MONDEJAR**, Episcopo titulo Grumentino, ad dioecesim Rombloniensem translato, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Cum dioecesi Rombloniensi, per Apostolicas Litteras — Christi Ecclesia — hoc ipso die constitutae, Episcopus esset praeficiendus, qui praeterquam quod necessarias animi ingenique dotes rerum etiam hominumque usum haberet magnum, tu Nobis admodum aptus visus es, Venerabilis Frater. Agitur nempe de tenella quasi arbore fovenda, ut crescat et floreat in dies magis. Accepta igitur sententia Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecti, vinculo te solvimus prioris Sedis titulo Grumentinae, quo ornabar, et ad cathedralem Sedem **ROMBLONIENSEM** transferimus, datis iuribus obligationibusque impositis congruis. Te autem ab iteranda catholicae fidei professione eximimus, contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus; attamen iusiurandum fidelitatis erga Nos et Successores Nostros dabis, teste quovis rectae fidei Episcopo, formulamque ad quam iuraveris Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis mittes, de more signatam sigilloque impressam. Mandamus insuper ut hae Litterae Nostrae clero ac populo in cathedrali dioecesis tuae templo legantur, die festo de praecepto. Quos dilectos filios oblata opportunitate hortamur, ut non solum te libenter accipiant, animarum suarum patrem et magistrum, etiam tuis mandatis pareant, inceptis faveant, quae ad eorum ipsorum supernum procurandum bonum danda vel ineunda esse censueris. Non dubitamus denique, Venerabilis Frater, quin commissum curis tuis Dominicum agrum exercendum sic impiger colas, ut de pastoralibus operibus tuis quam copiosissimi possint, Deo iuvante, meti fructus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum die undevicesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo non-gentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT
Secretarius Status

JOSEPHUS ROSSI
Episcopus Palmyren., Proton. Apost.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Dilecto filio **ALBERTO PIAMONTE ET JOVER**, Ecclesiae Jarensis Sacerdoti, electo Episcopo titulo Gubalianensis atque Auxiliari sacri Praesulis eiusdem Sedis Jarensis, salutem et Apostolicam Benedictionem. Qui benigno Dei consilio in vertice sacerdotalis auctoritatis constituti sumus christianae familiae patres et pastores, munus officiumque Nostrum pontificale tunc magnam partem explevisse putamus, si unicuique dioecesium iustam rectorum copiam fecerimus. Cumque fere ubique gliscentibus negotiis etiam labores Episcopis ineundi accreverint, oportet sane a Nobis paribus auxiliis Venerabilibus fratribus subveniri. Qua de re, volentibus Nobis expostulationibus Venerabilis Fratris Artemii Casas, Archiepiscopi Jarensis, concedere, petentis ut sibi Auxiliaris Episcopus daretur, bene fieri visum est, si te tanto officio destinaremus, quem non solum ingenium fertile ornat, verum et pietas, et prudentia, et usus rerum haud minimus, ceteraeque Episcoporum propriae virtutes. Quae cum ita sint, consilio petito a Venerabili Fratre Nostro S.R.E. Cardinali Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis Praefecto, te Auxiliarem Episcopum nominamus et renuntiamus eius quem diximus sacri Praesulis, simulque titulo insignimus Sedis **GUBALIANENSIS**, iam vacantis, factis nempe iuribus quae per Litteras Apostolicas — Ecclesiae sanctae — descripta sunt, die sexto mensis Augusti anno millesimo nongentesimo sexagesimo sexto, datas. Ad consecrationem tuam quod attinet, poteris eam ubique terrarum excipere, a quolibet catholico Antistite, cui assistant duo aequalis dignitatis viri et ipsi consecrantes. Non tamen id fieri poterit antequam sive fidei professionem feceris sive ius iurandum dederis fidelitatis erga Nos et successores Nostros, lege ecclesiastica statuta. Re vero acta, formulas ad quas iuraveris, recte subscriptas, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis cito mittes. Ceterum, dilecte fili, munus quod suscipis tecum assidue reputa, quam amplum, quam sanctum. Summa ergo pietate illud aggredere, ut de tuo labore Ecclesia messem laetissimam faciat. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die duo de tricesimo mensis Decembris, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quarto, Pontificatus Nostri decimo secundo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT
Secretarius Status

JOSEPHUS ROSSI
Episcopus Palmyren., Proton. Apost.

ANG MAHAL NA BIRHEN

Mary in Philippine Life Today

A Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines on the Blessed Virgin Mary.

INTRODUCTION

To the people of God in the Philippines, especially the clergy, religious men and women, and members of mandated organizations.

Dearly Beloved:

1. The unavoidable conclusion of anyone contemplating the religious practices of the Philippines is that we Filipinos are indeed a religious people. The thousands of churches and chapels all over the Islands, from the Batanes in the North to Jolo in the South, testify that Christianity has become a true part of Philippine life. We consider ourselves the Christian country of Asia.

2. When one tries to determine the characteristic of our Christian faith, one finds that our practice of religion has taken on a popular color and has a special sense of devotion that makes it specifically Filipino. He finds that certain traits of Philippine Christianity transcend the boundaries of

Catholicism and are found with equal prominence in other groups of Filipino Christians and in other Philippine Christian Churches. The devotion that the Filipino people show for the Principal mysteries of our Redemption comes from the very life of our men, women and children in the form of a deep and personal faith. The celebration, for instance, of Christmas with its cheerful and colorful religious and family customs, on the one hand, and the mournful but no less colorful celebration of Holy Week on the other, center the Christian life of the average Filipino on the Incarnation and Passion of Our Lord.

3. No less prominent is another trait connected with the two mysteries just mentioned—the special place the Mother of Christ has in the life of the Filipino people. It is to this devotion to the Blessed Mother that we would like to dedicate our Pastoral Letter. The spirit of reform and renewal, or to use the catchword “aggiornamento,” made famous by the

late Pope John XXIII, which began at the end of the Second Vatican Council has led us to direct our attention to this aspect of the religious life of our people. This devotion to the Blessed Mother should be reflected upon and examined so that a golden mean may be kept between these forms of devotion that reflect "the diversity of native characteristics and temperament among the faithful,"¹ and the principle stated by the Council itself "that true devotion consists neither in fruitless and passing emotion, nor in a certain vain credulity. Rather, it proceeds from true faith, by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues."²

4. We had been considering the idea of addressing to you a pastoral letter on renewal of devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Mary — "renewal" in all its facets is also one of the purposes of the Holy Year — when we received the Apostolic Exhortation of our Holy Father Paul VI "Marialis Cultus" which he has dedicated to this very theme. We feel, therefore, doubly justified in addressing ourselves to you now. This offers an opportunity to examine one important aspect of our religious life at a time when there are excesses in both directions, credulity and unbelief, and not a few of our faithful are looking for appropriate guidelines in the matter of devotion to Mary.

5. We begin this Letter with a description of the veneration of Mary in the Philippines. There will follow a doctrinal reflection on the basis of the devotion to Mary and finally we will make concrete pastoral applications to the religious life of our faithful.

I. FACTS RELATED TO THE VENERATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IN THE PHILIPPINES

6. Statistics are cold numbers which will never express accurately a spiritual reality nor the intensity of religious faith. At times, however, numbers may constitute a significant index of a more profound reality. It would be enough to open the **Catholic Directory of the Philp-**

ines to realize that a very large number of **parishes** are dedicated to the Mother of God under one of her many invocations. Four hundred sixty-three, or over one-fourth of all parishes have the Virgin Mary as their titular patron without counting innumerable **barrio**

¹ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG), n. 66.

² *Ibid.*, n. 67.

chapels, religious oratories or private shrines dedicated to her.³

Various Invocations and Titles

7. Over 100 of the parishes honor the Immaculate Conception, over 60 are dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, while others carry various titles like the Assumption, Our Lady of Carmel, Mother of Perpetual Help, Our Lady of Lourdes, etc.⁴

Some of the shrines dedicated to Mary have won nation-wide popularity either as focal points of national pilgrimages or as well-known centers of devotion. To mention just a few among the better-known, we find 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 Peace

and Good Voyage in Antipolo, Rizal, the Purification of Our Lady (or *La Candelaria*), in Mabitac, Laguna, Our Lady of Caysasay in Taal, Batangas, Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga City, Nuestra Señora Virgen de Regla in Lapulapu City, Our Lady of the Pillar in Zamboanga, etc.

8. This widespread devotion to the Blessed Mother goes back to the origins of Christianity in the Philippines. As early as 1571 we find ancient statues of Mary, like *Nuestra Señora de Guia*, now venerated in the Ermita Church and whose origins are somehow lost in the folkloric details of legend, and Our Lady of the Rosary in Manila whose origin dates back to 1587.⁵

9. Among the titles under which Mary is venerated in the Philippines, two are particular-

³ See an almost complete list in *The Sentinel* (Nov. 29, 1954), pp. 13-14; or *La Virgen María Venerada en sus Imágenes Filipinas* (LVM). Manila: Imp. de Santos y Bernal, 1904; or the *Catholic Directory of the Philippines*, 1974. Manila: Catholic Trade School. There is no record available of the number of barrio chapels whose patron saint is Mary, but judging by the number of parishes under her patronage the presumption is that there are many.

⁴ Thirty parishes are dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes, 24 to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 23 to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, etc. In some regions Mary is venerated under the title of Our Lady of Salvation, an invocation less known in other places. The same may be said of the invocation of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, from which the popular feminine name of *Milagros* originates.

⁵ Although originally the image of *Nuestra Señora de Guia* was in the Ermita Church, from about 1600 however it was venerated in the Manila Cathedral. From there it was brought back to Ermita around 1800. Other examples: Our Lady of *La Candelaria* in Mabitac, Laguna (1599-1600), Our Lady of Manaoag (1605-1608), Our Lady of Caysasay (1611), Our Lady of Carmel of San Sebastian, Manila (1617), Our Lady of Antipolo (1622), Our Lady of Piat (1623), Our Lady of Peñafrancia (1798), etc.

ly prominent: the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of the Rosary. The invocation of the Immaculate Conception goes back to the year 1578 when Pope Gregory XIII in a Bull issued on February 6 decreed that the Manila Cathedral should be erected under the invocation of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁶ Clement VIII decreed on 13 August 1595 that the Cathedrals of Nueva Segovia and Caceres also be erected under the same title of the Immaculate Conception. Moreover, one of the three ships that reached the Philippines in the first voyage of Magallanes in 1521 was the "Concepcion," named after the Immaculate Conception, together with the ships "Trinidad" and "Victoria." Hence the Islands before being named Filipinas, and even before the name of Christ had begun to be preached, saw on these shores the name of Mary under her title of the Immaculate Conception.

10. The veneration to Our

Lady under the title of the Rosary goes back to 1587 when her statue was brought to the Philippines. A confraternity was established in 1588. Nuestra Señora de la Naval occupies a place of honor among the national shrines dedicated to Mary in the Philippines.⁷ The Blessed Mother was referred to as the *Señora Grande de Filipinas* on account of the many favors attributed to her. The recitation of the Rosary became a popular practice⁸ which has more than one analogy with the popularity that the novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help enjoys today.

Various Practices of Devotion

11. As other examples of paraliturgical devotions in her honor, we may mention novenas to the Blessed Mother as preparation for the patronal feast.⁹ These include the special weekly novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, now very popular in the Philippines.

⁶ See *LVM*, p. 165. On 21 December 1581, Bishop Domingo de Salazar, the first bishop of the Philippines, erected the Cathedral under this title.

⁷ Another example is the shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag. The origin of the image and first chapel of Manaoag is placed between 1605 and 1608; the statue was canonically crowned in 1926.

⁸ The description of P. Murillo Velarde in his *Historia de la Provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesus*, Segunda Parte, Manila: Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesus, 1749, fols. 7v, 44v and 45 portrays the popularity of the recitation of the Rosary as a truly remarkable feature of the devotion to Mary in the Islands. See also the report of Fr. Antonio Cloche in the Dominican archives of Santo Tomas, *Libros*, Tomo 60, fol. 177. The case of Babuyanés vividly reminds us of the perseverance of the Native Communities in their faith in spite of the total lack of priests for many years. Cf. *Cartas de Provinciales*, Tomo 3, fol. 172v in the Dominican Archives of Santo Domingo, Quezon City.

⁹ The novena in preparation for the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, 11th of February, makes the 2nd of February, feast of *La Candelaria* and first day of the novena, doubly dear to the devotees.

12. The **Block Rosary** is practised in some parts of the Archipelago. It offers a good example of a devotion that is connected with the visit of images or statues of Mary from house to house and from one family to another, where special veneration is given to Mary during the term of the image's stay.

13. A familiar sight in many homes, even of modest income, is what can be called the "**family altar.**" In most families the image venerated is the image of the Virgin Mary under one of her familiar invocations. This fact, more than any other, constitutes a proof of how deeply rooted the veneration to Mary is in the socio-religious structure of the Filipino Christian family.

14. The various manifestations of popular piety towards

the Mother of God appear not only in the number of churches, chapels, or shrines consecrated to her, but in many other forms, ranging from the liturgical celebration of her feasts throughout the year to religious calendars with the holy picture of Mary — not always of the most artistic nature, it must be acknowledged—in the most humble nipa huts or in the slums of the cities, to her picture in public vehicles, buses or jeepneys. Grottoes dedicated to the Immaculate Conception under the invocation of Lourdes are found in private gardens or in modest dwellings.¹⁰

15. The endless symphony of **Marian names** in the baptismal records of our parishes constitutes by itself a tribute to the devotion of our people to the Mother of God. It may be safely said that of the names of saintly women imposed in Baptism,

¹⁰ Various institutions or practices associated with or dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary are found almost everywhere: the Legion of Mary, so flourishing in some dioceses; the Saturday devotions practiced in others; or even the recitation of the *Angelus*, a practice which in some municipalities takes on a public character because of municipal ordinances providing for the cessation of all traffic during the time of the recitation. All these are signs that the veneration of Mary has become a true part of the religious life of the people.

Since this letter does not intend to present a complete socio-religious picture of the Christian life and in particular the veneration of our faithful to the Blessed Virgin Mary, what we offer here is neither complete nor exhaustive. However it is substantially correct, data and details having been taken from reliable sources and confirmed by a rapid survey made in practically all the ecclesiastical territories of the Philippines. The answers to questionnaires sent to all Ordinaries for the places of their jurisdiction and their evaluation by persons in a position to know the facts and capable of interpreting them corroborate the essential findings presented here. In this sense also this letter may well be not only an encouragement but a starting point of research and reflection on the various aspects involved in what may be called religious "folk practices" among the average Filipino.

none is more frequently found than the name of Mary either expressly or in one of her many titles.¹¹

The Liturgical Year

16. The Liturgical year has its climax in the solemnity of Easter, but within the year the Church recalls the mysteries of Redemption, thus opening to her faithful "the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that they are in some way made present at all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold of them and become filled with saving grace." "In celebrating this annual cycle of Christ's mysteries, the Church honors with special love the Blessed Mary Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption."¹²

17. Thus we find various feasts of Mary celebrated in the Philippines. We find her feasts particularly in the Christmas cycle which comprises the Aguinaldo Masses where the traditional celebration is the Mass

of the Blessed Virgin Mary, New Year's day when the Church celebrates the feast of the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the feast of the Holy Family which falls within the octave of Christmas, and the feast of the Purification, now called the Presentation of Our Lord, and popularly known in the Philippines as *La Candelaria*.

It is a well-known fact that the most important religious occasion of the year for the Filipino, with the possible exception of the religious celebration of the town fiesta, is Christmas. Christmas offers a special opportunity for the people to show their veneration to Mary not only will the *belen* feature the "Mahal na Birhen," but in other dramatic presentations, like the *posada*, or *panunuluyan* ("begging for shelter") which persists in many communities, Mary plays an important role.¹³

Christmas caroling could also be conveniently related to and considered as a commemoration of the search of Mary and Joseph for a place to spend the

¹¹ These are the names most frequently used: Concepción, Natividad, Purificación, Dolores, Asunción, Rosario, Guadalupe, Pilar, Carmen, Lourdes, Paz, Socorro, Remedios, Consuelo, Victoria, Nieves, Milagros, Candelaria, Mercedes, Salvación, Estrella, Amparo, Fátima, etc.

¹² Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, arts. 102-103.

¹³ This custom is found in several places; some of them are well-known even to visitors from outside the town. In some towns and barrios the *panunuluyan* is done with the use of statues, in others a couple representing Joseph and Mary knock at different shrines erected along the road or simply go from house to house, ending up in the Church for the midnight Mass.

night. This feature should be brought out more clearly in order to give this custom a truly religious meaning.¹⁴

The re-enacting of the Nativity of Our Lord, with the part that Mary had in it, is done dramatically, with a deep sense of simple faith and identification with both the Infant Jesus and Mother Mary.

18. During the Lenten season, especially during Holy Week, Mary plays an important part in the popular devotion of our faithful. Good Friday has a deep human appeal for many Filipinos especially with its Way of the Cross and commemoration of the sufferings of Our Lady of sorrows. Easter Sunday brings the deeply human and dramatic encounter of the Mother with her risen Son in the *Salubong*, which is artistically

enacted in many places all over the Islands.¹⁵

A popular feature of the Holy Week is the *Pabasa ng Pasiyon*. Although there are versions in almost every major language of the Philippines, the best known Tagalog *Pasiyon*¹⁶ which begins with a prayer to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary, not only tells the story of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve, but even tells of the birth of Mary. After having described a series of selected events from the life of Christ, especially His Passion, Resurrection and Ascension, the death, burial, and assumption into heaven of Mary are treated, as well as her crowning as Queen of Heaven.¹⁷

When the Holy Week solemnities are accompanied by processions, the custom is that the

¹⁴ It is to be noted that in many barrios where there is no resident priest the religious preparation for Christmas—and not seldom the celebration of Christmas itself—is done paraliturgically. The ceremony consists in the recitation of the rosary interspersed with hymns sung between the decades and the Litany of Loretto sung at the very end—often in Latin. The celebration takes the place of the Aguinaldo Mass and of the Mass at Christmas night.

¹⁵ The *Salubong* ("meeting") is usually held before Mass. The central event in this procession is the meeting of images of the *Dolorosa* and the Risen Christ as an appointed spot. In some places a little girl dressed as an "angel" ascends the platform and sings the "Regina Caeli" to Our Lady, after which she stoops and removes the black veil of Our Lady, thus revealing an embroidered white veil. This custom offers a clear example of the dramatic empathy with which the people in general identify themselves with the Mother of Christ.

¹⁶ Mariano Pilapil. *Kasaysayan ng Pasiong Mahal ni Hesucristong Panginoon Natin*. Manila: Aklatang Lunas, 1970. The first edition was published in 1884.

¹⁷ The finding of the Cross by Sta. Helena also has its place in the *Pasiyon* which ends with a prayer to Mary. When the reading of the Passion takes place in private houses—as it often does—it is not rare to find that together with one of the favorite images of our suffering Lord, the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows is also venerated.

last statue in the procession is the **Mater Dolorosa** (the Sorrowful Mother) behind which the priest walks, followed by a brass band playing solemn marches.¹⁸

19. It would be worth our considering the sociological implications of the two most popular celebrations we have just described where Christ and His Mother are presented together: the feast of Christmas and the celebration of Holy Week, particularly the **Salubong**. If one compares the two feasts, as locally celebrated, he will observe that in the traditional celebration of Christmas, it is the Family which is the center of interest from the time of the **Misa de Aguinaldo** onward. In the Easter celebration, the folk practices center on the reunion of Christ and His Mother, while all who participate feel the joy of this meeting vicariously. Both of these feasts, therefore, feature a family reunion, and are for this reason extremely rich experiences for the Filipino.

¹⁸ The Pieta is often exhibited, although not until Good Friday, portraying Christ in the arms of His Mother. In fact, on Good Friday at the end of the procession, the places of greatest prominence are given to the image of Christ ready for burial and of Mary, the Mother of Sorrows.

¹⁹ For the description of *Flores de Mayo*, see *Area Handbook of the Philippines*, vol. I, HRAF-16. Connecticut: University of Chicago, 1955, pp. 603-609. The fact that the greatest number of town fiestas in the Tagalog region, for instance, is celebrated in May could be explained not necessarily for religious reasons but perhaps also because May falls within the dry season. For many details of other above-mentioned practices see also the same work, pp. 531-681.

Popular Celebrations

20. In May the classical **Flores de Mayo** are held in many localities, towns, or barrios, parishes or private chapels and involve not only women and children but in some places the whole family. They are celebrated with a splendor and simplicity of faith and devotion which echoes the simplicity of the Gospels.¹⁹

Then follows October with the **Rosary** devotions, a practice widespread since time immemorial, due mainly to the zeal of the Sons of St. Dominic, and the historical procession of **La Naval**.

The **Immaculate Conception**, whose feast falls on December 8, remains the principal Patroness of the Philippine Islands. After the suppression of several Church holydays in the Catholic Calendar of the Philippines, still her feast stays as one of the three holydays of obligation during the year, the other two being Christmas and January 1,

when the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, is celebrated.²⁰

21. It would not be correct to qualify all these manifestations of the Marian piety of our faithful as mere actions or symbols without meaning, or to consider that they do not stem from a sincere and simple faith, since all these devotions represent a normal outlet for human and religious remembrance, thoughts, and affection. In fact this veneration of and deep commitment to Mary blossomed in the mid-eighteenth century with the foundation of the first Filipino congregation for religious women, dedicated from its beginning to the Blessed Mother, namely, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Philippines, popularly known as Religious of the Virgin Mary. The **Barangay Sang Birhen**, the Sodality of Our Lady, the Legion of Mary, the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate, are also fruits of the same devotion and have contributed in their own way to the development of Christian life in the Archipelago.

22. An element that often escapes the superficial observer is the deep religious meaning that some of these practices, and in particular the town *fiesta*, have in the life of the Filipino people. The *fiesta* is neither exclusively sacred nor

secular but a mixture of rites and feasts. But from the religious point of view, the *fiesta* has three notable effects: the fulfillment of the community's obligation to its heavenly patron, in our case the Virgin Mary; a certain, perhaps only initial, renewal of the spiritual life of the individual by the reception of the sacraments of confession and communion, and in many cases also by the baptism and confirmation of children; and the renewal (or creation) of the individual's consciousness of membership in the Catholic Church.

This is true of the *fiestas* in general, but it applies in a particular way to the *fiestas* in honor of Mary who is the patroness of so many parishes and barrio chapels. In this sense, the celebration of the *fiestas* in her honor offers a particular occasion for revitalizing Christian life, and thus fulfills a truly religious function. This would be reason enough to allay the fears of those who may think that these celebrations divert the attention of the faithful away from God to Mary and thus appear to be anti-Christian or superstitious. What is needed is a renewal, not a suppression.

Veneration of Mary in Other Christian Churches

23. This veneration of Mary is not a feature exclusively of

²⁰ Less flourishing today is the practice from pre-Vatican II days of singing the *Salve Regina* on Saturdays, although it still continues in some localities.

Catholics. Even the followers of the late Gregorio Aglipay often have shown and continue to show many of the signs of veneration toward Mary that Catholics do in celebrating her feasts, such as holding processions in her honor, keeping lamps burning in front of her image, and even having associations that carry the name of Mary.²¹

Without in any way minimizing the differences in attitude toward the Mother of God among various Christian groups in the Philippines — some respectful, some rather belligerent regarding Catholic doctrine and practice — we find for example, that there is also a genuine

Marian piety among the faithful of the Philippine Episcopal Church manifested in the liturgical celebration of various Marian feasts (Annunciation, Purification), the song of the *Magnificat* in the Evening Prayer, and even the fact that their cathedral in Manila is dedicated to St. Mary and St. John.

24. The facts we have presented above show the extent of devotion to the Blessed Mother in our country, especially among Catholics. Before we come to pastoral and more practical considerations in this matter, we wish to offer some theological reflections on the veneration to Mary, the Mother of God.

II. THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

25. In order to preserve and purify and strengthen our Filipino heritage of devotion to Mary, we should compare our own practices and attitudes with the sources of Revelation and the documents of the Magisterium, so that we can retain and enhance what is truly Christian and eliminate what is merely legendary or false. We should also set our devo-

tion to Mary in the context of our Filipino society and in confrontation with the needs of the Filipino people today, so that it may be truly our own and may mirror our way of approaching Mary and Christ.

In this way too we can avoid the deviations against which the Second Vatican Council, and recently Pope Paul VI himself,

²¹ The official stand of the Philippine Independent Church regarding the veneration of Mary is as follows: "14. The Blessed Virgin Mary: The Virgin Mary was chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ is truly God and Mary is the Mother of Jesus Christ, she is the Mother of God in His human generation. She whom God honored is to be honored above all." ("Declaration of Faith and Articles of Religion of the Philippine Independent Church," *The Filipino Missal*, Manila: The Supreme Council of Bishops, 1969, p. V. See also n. 16 of the same Declaration.)

warned us: exaggeration that can falsify our devotion to Mary, or a sentimentality that can substitute merely external practices for a serious commitment to the Gospel in action and in life.²²

A. Mary in Scripture

26. The Apostolic Exhortation *Mariialis Cultus* issued on 2 February 1974 by Pope Paul VI calls our attention to the fact that "Today it is recognized as a general need of Christian piety that every form of worship should have a biblical imprint".²³

A first level of biblical imprint on Marian devotion is attained when scriptural texts that mention Mary or allude to her are used in liturgical worship as well as in popular devotions.²⁴ It is therefore useful for us to review these scriptural texts briefly.

The Texts

27. The mother of Jesus is mentioned in Mark 3:31-35 and its parallels in Matthew 12:46-50 and Luke 8:19-21 (see also Luke 11:27-28). There Jesus speaks about the person who does what God wants as His true kinsman.

A reference to her is also made in Galatians 4:4 when St. Paul emphasizes the full humanity of Jesus, son of a human mother.²⁵

Basic Gospel Data

28. The data we have from the Gospels concerning Mary are that she was betrothed to Joseph (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:26-27) in Nazareth; that she was a virgin when she conceived (Luke 1:27.34-35; Matthew 1:25; see also Luke 2:5) and that she gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:25-2:1; Luke 2:4-7). Otherwise she is simply located at various places, always connected with her Son: in the hill country of Judea for Elizabeth's recognition of her unique maternity (Luke 1:39ff.); at Jerusalem for her own purification in the Temple and the offering of the Child to God (Luke 2:22f.); at Nazareth for Child's rearing (Luke 2:51; Matthew 2:23); at Jerusalem for the discovery of Jesus speaking with the teachers in the Temple (Luke 2:42.46); at Cana for a wedding (John 2:1); and finally at Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified (John 19:25) and when the Holy Spirit comes upon the Apostles (Acts 1:8).

²² Cf. *Mariialis Cultus* (MC), n. 38, and *LG*, n. 67.

²³ *MC*, n. 30.

²⁴ For a second level of biblical imprint on Marian devotion, see Part II at the end of the section on Mary in Scripture, n. 48.

²⁵ A Marian meaning is discernible in the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament and Tradition. The main texts are Genesis: 3:15 on the enmity between the serpent and the woman; and Isaiah 7:14 on the maiden who will give birth to Emmanuel.

Theological Reflections

29. It is necessary for us to go beyond the historical data in order to appreciate what Scripture has to say about Mary. When she is spoken of in the New Testament, the inspired writers often convey a deeper meaning by their words than may be immediately seen by the average reader.

A) Matthew

30. Matthew connects the virginal conception of Jesus by Mary to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. In so doing he teaches us that long before the event God chose Mary to be the Virgin Mother of the Saviour. The Evangelist reinforces this point by stating that Joseph "did not know her" until the birth of the child. According to Matthew then, Joseph recognized that Mary was divinely chosen to be the Virgin Mother of the Child, and fully respected God's will that Mary remain a virgin.

It has been said that Matthew gives more attention to Joseph than to Mary, but it should not escape our attention that the role of Joseph in Matthew's narrative is to provide the title "Son of David" (Matthew 1:1) for the Son of Mary (Matthew 1:25) — a role he fulfills because he is of Davidic lineage (Matthew 1:20) and the husband of Mary; to understand Mary's virginal motherhood of Emmanuel; and to care for and

protect mother and child so that they could achieve their salvific mission to the Jews and the whole world.

31. In the story of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12) Matthew keeps silent about Joseph but says that the Magi from the east "saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage" (Matthew 2:11). Jesus is revealed to the Gentile world, represented by the Magi. Mary's Son is the "Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1), the one through whom the divine promise that all the nations are to be blessed in Abraham is fulfilled (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:8-9). A clear allusion to Mary in a perhaps not too clear context but with deep religious and moral significance for Christian discipleship is found also in Matthew 12:46-50 "Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" — a parallel with Mark 3:31-35.

32. It is clear from Matthew's theology that Mary has a special place in God's salvific plan. She was chosen by God to be the woman who would give reality to the messianic hope of Israel, and the one who will be with the Messiah when the Gentiles come to worship.

B) Luke

33. By an artistic use of comparison and contrast the Infancy narrative of Luke shows the superior dignity of Jesus over

John and of Mary over Zachary and Elizabeth. The literary style of the narrative draws heavily upon words, expressions and figures of the Old Testament, not by direct citation of them, but by allusion.

34. In the Annunciation the angel Gabriel greets Mary saying: "Rejoice (Hail), so highly favoured (full of grace)! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). The Evangelist suggests that this greeting is not to be interpreted conventionally, for he describes Mary as pondering it and asking herself what this greeting could mean (Luke 1:29).

All three parts of the greeting are connected with Old Testament prophecies that invite Israel, under the figure of a woman, the "daughter of Sion," to rejoice because God will bring about the promised salvation of the people.²⁶ The invitation to rejoice (*Χαίρε*) parallels that of Zephaniah 3:14.²⁷ The expression, "so highly favoured" (*κεχαριτωμένη*) recalls the idealization of Israel as God's favoured people, spoken of as the "virgin daughter of Sion" (Isaiah 37:22) or "virgin Israel" (Jeremiah 31:4), who is invited to rejoice at the fulfillment of her messianic hope.

The assurance, "The Lord is with you," as used in the Old Testament²⁸ expresses the idea of God's savioric presence, and when connected with Zephaniah 3:15, "The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst," it refers to the inauguration of the messianic era. As the prophet Zephaniah (3:14-17) invited Israel to rejoice over the presence of God within it to save it from all its misfortunes, so the angel invites Mary to rejoice because she is favored with the presence of God who saves her from all the misfortunes of her people. In this way Luke teaches that Mary, by becoming the Mother of Jesus, Son of the Most High, receives in her person the messianic hope of her people. The total salvation which in the past was just a promise, becomes a living reality in Mary. She epitomizes all that God has done for his people.²⁹

35. Mary's famous question in Luke 1:34, "How can this come about, since I am a virgin (I do not know man)?" raises exegetical problems that have not yet been fully solved. However it is clear that, in contrast to Zachary who requested evidence to verify the truth of Gabriel's prophecy concerning Elizabeth child (Luke 1:18), Mary does not

²⁶ Joel 2:21-27; Zechariah 9:9-10; Zephaniah/Sophonia 3:14-17.

²⁷ In the Septuagint version.

²⁸ Genesis 26:24; 28:15; 46:4; Exodus 3:12; Judges 6:12.16.

²⁹ This interpretation of Luke 1:28 does not detract from the traditional doctrine about Mary's fullness of grace. Through an approach and terminology fully consonant with biblical practice this interpretation establishes the basis for the theological development which, at a stage, will give a new emphasis — the objective one — to the term "grace."

Challenge Gabriel's message, but merely asks that she be given an understanding of it. The angel replies that the divine favor is to be shown her through a virginal conception of the child by the divine presence residing within her (Luke 1:35). Just as in the Old Testament an over-shadowing cloud symbolized the divine presence in the meeting Tent housing the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 40:35), so also the power of the Most High will cover Mary with its shadow, and cause—not only symbolize—the presence of God's Son in Mary's womb, the new Ark of the Covenant.

Overwhelmed at God's favor, Mary professes her humility but accepts the angelic message in its entirety, expressing her confidence in the virginal conception as an action of God, in the mystery of the divine presence in the Child, and in the pledge of God that the divine favor toward her and her Child will be manifested in due time. Through this act Mary becomes the model of faith.

36. In the visitation (Luke 1:39-45:56) Mary, carrying the Child in her womb, is compared by allusion to the Ark of the Covenant, the site of the per-

manent presence of God among His people. As the Ark was brought to Jerusalem in David's time (2 Samuel 6:1-11), so the mother of Jesus departs in the direction of the Holy City to visit Elizabeth. As Israel honored the presence of God in the Ark during its trip toward Jerusalem, so Elizabeth recognizes at Mary's greeting that the mother of Jesus carries in herself the divine presence. But unlike David's (2 Samuel 6:9), Elizabeth's reaction to the presence of the Lord is one of joyful awe, not reverential fear (Luke 1:43); for Mary carries the presence of God that sanctifies (Luke 1:4) in contrast to the terrible presence that dealt Uzzah a mortal blow (2 Samuel 6:11), so Mary remains with Elizabeth for about three months (Luke 1:56).

37. The Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) brings back the theme of Mary's exalted dignity hidden in her humility.³⁰ She is again presented as a model of faith, but this time faith takes the characteristics of the ANAWIN, the spiritual community of the humble poor who found their joy and strength in their dependence on God.³¹ Essentially the Magnificat is a series of religious reflections invoking

³⁰ A further elaboration of the *Magnificat's* social implications will be made in Part III.

³¹ In the Bible "the poor" (ANAWIM) denotes the pious, hardworking, humble folk, very often oppressed and persecuted, who look for redemption from God alone. This religious spirit of basic humility before God can also embrace those who use their wealth in a detached and generous manner — such as Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 25:57) and Zacchaeus in his conversion (Luke 19:8).

various Old Testament ideas that concern the mystery of God's salvific plan finding fulfillment in Mary, through whose maternity of Jesus the generations to follow will receive the blessings of the messianic era. All generations, recognizing the divine favour bestowed upon them through her, will call her blessed.

38. The second chapter of Luke invites the reader to reflect on the mystery of Jesus through the eyes of his mother. The Child's birth occurs in simple and lowly surroundings that reflect the condition of Mary as the embodiment of the ANAWIM. Together with the shepherds, who also represented the ANAWIM, Mary ponders the revelation of her Child to Israel.

Also in her capacity as one of the ANAWIM, Mary presents the Child to the Lord in the Temple and makes the offering of the poor, two turtle doves (Luke 2:22). On this occasion God acts to manifest the significance of the Child as Saviour not only of Israel but of the Gentiles as well, thereby also giving joy to the old man Simeon (Luke 2:32). But Mary is invited to look at Jesus as a "sign that is rejected" and to prepare herself for the sword that will pierce her heart (Luke 2:33-35). The prophetess Anna

gives a joyful ending to the episode by praising God and speaking of the Child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38).

39. Luke concludes his Infancy narrative by putting a veil of quiet obscurity on the Holy Family fulfilling God's design through humble living in Nazareth, a veil lifted for a little while by the episode of the Child lost and then found in the temple, sitting among the doctors, busy with his Father's affairs (Luke 2:41-50). Mary is presented as the model of those who ponder things in their heart as Jesus increases in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men (Luke 2:51-52).

40. The saying in Luke 8:21, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice," has been so edited by the Evangelist that it becomes the conclusion of a series of teachings about hearing the word of God.³² Far from being a denial of Jesus' filial sentiments toward Mary, the saying is Jesus' praise of his mother as the perfect hearer of the word of God. She is commended as the model of Christians inasmuch as they must respond to the word of God. She is a figure or type of the Church, the community

³² The Parable of the Sower, especially 8:8 and its explanation, especially 8:15; the Parable of the Lamp, especially 8:18. In Matthew and Mark the saying comes right *before* the Parable of the Sower. Moreover, in Mark it is the conclusion of a story started in Mark 3:21.

of those who, listening to the words of Christ, become his mother, brothers and sisters.

A similar message is found in Luke 11:27-28, the passage telling the incident of the woman who spoke to Jesus saying, "Happy the womb that bore you and the breasts you suck-ed." Jesus replied: "Still happier those who hear the word of God and keep it." Although the happiness that came to Mary because of her physical motherhood of Christ was great, greater still was the happiness of being the disciple of Christ, the woman of faith. This is the deeper level of understanding that Luke wanted his readers to attain.³³

41. The theological portrait of Mary in the Lucan writings is rich in its variety of roles: Mary is the Daughter of Sion, or personification of God's beloved people, who is invited to rejoice at the messianic fulfillment of God's promises; she is the New Ark of the Covenant that causes rejoicing because she makes God present among men; she is the embodiment of the ANAWIM who rejoice in their complete dependence on God.

C) John

42. John has been called "the Theologian" *par excellence* among the Evangelists as he

constantly invites his readers to see the deeper meaning of what Jesus did and said. He frequently does this by alluding to Old Testament events, personages, oracles, as well as Jewish religious practices, and by suggesting that the New Testament inaugurated by Jesus brings the past to perfection and makes it operative in the present. Even the eschatological and future glory of the Church is presented by John as already present in the person of Jesus Christ.

From the Johannine viewpoint Mary, as the mother of Jesus and the woman most closely associated with him, acquires a prominence unequaled in the other Evangelists' treatment of the public ministry of Christ.

43. Mary is presented by John at Cana, when Jesus begins his ministry (John 2:1-12), and at Calvary when he consummates his work (John 19:25-27). In the narrative of both episodes we find the term "the mother of Jesus" as well as "women" and "hour."

It is impossible to interpret satisfactorily the Cana narrative on the assumption that it is solely the historical record of an objective event. John has purposely saturated his historical data with allusions to the Old Testament so that the deeper meaning of what happened

³³ For the dimension of prayer see Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:28; 11:13; 18:1-8.

could be appreciated by the discerning reader.

44. John avoids Mary's proper name and designates her with a title, "mother of Jesus" (John 2:1.3.5.12). For John titles are important to clarify the religious significance of personages.³⁴ As mother, then, Mary had a role to play in Jesus' glorification. This is called his "hour"³⁵ and is achieved through his Passion, Death and Resurrection. Once glorified by these events, he can bestow messianic benefits on Israel and on all men.

Without denying the historical value of Mary's declaration, "They have no wine," we must seek in it a theological meaning intended by John. Wine, in the Old Testament symbolism, stands for the messianic benefits.³⁶ In the theology of John, the statement, "They have no wine," may be understood as implying that Mary is asking Jesus to bestow the benefits of the messianic kingdom on Israel.³⁷

45. Taking account of the petition implied in Mary's remark, Jesus addressed her as "woman." This title as used in John 2:4 cannot be taken simply for the respectful term of address it represented in the Greek world of the Evangelist's time. John gives it a theological meaning which we can grasp only after the meaning of changing water into wine becomes evident.

The element of rejection in the question, "What (is it) to me and to you?" is explained by the fact that, at the historical moment of the Cana event, the "hour" of Jesus had not yet arrived. Jesus will not yet give the people the messianic benefits for they will be given only after his Resurrection. However, a "sign" of the messianic benefits could be given, and this is what Jesus proceeded to do.³⁸

By changing water into wine Jesus manifested to his disciples that he will fulfill the messia-

³⁴ Cf. John 1:19-51. The particular title of "mother" given to Mary is to be understood according to the thought of John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh, he lived among us (he made his tabernacle among us), and we saw his glory." Mary as "the mother of Jesus" is the one who gave "flesh" to the eternal Word; the one in whom he took "flesh" in order to manifest his glory to all.

³⁵ Cf. John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23-27; 13:1; 17:1.

³⁶ See Amos 9:4; Isaiah 25:6; Jeremiah 31:12; Joel 4:18.

³⁷ Part of such benefits, as understood by Mary, would be material: the actual giving of wine to be drunk by the festive crowd.

³⁸ Why did he do it? John has been interpreted by some exegetes as implying that Jesus performed the "sign" to reward Mary's faith and also in consideration of the future role to be given to Mary as the associate of Jesus in bestowing messianic benefits to men. A certain relationship between Cana and Calvary because of the terms "hour" and "woman" in both can hardly be denied.

nic benefits promised to the Patriarchs. A confirmation of this thought is provided by the setting of the miracle, a wedding banquet. This is a Christian term portraying the joys of the messianic kingdom.³⁹ The meaning of the symbolism is further confirmed by the fact that the wine came from the water of ritual purification. Jesus will transform Old Testament rituals into New Testament salvific sacraments.

46. In the light of the message so far gathered from the Cana narrative, we can see more fully the meaning of "woman" in John 2:4. It echoes the "woman" in Isaiah 26:17, the metaphor of the pregnant woman, yearning for the kingdom but unable to bring it about. The title "woman" in the Cana narrative makes of Mary a figure of the people of God: first, of the old Israel yearning for salvation through Christ, yet completely dependent on the action of God through him; and second, of the new Israel to come into existence through his Passion and Resurrection. However, in Christ's ministry, the kingdom is being inaugurated. Its full benefits can not yet be imparted but a "sign" of them can be given.

From this standpoint Mary is the mother-Israel foretold in Isaiah 60:4-5 and 66:7-11.

Through her participation in the miracle at Cana she is beginning to experience the joy of gathering the new people of God into the kingdom that Christ will finally establish.

47. In the Calvary scene John appears to offer—if not to complete—his reflection on Mary as a "woman" who will be the associate of Jesus in renewing mankind. "Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son."

Mary's physical motherhood is perfected with the addition of spiritual motherhood. She is not only the "mother of Jesus" but also the mother of John, who typifies the new people of God. At the word of Christ the John who was not the son of Mary is changed to the John who is Mary's son, just as, at Cana, by the command of Christ, water was changed into wine. The messianic benefits Mary asked for at Cana and which were then deferred and granted only as "sign" are now given in full measure to the new people of God represented by John. The messianic benefits are summed up in the privilege of becoming the son of Mary. The Mother of Jesus becomes also the Mother of the Church.⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. Matthew 22:2; 25:10; Luke 12:36.

⁴⁰ In the Book of Revelation, ch. 12, a woman is presented as a symbol of the people from whom came the Messiah and who are involved in the

48. We mentioned above a first level at which the Bible left its imprint on Marian devotion. A deeper level is attained when this devotion is made a channel through which great themes of the Bible are brought to the attention of the people (Matthew 22:2; 25:10; Luke 12:36). In seeking to reach this level we can avail ourselves of the practice not uncommon in the patristic era of seeing Mary typified in Eve, Esther, Judith, the Ark of Noah, etc. We can also apply to Mary such texts as Proverbs, ch. 8, and Ecclesiasticus, ch. 24, as well as the book of the Song of Songs. But the task of extending the biblical typology and accommodating biblical texts go beyond the strict study of Scripture. We therefore conclude this section happy in the thought that modern advances in biblical studies have enriched rather than diminished the place of Mary in Scripture.

49. We may say in fact that in our time a great interest in Mary has been shown by biblical scholars, both Catholic and Protestant. Their findings converge remarkably, while at the same time both emphasize

the fact that the Mariological orientation in Scripture is always and definitely Christological. The description of Mary is always pithy and sober, without any hint of exaggeration even in Matthew and Luke. It will also be useful to remember that the Gospel data regarding Mary do not present a historical narrative of Mary's life but rather a kerygmatic picture of Mary as the Church saw her since its beginnings, a paradigm of what we see in her also today.

B. Mary in Tradition: Doctrine and Life of the Church

50. Scripture gives witness that Mary's privileged role became the object of the early Church's reflection. We might say that following Jesus' last bequest on the Cross, the disciples of Christ took Mary as their own and sought to discover the great graces with which God rendered Mary truly blessed among women.

51. By this title we express the most basic truth of our faith, that God became man, the mystery of Incarnation. We honor Mary with this title when-

struggle against Satan. It would be inaccurate, however, to simply say that the woman "adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head for a crown" (Apocalypse 12:1), is Mary. Actions attributed to this woman, like "crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth" (12:2) and escaping to the desert in order to escape from the dragon when the Child was taken into heaven (12:5-6), are not applicable to Mary. Scholars agree that the woman as described here symbolizes the People of God of both testaments. But since this woman is described as giving birth to Christ (12:5), Mary is alluded to, and later Christian tradition will identify this woman-symbol as Mary.

ever we recite the Hail Mary: we honor her as Mother of God in each of our Eucharistic Prayers.

This title was in use in the Church as early as the third century. The original form of the familiar prayer "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God" may also be that early. In the doctrinal controversies of the fifth century that accompanied and followed Euthyches' and Nestorius' opinions on the problem of nature and person in Christ, the title of Mary as Mother of God was challenged. And although the point at issue was Christological rather than Mariological, the logical consequence of Nestorius' doctrine as understood in the debate was the denial of Mary as **Theotokos** (*θεοτόκος*, Mother of God).

52. The Church reacted strongly to this challenge. St. Cyril of Alexandria defended Mary's title of **Theotokos** precisely as a profession of faith in the divinity of her Son: "Jesus Christ was not first born of the holy Virgin as an ordinary man, in such a way that the Word only afterwards descended upon him; rather he was united with flesh in the womb itself, and thus is said to have undergone birth according to the flesh... For this reason the holy Fathers have boldly proclaimed the holy Virgin **Theotokos**".⁴¹ It was this faith in Christ's Incarnation

that the Council of Ephesus proclaimed in 431 A.D. when it supported St. Cyril and defined Mary's title of "Theotokos" as a doctrine of Christian faith.

Mary then can rightly be called "Mother of God," not indeed in the blasphemous sense of having existed before God, but as an affirmation of the truth of the Incarnation. The Son of Mary and the Son of God is one and the same person, Emmanuel.

"Ang Mahal na Birhen"

53. This is the title by which Filipinos very often address Mary. And our Filipino tradition has nuanced this title with all the reverence paid to Mary as Mother of God and all the childlike trust with which we can call her our own Mother.

Mary's virginal Motherhood is a mighty act of God, an overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, as is related to us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Christ's virginal conception is a mystery acknowledged and proclaimed by the Fathers of the Church. In fact the earliest Fathers took Luke and Matthew literally on this point. We profess Christ's virginal conception in our acts of faith and recite it in our creeds.

54. Some perhaps may find it strange, if not difficult, to

⁴¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter 4* (to Nestorius), PG 77, 46-47.

understand how this fact can be a point of revelation on the part of God. Virginal Motherhood seems so much like a private privilege which would only benefit Mary, and would have little relevance for our lives as Christians. Theologians hasten to point out that Mary's virginal Motherhood is a great sign of God's own absolute initiative in redeeming mankind. As St. Irenaeus says, "Because an unexpected salvation was to be initiated for men through God's help, an unexpected birth from a Virgin was likewise accomplished. The sign was God-given; the effect was not man-made."⁴²

When we emphasize God's absolute initiative in granting Mary the privilege of her Virginal Motherhood and the Church celebrating her virginity, both elements are to be properly understood. It is not simply the absence of a man that is being extolled at the Incarnation, but also Mary's action of totally committing herself to God for the redemption of mankind. It is precisely from this mutuality of God's initiative and Mary's total response that her blessedness appears in full light.

Mother of the Church

55. The first new insight given us by the Fathers of the

Church is that of Mary as the "new Eve." As early as the second century St. Justin brought out the contrast between Eve and Mary. The virgin Eve accepted the word of the serpent and gave birth to disobedience and death; the virgin Mary received the word of the angel with joy, and through the power of the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Son of God.⁴³ "And thus," adds St. Irenaeus, "as the human race fell into bondage to death by means of a virgin, so it is rescued by a virgin; a virgin's disobedience is balanced by virginal obedience."⁴⁴

This comparison of Mary with Eve quickly gave rise to the veneration of Mary as the new "mother of the living."⁴⁵ Thus the title that had been given to the Church from the beginning was also applied to Mary; and this is in turn occasioned the growing comparison between Mary and the Church. The Woman of Apocalypse (the Church) and the Woman at the foot of the cross (Mary) became one.

56. Filipinos have always had a very tender devotion to Mary as Mother; and this devotion has brought down numberless benefits on our people. The loyalty of our people to Christ has been closely bound with our

⁴² St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, bk. 5, ch. 19, n. 1, PG 7, 1175.

⁴³ St. Justin, *Dialog with Trypho*, n. 100, PG 6, 709.

⁴⁴ St. Irenaeus, *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ Cf. LG, n. 53.

devotion to Mary who is his Mother and ours. Rather than discourage a filial devotion like this, we hasten to praise it, and pray that we may always preserve our childlike trust in Mary's maternal love for us. But with the maturing faith of the Filipino we should reflect and consider what we mean by Mary's spiritual motherhood.

57. St. Epiphanius, who first honored Mary as "mother of the living," explains it thus: "Life itself was introduced into the world by the Virgin Mary... Mary brought forth the cause of life, through whom life itself is produced in us."⁴⁶ Mary is our spiritual Mother because she is the physical Mother of our Savior Jesus Christ. Of course, mere physical motherhood would have been of no avail either for Mary's own sanctification or for our redemption. A basic element of Mary's motherhood was her faith and consent expressed in her "yes" to the Angel of the Annunciation. Mary conceived in her heart, with her whole being, before she conceived in her womb. As St. Augustine says (and the Second Vatican Council quotes his words), Mary is "clearly the mother of the members of Christ... since she co-operated out of love that

there might be born in the Church the faithful, who are members of Christ their head."⁴⁷

St. Augustine hastens to add that we too are Christ's brothers and sisters and mother when we do the Father's will in charity, and labor for others until Christ be formed in them. We are all brothers and sisters, parents and children to each other spiritually.⁴⁸ But Mary is the spiritual Mother of us all, because she cooperated in the birth of us all when she bowed to God's will and consented to be the mother of our Redeemer. And the Vatican Council reminds us that Mary's cooperation with her Son's work of redemption lasted from the moment of Christ's virginal conception up to his death. And even after Jesus' ascension, she prays with the Apostles for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Finally, even in heaven Mary's maternal heart reaches out to us, the members of her Son's Mystical Body. With confidence then do we "rely for help on her intercession," as we profess in the Eucharistic Prayer.

58. It is based on these ideas that Pope Paul VI on 21 November 1964 at the closing of the Third Session of the Council proclaimed Mary as Mother of

⁴⁶ St. Epiphanius, *Against Heresies*, bk. 3, vol. 2, n. 78, PG 42, 728.

⁴⁷ LG, n. 53.

⁴⁸ St. Augustine, *On Christian Virginity*, ch. 5, PL 40, 399.

⁴⁹ Cf. AAS, vol. 56, 1964, pp. 1015-1018. "For just as the divine Maternity is the cause of Mary's singular relationships with Christ and the reason for her being involved in Christ's work of the salvation of mankind, so too the divine Maternity is the source of those relationships

the Church.⁴⁹ This title refers to Mary's spiritual motherhood toward the members of the Church, pastors and ordinary faithful alike, the Church being the mystical body of which Christ is the Head.

59. Mary is the way God chose to carry out his wonderful work of reconciliation and redemption. Mary totally gave herself to this work in her cooperation. But she is not a dead instrument, rather we see the effects of God's wonderful redemption present in her in a very special way. She who was to work and cooperate with her Son was also to be the first to experience all the wonders of God's redemptive power.

Mary as First of the Redeemed

60. Finally we should also treat of the singular blessedness of Mary as first of the redeemed. Considering how infrequently the Gospel writers praise individuals, the insistence on Mary's blessedness in the first chapter of Luke is evidence of the veneration in which she was held in the early Church. She is called blessed by the Angel; twice by Elizabeth; and once even by herself: "All ages to come will call me blessed, for he who is mighty has done

great things for me" (Luke 1:48-49).

We must hasten to point out that Mary's holiness is entirely the gift of God, derived wholly through the merits of her Son Jesus. Mary is redeemed, as we are, although in a more excellent way. Her claim to glory derives entirely from the faith and obedience — themselves divine gifts too — with which she received the gratuitous gifts of God. She is our Mother and our model and our patroness only because she is "the handmaid of the Lord" who opens herself completely to God's saving grace. "Blessed, because you have believed" (Luke 1:45 & 49).

61. **Mary's Immaculate Conception** was the first gift that God gave to Mary. Conceived and born of human parents in the normal way, Mary was especially gifted by God from "the first instant of her conception," when she received a fullness of sanctifying grace and indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity and so was by a singular privilege preserved from the stain of original sin "in consideration of the merits of Christ Jesus the Saviour of the human race" to prepare her to be

that exist between Mary and the Church; since Mary is the Mother of Christ, who, as soon as He took on a human nature in her virginal womb, united to Himself as its Head His Mystical Body which is the Church. And so Mary is the Mother of all the faithful and the bishops, which means of the Church" (Translation in *The Pope Speaks*, vol. 10, 1964-65, p. 139).

the Mother of the Redeemer,⁵⁰ — her most basic gift. Thus we wish to point out that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is doubly Christ-centered. It makes clear, first of all, that no one is saved apart from Christ. This is true of all men who have ever lived, even though they were born many centuries before Christ. Secondly, the privileged redemption of Mary is totally and splendidly God's gift to her because she was to be the Mother of Christ.

62. Another aspect of our Lady's holiness is brought out in one of her oldest liturgical feasts, the **Assumption**, a celebration so dear to the heart of Eastern Christians. The meaning of this doctrine is that Mary is one with the risen Christ in the fullness of her personality, or as we commonly say, "in body and soul." Pope Pius XII solemnly made this doctrine explicit on 1 November 1950: "The Immaculate Mother of God, Mary ever-virgin, after her life on earth, was assumed body and soul, into heavenly glory."⁵¹ The title of Mary as Queen of the Universe appears, thus, to be full of meaning.

Again, we should not look on the Assumption as a private gift of God to Mary alone. Rather, "Mary assumed into heaven" serves as a gracious reminder to the Church that our Lord wishes all whom the Father has given to him to be raised with him. In Mary taken into glory, to union with Christ, the Church sees herself answering the invitation of the heavenly Bridegroom. Hence in Mary's life and vocation the Church's, indeed every Christian's, call to faithful service and to glorious union with Christ shines forth.

III. PASTORAL REFLECTIONS

63. The summary of Mary's place in the history of our country as presented in the first part of this Letter has shown how deeply she is part of our heritage and part of our Filipino identity. Even where religious instruction among Catholics is inadequate, the Filipino always holds on to the devotion to Mary as a source of inspiration and an aid to salvation. This devotion, even in an imperfect form, is a positive asset that we pray will always be ours.

⁵⁰ In this context theologians use the distinction between *gratia remissionis* and *gratia praeservationis*. The words of the definition in the Bull *Ineffabilis* or Pius IX are "We declare, pronounce and define: the doctrine that maintains that the most Blessed Virgin Mary in the first instant of her conception, by a unique grace and privilege of the omnipotent God and in consideration of the merits of Christ Jesus the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly held by all the faithful." (*The Church Teaches*. Documents of the Church in English Translation. St. Louis, Mo.: B. Herder Book Co., 1955, n. 510, p. 208)

⁵¹ AAS, vol. 42, 1950, p. 770.

And we write this Pastoral Letter so that the Filipino may grow in his devotion to Mary and acquire a deeper understanding of Mary's role in the Church and a keener appreciation of her role as our Mother.

64. We would now like to bring to your attention certain aspects needing either reform or renewal from a particular pastoral point of view or in the general context of Christian life. It is not our intention to draw up an exhaustive list. We have chosen just a few examples either because some need more immediate attention, or because the principles and norms we propose may be applied not only to the case in question but may also serve as a pattern for similar situations. But before we come to them, let us examine the positive values we find in the veneration of Mary by our faithful.

Positive Values of the Devotion to Mary

65. As a preparation for the writing of this Pastoral Letter, a survey was conducted on the devotion to Mary in the Philippines which, although limited in scope, was very precise in the questions proposed. From the answers given in the various ecclesiastical territories in the Philippines it seems clear that devotion to Christ's Mother is a positive and powerful force in and for the Christian life of our people, although in some

cases it must be purified and more vigorously incorporated into Christ's mystery.

Several facts have been brought up in this survey which in a remarkable way point to the same conclusion and serve to complement each other. We find them expressed in various forms.

66. The love for and veneration of Mary, especially by the celebration of her feasts, the pilgrimages to her shrines, the recitation of the rosary (a practice however not as flourishing as in the past) have given the faithful a community awareness while promoting a Christian atmosphere, and continue to help keeping family solidarity by making participants feel that they are truly brothers.

67. Besides effects of a more general nature, these practices of Marian devotion have produced other concrete and perceptible results in our people. We do not speak only of the Marian life fostered by the Legion of Mary whose *praesidia* are widely disseminated in some dioceses, nor the fact that the *Barangay Sang Birhen* has taught a number of believers how to pray the rosary and continues to help many to build up christian communities. We refer particularly to the fact that the cult of Mary and the devotion to her image have helped many simple people to remain Catholics. Although the

religious practice of many is minimal, yet the devotion to the Mother of God helps them to keep their faith alive. In fact on the occasion of her feasts and during novenas in her honor a perceptibly greater number of people receive the sacraments. Hence we may say that even a minimal form of devotion to Mary has consistently proven valuable.

This has helped in many instances to keep and nurture the prayer-life of our people, but also — and this must be noted — it has given an added dimension by providing a powerful motivation for works of Christian charity, particularly by groups dedicated to her. It is to be hoped, however, that it will help them also to dedicate themselves with greater ardor to the apostolate of social justice, accepting Mary's special role in humanity's destiny, in the development of humanity to a community of justice and peace.

68. Perhaps this is the place to reflect more deeply on an aspect of our catholicism which on the one hand is characteristic of our people and on the other contains a richness of spiritual values which might not have been properly appreciated in the recent past or may have been placed out of focus.

Popular Religiosity

69. The recent Synod of Bishops in Rome has discussed the problem of Evangelization in the World Today, considering it in the various regions of the globe and in the various aspects of Christian life. In a certain sense, the presentation and defense of popular Catholicism at the Synod, albeit surprising to some, represents a new approach in pastoral theology. An attempt will be made here to reflect on these aspects of popular Marian religiosity that seem to demand more immediate attention in our country.

Our brother bishops of Latin America — a continent with which our country has more than a few similarities — have also been confronted with the problem of popular religiosity in their own countries. Their reflections were offered to their fellow bishops during the recent Roman Synod. Their views represent very valid insights into the problem. Hence we do not hesitate to make our own many of their ideas as they are applicable in general to popular Catholicism in the Philippines and in particular to the veneration of Mary by our faithful.⁵²

70. Christian tradition penetrates individual existence, so-

⁵² Official Latin text of Archbishop Eduardo Pironio's report in *De Evangelizatione Mundi Huius Temporis*, Pars Prior, Relationes Quibus Mutua Communicatio Experientiarum introducitur, Synodos Episcoporum.

cial content and the very history of our people. This Christian tradition, a real experience of God and of faith, can be said to be the concrete mode in which Christianity is incarnated in our people, deeply lived by them and manifested in their existence.⁵³

This popular religiosity is manifested above all in a special sense of God and of His providence over our lives, of the special help and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints and in certain fundamental attitudes in the face of life and death. From these arise the popular devotions, novenas, processions, pilgrimages, fiestas, and the celebrations that surround baptism, first communion, marriage, death and burial.⁵⁴

While not a few forms of this popular religiosity are of a rather ritualistic sort and in general tend to be unrelated to day-to-day life, still the spirit behind them keeps in our people its full unity and operative power. Popular religiosity in our country is a springboard as well as an invitation for the deepening of a more religious consciousness. The valid elements of an authentic faith, which are present in the pro-

found religiosity of our people, need and demand that they be purified, interiorized, made more mature, and brought to bear on daily life.

71. This demands that certain syncretistic and superstitious elements that might have entered into certain practises of devotion, at times a kind of folkloric ritual which is wholly out of keeping with the true Christian faith, must be eliminated or transformed. In particular this religiosity of our people, this beautiful gift of God which is the seed of our authentic faith, must be deeply rooted in the reality of the Person of Jesus Christ and in the Paschal Mystery — the Christ-event which at times has been somewhat obscured.

72. This brief summary of what popular religiosity is, its positive values and shortcomings may now be applied to the devotion to Mary in the Philippines.

It cannot be denied that popular religiosity has maintained in our country a deep Christian content. Witness the many facts, historical and situational, presented in Part One of this Letter. From them it appears clearly how devotion

Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, MCMLXXIV, pp. 19-33. On Popular Religiosity, nn. 7-10. See also a summary of his report in *L'Osservatore Romano*, October 17, 1974, and *Evangelization in Asia Today: Part II*, Bishops' Synod 1974, CBI/LST, pp. 59-61.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, n. 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

to Mary in the Philippines has been intimately intertwined with Christ and the mystery of Incarnation and Redemption. In fact, the Philippines, like her sister countries in Latin America, is a Christian and Marian nation. The Philippines was evangelized in the light of Christ, of crucified Christ — hence the prominence of Christmas and Holy Week — and of Mary. In this incarnational and redemptive context, the veneration of Mary has been and still is an important element in bringing about a deep evangelization of the masses of our people.

In this respect what is true of Latin America is also true of our country: "The fundamental paschal dimension came to us through the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, especially through the recitation of and meditation on the mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary,"⁵⁵ a devotion which encompasses the mysteries of the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection of our Lord.

73. In this sense, we may also say with our brother bishops of Latin America that devotion to Mary "is the safeguard for the preservation of our faith and the principle of deeper and fuller evangelization."⁵⁶

Hence we cannot but encourage our priests and faithful

to continue fostering a fervent and authentic devotion to Mary.

74. One particular aspect of the veneration of Mary intimately connected with the forms of popular religiosity in our country is the holding of fiestas in her honor and pilgrimages to her shrines.

Fiestas are more intense and vigorous moments of the spirit in the collective life of the people and constitute for them a privileged encounter with God and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our people should be helped to rediscover in community the ever present riches of the religious celebrations.

75. These celebrations in honor of Mary often culminate in pilgrimages to one of her shrines, where God's presence among us appears with particular transparency, where people feel they have a proper forum for their religious experiences, and where the pilgrim finds a particular stimulus to commit himself to a real "salvation history."

76. In this context we find a deep meaning in the holding of **processions**, a feature most frequently found in the celebration of fiestas. These processions when participated in with a spirit of faith and prayer, become the sign of the pilgrim Church moving towards

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, n. 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Christ's paschal mystery. In this sense participants become — and are — echatologically oriented. **Pilgrimages** to Mary's shrines, thus, not only help in conserving a tradition of faith, but are also full of spiritual meaning and content. It is the duty, therefore, of the pastors to make these fiestas and processions in honor of Mary and pilgrimages to her shrines a true spiritual encounter, and to prevent in their celebrations any deviation towards superstition or even the appearance of commercialism.

Need of Reform

77. We said above "authentic" devotion to Mary. This word invites us to reflect on those aspects of the devotion which might have deflected from genuineness and purity, and hence are in need of reform and renewal.

The survey on the veneration to Mary we mentioned above, has shown not only the many and rich, positive and potential values of this devotion, but has also brought to light some aspects that are less commendable. Some attitudes or practices in Marian devotion, well-intentioned as they are, cannot be unreservedly approved, and in this respect there is a need of instruction and correction.

78. The lack of doctrinal instruction (biblical or liturgical) on the role of Mary in the his-

tory of salvation, seems to be at the root of the problem. The exploitation of Marian popular devotions for show purposes or for the benefit of visitors, and the fact that in many places the main devotions appear to be too secularized, should be the object of special reflection.

79. Some practices need special consideration. We cannot approve, for instance, of the presence of several images of Mary in the same house, chapel or church — even parish churches — with their devotees extolling the power of their statues over the others as if they were rivals. Medals, scapulars and votive candles are by their very nature religious symbols and manifestations of spiritual trust and candid devotion. However we see a danger connected at times with their use, when people consider them as magic talismans, a kind of **anting-anting** for mere material or bodily protection. We warn our faithful against a thirst for and easy acceptance of visions and visionaries with the concomitant dangers of paying a less than prudent credulity to strange announcements, threats or promises. We are seriously concerned about the abuse in some places, where so-called faith-healers use the popularity of the devotion to Mary under one or other of her titles to persuade the simple people that their faith-healing power comes from her or through her intervention.

80. Above all we wish to emphasize that all veneration of Mary is to be subordinated to the adoration of the triune God and of Christ who is the Mediator. Mary's dignity is the most exalted among all the saints because of her divine maternity and hence she is worthy of special veneration as the Mother of God. Her place and role in the economy of salvation is to be clearly proposed to the faithful, as the Second Council of the Vatican has expressed.⁵⁷ This, we think, is a very important point and, if wrongly understood, is the root and source of any ill-advised form of Marian devotion.

81. It is in this context that certain pastoral steps should be taken to reform and renew some practices in the life of our faithful. The faithful should be instructed to venerate Mary out of love for her and appreciation of her dignity and not primarily to obtain personal and material favors. They should see the hierarchy of Christian values and the duties in the Christian life by paying greater attention to the participation in the Eucharistic celebration on Sunday than in any other form of devotion. Public and traditional Marian celebrations like the **Flores de Mayo**, often connected with the **Santacruzan**, must be prevented from becoming fashion shows

that take away their spiritual meaning, with the danger of converting Marian devotions into beauty parades rather than religious manifestations of faith. Similarly the traditional forms of devotion must never be an ostentatious show to be displayed for guests or visitors. The real spirit of these devotions should be emphasized, and not merely the external practice.

Need for Renewal

82. These and other points are offered here as concrete suggestions for reform. But there must also be room for renewal. Not a few forms of Marian devotion, good in themselves, and with the venerability of tradition, have fulfilled an important role in their time. However they must be updated and adapted to today's religious world and needs. The lead has been shown to us by the Second Council of the Vatican which courageously initiated liturgical reform and renewal.

83. Thus, in consonance with the principles of liturgical renewal which do not need to be repeated or enumerated here, it is clear that the problem of fiestas and novenas must be squarely faced. Pastors must be vigilant to prevent as far as possible the mixing of paraliturgy with liturgy, or the simple incorporation of novenas into the

⁵⁷ *LG*, n. 55.

Eucharistic celebration. A distinction must be made also between the novena for the annual patronal feast, a weekly novena (like the popular novena to Our Lady of the Perpetual Help) and devotions to Mary that may last one full month (May and October). In any event two alternatives may be offered here:

a) A Mass-Novena with the elements of the Novena incorporated into the Mass either after the Communion and before the dismissal, or even during the Prayer of the Faithful. It is to be noted, however, that in this case the prayer should always be addressed to God the Father, not to Mary.

b) The novena by itself, which should be renewed. A special committee to deal with this matter for the liturgical and paraliturgical forms of devotion to Mary will be established, particularly for the renewal of the Novena structure and prayers.

84. Novenas will then be renewed by making them more scriptural, avoiding a verbosity present in some of them and a sentimentality less in consonance with today's religious attitudes.

On the other hand it is a well-known fact that the holding of Novenas, specially in preparation for Mary's feasts, brings with it a particular sense

of community among those practicing the devotion.

85. As for the Flores de Mayo an effort must be made to utilize them better to instruct the people about the meaning of religious celebrations and to revitalize them. A similar remark applies to the practice and recitation of the block rosary, a practice we highly recommend. We address also a word of encouragement to priests and religious: they too should try to rediscover the value of the rosary as a community prayer.

86. A word of caution seems to be in place here. Our calling attention to the need of reform and renewal does not in any way advocate a kind of iconoclasm for images or devotions. On the contrary we wish these manifestations of veneration to be kept for their value and to be purified of excrescences or deviations. Hence pastors should be very careful not to eliminate or discourage devotions of piety in their correct forms, and in this way create a vacuum which cannot be easily filled. This is a delicate matter that needs to be handled with utmost pastoral prudence lest we lose many religious practices and particularly forms of devotion to Mary, because of an imprudent or too premature uprooting of forms that demanded only reform and renewal. This demands in turn a certain sensitivity and a profound respect for the people's

affectivity, their love for color and their sentiments of faith.

These are some of the aspects we thought deserve your attention from the pastoral and

liturgical point of view. Let us now enter into that dimension that Pope Paul VI elaborates as the fourth principle in his Apostolic Exhortation on the Marian Cult.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

87. Let us turn our attention now to a different but not less important aspect. We refer to that dimension essential in the authentic devotion to Mary which is particularly relevant in today's world — the social and anthropological dimension. This sociological aspect has come to the fore with distinctive intensity in the 20th century and must be discerned in the light of the Gospel.

88. A revolution is going on which is woman's growing awareness of what she is. Previously consigned to roles defined for her by a man-controlled society, woman is now questioning the structures of such a society. Agencies all over the world are taking cognizance of this phenomenon. The United Nations, for one, has designated 1975 as International Year of Woman. If the Church is to be faithful to her call, she must look at this phenomenon and question herself regarding her own attitude towards women. This is not a problem only for women, but a profoundly human one.

89. Without question, the male element is preponderant

in the Church. Sometimes this fact breeds a certain unconscious attitude of paternalism or condescension toward women which prevents women from attaining mature stature or from fully participating in the life of the Church. This area needs to be explored, especially with regard to implementation of new forms of service for women, and renewal of a devotional spirituality that often appears less masculine in character. However, the traits of liturgical services and spiritual are more pronouncedly masculine.

90. In the Philippines where women enjoy a status and a freedom to which her Asian counterparts still aspire, we must look deeper into the question, beyond what seems to be obvious and taken for granted by convention. The Filipino woman, though stereotyped as Maria Clara, is a figure of strength not only in the family but also in society. Her relationship with man, therefore, is highly ambivalent. Since it is this relationship which is at the root of any society, it needs to be examined before any renewal of Philippine society can

be effected. Is the Filipina one who is equal but complementary to man, or is she one who supplants man? Does she, by her manner of being and her attitude toward herself and the opposite sex, help to produce better Filipino manhood or does she weaken it? These questions need to be probed especially by those engaged in the social sciences.

91. Imitation of Mary does not mean keeping women within the cultural limitations which bound the women of Mary's time. The Virgin Mary is proposed to the faithful as an example to be imitated not precisely in the concrete tasks she undertook at Nazareth, and "much less for the socio-cultural background in which she lived and which today scarcely exists anywhere. She is held up as an example to the faithful rather for the way in which, in her own particular life, she fully and responsibly accepted the will of God, because she heard the word of God and acted on it and because charity and a spirit of service were the driving force of her actions."⁵⁸ The quality of her life as spouse and mother can imbue the ordinary chores of women in the home with a deeper meaning and significance.

The modern search for the equality of women, and their

co-responsibility in politics, the social field, scientific research, and intellectual activities, is by no means incongruent with a deep devotion to Mary. Marian devotion and imitation have shown themselves in varied ways, according to the different sociological contexts in which Christian women lived. The Church does not bind herself to any particular anthropological ideas underlying such expressions of the Marian cult. She "understands that certain outward religious expressions, while perfectly valid in themselves, may be less suitable to men and women of different ages and cultures."⁵⁹

92. In connection with the image of women, there is these days widespread publicity given to numerous beauty contests, a fact that is deplorable since these events are occasions of falsehood which distort the true image of women, feed people's minds with false values, and put women on pedestals only to exploit them. The eyes of the nation are often diverted by such beauty pageants from the ills of society and the serious tasks of nation-building. Church-related activities are not entirely free of this tendency, and fund-raising connected with fiesta queens ought to be discouraged. It is also worthwhile mentioning that respect for women should find its

⁵⁸ *MC*, n. 35.

⁵⁹ *Ib. id.*, n. 36.

expression in decent feminine dress, and is also fostered by Christian propriety.

93. In view of the above consideration of Mary and the Filipino woman it is appropriate that we should address a few words to the Filipino man in particular. The dignity, self-awareness and spiritual realization to which Mary is summoning the Filipina is for the Filipino man a challenge to understand her correctly and a reminder to respect, love and protect her. A woman is degraded when treated like an object, the conquest of which is taken as a proof of one's masculinity in the spirit of childish *machismo*. A woman is a companion and a partner an equal, and not a plaything or a slave. It does the Filipino woman no justice to practise in her regard a double standard, by which she is expected to fulfill her familial duties, while the man's infidelity and irresponsibility are excused or taken for granted. Moreover, supporting her materially is by no means the only obligation of a husband to her, nor does it justify any negligence or abuse on his part.

The mutually enriching and salvific union which is the goal of the institution of the sacrament of marriage can only be achieved on a basis of respect, love, fidelity and the deep sense of responsibility that a man should have for his wife and

vice versa. The Filipino woman measures up more fully to her very important role in our nation-building and most especially in that basic unit of society, the family, when she is accorded love and justice by the Filipino man.

94. We rarely associate devotion to Mary with the social dimension of Christian living, and this is when devotion to her can tend to become pious individualism. Mary should always be seen in a Biblical context, for she was the product of the heritage of patriarchs, prophets, and psalmists of the Old Testament. We see this very clearly in her song of praise, the *Magnificat*, where she turns naturally from herself to her people. The God who is her personal Saviour and whose greatness she proclaims is a God whose action on behalf of the lowly and the poor endures through the ages. Although Mary's words are not to be interpreted in the contemporary sense of class struggle, they point to a reversal of the social order in the Kingdom of God.

95. Mary's song speaks of a God who has "routed the proud of heart," "pulled down princes from their thrones," "exalted the lowly," "filled the hungry with good things," and "sent the rich empty away" (Luke 1:51-53). This is an echo of the utterances of the prophets who condemned the wealthy not for

their wealth but for their selfish complacency, the powerful officials not for their positions of authority but for their injustice and cunning. The poor of Israel were a blight in the land; they were the manifestations of a sick society, but even more fundamentally, of a radical deviation from God's intentions for his people. In brief, the poor were visible signs of the deep-rooted sin of the nation. Greed and deceit were in the hearts of the powerful of the land who were squeezing the lifeblood from the poor for their own selfish purposes. Though entrenched in this social sin, they put a facade of piety and respectability which was sacrilegious in the eyes of the prophets. It was to those people that the Lord said: "When you stretch out your hands I turn my eyes away. You may multiply your prayers, I shall not listen . . . Take your wrongdoing out of my sight. Cease to do evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:15-17).

96. Such a society is encountered in the Philippines. The destitution of millions of Filipinos is an indictment of all of us who call ourselves believers. The oppression that exists in Filipino society is contrary to the salvation that Jesus and His Mother proclaimed by

their lives. We who profess to be their followers must live according to what we say we believe. At this moment of our history as a people, our collaboration with God's work of salvation must take the form of work for justice, freedom, and peace — not in the abstract, but in the daily realities of living, for they are the conditions of salvation. Wherever there is injustice, bondage, and unrest there sin prevails.

Our devotion to Mary should never lose sight of the present plight of the vast majority of our Filipino brethren who live lives unworthy of human beings. These poor and oppressed brethren of ours are devotees of Mary, too; and they call out to her, their Mother, to ease their sufferings and free them from their chains. And surely her maternal heart goes out to them. Her appeal comes to those of us who can help the helpless. Mary is the model of the perfect disciple of the Lord: "the disciple who builds up the earthly and temporal city while being a diligent pilgrim towards the heavenly and eternal city, the disciple who works for that justice which sets free the oppressed and for that charity which assists the needy."⁶⁰ Devotion to Mary shows itself in works, and the works which are needed in the Philippines today are the works of justice and freedom from

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 37.

oppression. As the Church points out to us, our mission is "to be present in the heart of the world proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted."⁶¹

CONCLUSION

97. These are some of the reflections on Mary, the Mother of the Lord, which we wished to share with you. The knowledge of the sincere veneration of our people for Mary has given us particular comfort and joy. This veneration is not only rooted in history but, above all, is deeply rooted in the hearts of our faithful.

We have also shared with you some insights on this devotion which is grounded solidly, as we have shown, in the teachings of the New Testament and the life of the Church itself from her beginnings.

But these two aspects — the historical and the doctrinal — must not be considered as triumphalistic or irrelevant utterances. In offering them to you we have a practical and pastoral aim in view: the authentic renewal of the veneration of Mary in the Philippines. This devotion must be fundamentally biblical, solidly

Christological, soundly liturgical.

98. The profound religiosity of our people — call it, if you wish, popular religiosity — will receive a powerful impulse during the celebration of the Holy Year, a year of renewal and reconciliation. Our faith in and love for the Incarnate Lord, who took flesh in Mary, will be strengthened in the measure we try to live with and for Christ as Mary did, so that we may become, like her, his true disciples. The Church contemplating Mary's "profound holiness"⁶² "admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption and joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless model, that which she herself wholly desires and hopes to be."⁶³ Our veneration of Mary, therefore, should be an imitation of her who achieved her destiny by freely cooperating with God's love, reacting responsibly to the demands of God and neighbor during her "pilgrimage of faith."⁶⁴

For the Catholic Bishops'
Conference of the Philippines

† Julio R. Cardinal Rosales
President

Manila, February 2, 1975
Feast of the Presentation of
Our Lord

⁶¹ 1971 Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World," Introduction.

⁶² LG, n. 64. "Ecclesia eius [Mariae] arcanam sanctitatem contemplant et caritatem imitans...." Arts. 63-64 present Mary as the type of the Church in her condition of Mother and Virgin.

⁶³ Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, n. 103.

⁶⁴ LG, n. 58.

FEATURES

REPORT OF ARCHBISHOP ENRICO BARTOLETTI AT THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS 1974

COMMISSION ON WOMEN

On 3 May 1973 Pope Paul created a special Study Commission on Women in Society and in the Church; this was in answer to the 1971 Synod's wish.

The Commission is made up of 25 members: 15 women coming from all parts of the world and from various vocations, and 10 men, both ecclesiastic and lay, and expert in biblical, dogmatic and moral theology, as well as liturgy, canon law, civil law, sociology and journalism.

Its terms of reference: a study of the role of women in society and in the Church, and a study of the relationship of men and women on the basis of radical equality as well as in the light of their diversity and complementarity. Such a study obviously had to be carried out within the Christian concept of the person and in view of the Church's mission apostolate. The Commission is a temporary autonomous body, which must present its conclusions directly to the Holy Father. It therefore has to keep in contact

with other bodies working in the same field.

Formal Object of the Commission is not the problem of ministerial ordination of women nor even their non-ordained ministry or women's role in the family. The Commission essentially confronts the question of the participation of women and their ecclesial and social responsibility in the relationship between the Word of God and anthropology, psychology, biology and sociology.

Method of Work. The Commission's work was carried on in plenary sessions and in study groups. The work was coordinated by a Select Committee which collaborated at Rome with the President. There was the widest possible consultation with women, both religious and lay, in diverse cultural regions.

Plenary Sessions. Three have already taken place (15-18 Nov. 73; 26 Feb. - 3 Mar 74; 20-25 June 74) occasioning a wide exchange of ideas. They reflected the

diversity of the cultural situations represented as well as the uncertainty and tension in new relationships now in the process of being established. Such meetings of minds already in themselves constitute an important accomplishment. The first session concluded with an encouraging papal audience.

Agenda and how the work went. The first session dealt with woman as an individual, of her tasks and mission from the theological point of view, of her role in society and in the Church (participation in pastoral responsibility and access to non-ordained ministries; the latter theme was treated intensely in collaboration with other competent bodies, especially with the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments).

Initial work afforded a clearer view of some needs surrounding this theme: regarding the first two points (woman as an individual and in the light of theology). However, to further the study in a more accurate ecclesiological perspective, it would be better to study the question from the point of view of the human being, man and woman, avoiding all dichotomy between Church and society, Church and world, etc. Thus the role of women was studied along the lines of *Gaudium et Spes*. In order to examine carefully the concrete problems which rise in the communitary situa-

tions of Church and society in general, further and more far-reaching surveys and consultation are still needed. We must always distinguish—without separating them however communitary responsibilities of women in general and the problems specifically regarding religious women.

Present Stage of Studies. After three sessions, the Commission made a provisional and impartial draft of some texts. An initial study of the theme "The Human Individual, Man and Woman, in God's Design" is in two parts: the contribution of human science (M. T. Graber-Duvernay), and the contribution of biblical theology (I. de la Potterie; D. Mollat; D. Grasso; P. Torret).

Brief Synthesis of the Studies. Although still incomplete, results do show the main outlines of a renewed vision of mankind in fidelity to the traditional teachings of the Church, but understanding all that is positive in present efforts for the "liberation of woman".

The Commission was inspired by listening to the Word of God. Revelation clearly affirms the perfect equality of man and women, as persons in the eyes of God. However, Scripture stresses the difference between man and woman in the complementary sense, a principle of unity: the human person should be considered in his fundamen-

tal equality; and a principle of difference: "man and woman, He created them".

In the human person body and soul are inextricably united, and sexualization concerns the whole being. Modern anthropology should be consulted more widely.

There still remains specifically theological work to be studied in depth: the mystery of man and woman in their relationship with the mystery of the Holy Trinity and also Ecclesiology and Mariology and their connection with culture down through the ages.

The search of new ways for the participation of woman in ecclesial responsibilities has thus been initiated.

The contribution of sociology will be required in order to reach concrete perspectives.

* * *

Towards International Women's Year. Following the mandate received from the Holy Father, the Commission would like to make a contribution to International Women's Year, proclaimed by the United Nations Organization for 1975. It is therefore in contact with the Roman Congregations, international Catholic organizations, and the International Union of Superiors General, etc. Occurring at the same time as the

Holy Year will allow a specifically Christian contribution to be given to it.

To synthesize the main outlines of the work, it is sufficient to refer to the document which was enthusiastically received by all the members of the Commission: Paul VI's apostolic exhortation "Marialis cultus". The Blessed Virgin appears as "the new woman and the perfect Christian who sums up in herself the most characteristic situations of female life" "the promoter of justice... and of charity... the active witness of love which Christ builds in hearts".

At the conclusion of Archbishop Bartoletti's report, various Fathers asked for clarifications on some points. They were Patriarch Paul II Cheiko, Archbishop Ricardo Durand Florez, Archbishop Maxim Hermaniuk, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Bishop Donal Lamont, Cardinal Leo J. Suenens, Bishop Joachim Ruhuna, Father Joseph Lecuyer, and Cardinal G. M. Garrone. Archbishop Bartoletti answered each of them at length. A short document prepared last July by the study Commission on women in society and the Church was made available to the Synodal Fathers. It spoke about the need to recognize and encourage the effective responsibility of women in the work of evangelization, the possibility of their access to non-ordained ministries (it is recalled that the

question of ordained ministries for women does not fall within the competence or tasks of the Commission), the work of education to be undertaken to bring about a change of mentality as regards the role of women, etc. The document closes listing three questions which must be studied in depth: 1) Setting out from the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Councils to have a better picture of "non-ordained ministry" with respect to the other forms of involvement in the Church, and to spell out more clearly the significance of the current

terms — ministry, apostolate, service, etc.; 2) To go to the roots of the problem of the participation of non-ordained baptized persons in the jurisdiction of the Church; 3) To undertake the necessary studies for a motivated reply to the problem of women's access to the ordained ministry. This is a reply which is not only disciplinary but ecclesiological, such as to make the Church's practice intelligible, starting out from biblical, theological and historical studies and from the living tradition of both the Latin and Eastern Churches.

THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS: ON WOMEN

The role of women — both nuns and laywomen — recurred again and again during general debate at the Synod of Bishops.

"The role of women in the Church can hardly be exaggerated," Bishop Alfonso Morepelt of Maseru, Lesotho, said. Women "always have been an invaluable source of life and strength to the Church, and their work in the future must be expanded."

His country, he said, now has 700 native Sisters who have hitherto "maintained their role mainly in hospitals and schools." Today, "they must be prepared to enter other social and pastoral fields of activity."

Bishop Paul Verschuren of Helsinki, speaking in the name of the Catholic bishops of Scandinavia, said: "In our nations the situation of women in civil society seems to be at odds with their role in the Church. Our episcopal conferences propose that the synod also consider the status of women in the Church, and especially that it examine the possibility of opening to women a number of ministries

which are already accessible to them — for example, acolyte and lector, ministries which according to tradition are not necessarily reserved to men."

Two superiors general of Religious orders, Father Constantine Koser of the Franciscans and Father Pedro Arrupe of the Jesuits, also discussed the new needs of the Church in terms of utilizing the apostolic capacities of women, especially of women Religious.

"The importance of the evangelical value of women Religious is not always recognized," Father Arrupe said.

"There is need for reflection and insistence that women Religious occupy the place due them by virtue of their dedication and strength, and they are in a position to exercise all the offices and ministries the Church may entrust to them."

Not all synod participants were enthusiastic about the emphasis being placed on new or expanded roles for women in the Church.

Bishop Caesar Gatimu of Nyeri, Kenya, said: "As for what pertains to women it should be remembered that Christ established (for them) only the regal and common priesthood" of the faithful.

Another African, Bishop Anthyme Bayala of Koudougou, Upper Volta, said that the question of ordination was "simply not under consideration" at the present meetings.

Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati, who delivered an opening report on the state of the Church in North America, Australia and Oceania, admitted later that his report made little reference to the role of women. He said this however was not a personal choice but simply reflected the absence of the subject in earlier reports from the various bishops' conferences on which his own report was based.

Archbishop Bernardin, in speaking at a press meeting after the synod session on October 3, said, "I admit that we have to address more attention to the rights of women in the Church."

WOMEN'S YEAR IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines was the first government to make a financial contribution to the cause of International Women's Year (IWY), and among the first, likewise, to come up with a program of activities in participation.

International Women's Year is "a year to focus attention throughout the world on the status of women, in the belief that the welfare of the world, the development of a country and the cause of peace require the full participation of women as well as men in all fields."

The idea was conceived in 1972 in Geneva, by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Its program was prepared and approved during the 25th Session of the Commission in New York last January and February, with Philippine Ambassador Leticia Ramos Shahani as chairperson.

Shahani was quick to point out that IWY is much more than just a year for Women's Lib. "The objectives of International Women's Year," she said, "should be taken in terms of national and economic perspective."

"International Women's Year," she explained, "should be an opportunity for all concerned — women, men, Governments, the UN, family, international organizations — to effect ways and means by which women, on a basis of equality with men, can be integrated more fully into national development and can be enabled to utilize their many gifts to enhance the quality of life."

Shahani pointed out that if one were to judge women's status on the basis of man-woman relationships alone, there would be no need for IWY in many countries, the Philippines included. "But when we consider how much part women are allowed to play in the national development schemes," Shahani observed, "there is much to be done."

The Civic Assembly of Women of the Philippines (CAWP) has been put in charge of the IWY Philippine observance, which was formally launched on January 6, 163rd birth anniversary of Tandang

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Sora (Melchora Aquino), one of the country's recognized heroines. A cross section of the women population of the country gathered at the Cultural Center to hear the First Lady, Imelda Romualdez Marcos, deliver the keynote address. Among the participants were rural women, factory workers, civic leaders, wives of government and military officials, and members of women's organizations affiliated with the CAWP.

The CAWP plan of activities includes researches on the Filipino women's contribution to nation-building, reaching-out activities to the cultural minority groups and rural women, nationwide seminars to be carried through barangays, and public exhibitions of the musical and literary works of Filipina women.

To make the observance truly meaningful, CAWP will seek to:

- 1) re-evaluate the educational program for women and the job opportunities for them so that they may be fully integrated in the total development effort of the Philippines;
- 2) concentrate on programs and projects that need priority consideration like family planning, food production and conservation;
- 3) study Filipino women's legal and economic rights intensively, and to share their findings with all Filipino women.

In a speech delivered during a conference on "The Changing Roles and Status of the Filipino Women", Leticia Shahani said:

"The focus should be not only on one social class of women but rather on the entire national spectrum of Filipino womanhood. When we say that the position of the Filipino woman is high, we are in reality speaking of the middle class who by birth, education, and environment is able to fight her way through life without much difficulty nor is handicapped by a sense of inferiority."

"The case is different for those from the lower classes or the poor who comprise the greater number of Filipino women and who do not have the confidence nor the how-how to fight for their rights but overwhelmed by the exigencies of earning a living, they accept whatever little benefits they can get from paid work, too frightened to find out whether their salaries are in fact in accordance with the minimum wage law and too scared to complain if they find out that their wages are sub-standard. According to my good friend, Mrs. Lucina Alday, the director of the Bureau of Women and Minors,

the greatest problem in this country for working women is their thorough, consistent, and pervasive exploitation by their employers. For example, although our working women are eligible for maternity benefits, only 350,000 are on record out of 6 million women workers, enjoying such benefits. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that discrimination against Filipino women do not exist, particularly in the employment field."

The editorial of a leading magazine for human development says:

"Many people have a misconception about women's liberation. They immediately associate it with Women's Lib movement in the United States which was concerned about bra-burning and abortion rights. This is but a one-sided minority view: middle class and white, concerned with how to get their husbands to share the kitchen work."

"The majority of Asian women who seek for liberation have a different interest. They suffer the pangs of a developing country: liberation for them is liberation from backbreaking work, low pay, superstition, cultural taboos, etc. It is true they may learn from their more advanced urban sisters the basic psychological aspects of exploitation and discrimination; the importance of education, information, organization. But the concrete situations will be different and the methods that are needed may be different too. Liberation for the rural women means liberation for both themselves and their husbands, their community, even nationally, from the structures of an unjust order."

Hopefully, Women's Year in the Philippines would be a step toward the true liberation of our poor and rural women — the greater in number.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

By

Manuel Panta

Article 3 of the Decree on the Instruments of Social Communications states: "(The Church) judges it her duty to preach the news of redemption with the aid of the instruments of social communication, and to instruct mankind as well in their worthy use."

And well, indeed, should the Church utilize them, for these instruments are proving themselves to be of incalculable worth in the effective dissemination of the Gospel. The press, radio and television have all shown their capability to win issues and influence minds. Put to the service of the Word, they will do much to make God's kingdom nearer to the hearts and homes of the people.

Among the three modes of communication mentioned above, the press rightfully occupies first place in power and influence. It is adaptable, flexible, and is thoroughly capable of shaping the facts as it pleases.

"The press, of its power and nature," acknowledges the Pastoral Instruction for the application of the Decree on the Means of Social Communications, "is of towering importance. Because of its adaptability, because of its variety and of the number of its publications, it can go into detail when reporting the news. It can also comment on the news, and without boring the reader, interpret it in a way that makes him think for himself. It is a most useful complement to the audio-visual means of stimulating men's critical faculties and of helping them form their own opinions. Since it is able to deal with such a variety of material and since it can so admirably encourage men to think, it has prime place in the promotion of social dialogue."

THE CATHOLIC PRESS

In view of this power of the press, it is but right to say that the press deserves the concern of the Church. In recent years,

especially after Vatican II, we have witnessed the proliferation of books, magazine articles, even news items, that accentuated the deep abyss of self-criticism and re-orientation to supposedly new values and new perspectives in Christian living that many theologians have fallen into. Inevitably, most Catholics became confused, unsure of their faith, even apologetic for it where no apology was required. Attacks on Church doctrine and papal pronouncements were the order of the day, resulting in a Babel of printed opinions that served to cloud more than clarify the issues involved. On the other hand, the Catholic press soared to new heights of awareness of the importance of its role in bringing God to man. It has become more aware of its great responsibility in the furthering of God's kingdom on earth, and of its power not only to promote the Word as such, but to make people realize it in social, political and economic terms.

In view of these, we must try to re-examine what truly should be the position of the Catholic press regarding matters of faith and doctrine, and regarding the spreading of the Gospel. Vatican II gives no clear-cut definition of the Catholic press, but it does state what its goals should be, and these are: to "form, strengthen, and spread public views which are in harmony with the natural law, and with Catholic teachings;" and to "... publicize and correctly interpret facts which pertain to the life of the Church." Such then is the Catholic press: first and foremost, it serves the Church, explaining and defending all that she stands for. Only secondarily must it cater to the personal thoughts and opinions of those who wish to avail of its resources.

THE CATHOLIC PRESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Catholic Press in the Philippines has had a long, at times turbulent, history. Throughout the years of its operation, it has faithfully served the Church through its rich, if sometimes disturbing, diversity of thoughts, criticisms, and opinions. But one cannot mistake its dynamism, its constant concern for the growth of our people into mature Catholics.

A sure mark of its liveliness is the recent setting-up of the Catholic Press Association of the Philippines. It is, in the words of its tentatively approved charter, "a professional and autonomous organization of Catholics in the field of the Press." First organized last May, 1974, it now enjoys the following of virtually all Catholic publications in the Philippines.

GENERAL PURPOSES

The general purposes of the CPAP as set forth in its charter may be characterized as attempts to translate Vatican II's ideal of the press into reality.

The Association, first of all, seeks "to facilitate the collaboration and mutual aid among Catholics engaged in the apostolate of the press in all its forms." There is no lack, no doubt, of Catholic publications in the Philippines expressly designed to serve the evangelical needs of the Church. What is clearly lacking is a central organization to unify their apostolate efforts so as to give them more weight and effectiveness that otherwise they would not have individually. Through membership in the Association, Catholic publications and their constituents can more freely and formally share ideas on fundamental issues regarding the life of the Church, as well as think out techniques to make their apostolate more fruitful and effective. Furthermore, they will be able to maintain a uniform opinion among themselves on basic questions already resolved by the magisterium, while freely discussing those still unsettled.

The important role of the layman who is engaged in press activity other than for Catholic publications in the apostolate of the Church is underlined by the second general purpose of the Association, which is "to encourage, assist and collaborate with those in all sectors of the press who seek to give a Christian witness in their professional activity." Behind this purpose is the clear recognition of the fact that the Catholic layman, by witnessing to his faith, can do much to promote the formation of a responsible secular press. He can, if he will, set himself to the task of checking the abuses of the press, and instill into it the Catholic ideal of truth. By formally affiliating himself to the CPAP, he will have taken a definite step towards the accomplishment of this objective. The Association provides him the necessary moral and physical support in his endeavors.

In the highly competitive field of journalism, it is inevitable that press publications should vie with each other for the attention of the buying public. They do this by presenting facts in a way that would make them attractive and exciting reading. In magazines with serious pretensions to being omni-authoritative, writers accomplish this by weaving tales about facts ostensibly designed to make the readers "see" in these facts more than meets their eyes. The love for the concrete, the colorful and the sensational however has oftentimes led the secular press to indulge in certain excesses: they give inappropriate, sometimes inaccurate, meanings

to the facts reported; writers in magazines allow their particular attitudes and philosophies to creep into their articles, so much the worse for their subject. The Church has more than once suffered a great deal for the slanted commentaries trained against her. What is worse is that the majority of present-day readers, too tired or too lazy to think for themselves, swallow without question the packaged opinions delivered to them by the press. In this kind of arrangement, both reader and subject suffer. The press, free of restraints, continues to create wrong impressions, wrong notions, and consequently, wrong-thinking individuals.

The CPAP, with its vast organizational potential, seeks to correct this condition. This is the reason why its third general objective is "to promote responsible and competent journalism and uphold the right to its free exercise." It will find ways and means to strike a suitable balance between the commercial demands of publication and the requirements of Christian justice and equity. It will also see to it that the freedom of the press is respected, just as it will do what it can to prevent it from abusing this freedom.

The fourth objective of the Association is on a level touching the total human being; it is "to foster a press that serves the total development of people." The total development of the human community has been the stock concern of Christian reformers, and one that has so far eluded realization. Its consideration — political, social, economic, cultural, religious — contain in themselves worlds of problems that cry for solution; so much more difficult it is to harmonize them. As an organ of social communication, the press can do a great deal in forming in the minds of the people the idea that development depends on no single consideration, but on all of them in harmony. It can do this by putting issues in their right perspective and importance.

CPAP will also serve as a body representing "the interests of the Catholic press and of Catholic journalism in the Philippines before national and international institutions or organizations, civil and religious." This is a particularly important function of the Association, since the Catholic press and Catholic journalism in the Philippines has a right to be heard and listened to both here and abroad.

The Association aims to accomplish its objectives by developing programs or projects that would serve its members and the cause of professional journalism. Membership fees, donations, from any of its projects are its principal means of maintaining its grants, bequests, endowments, as well as any income it may derive activities.

MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Membership in the CPAP is open to all Catholic members of the working press. These include: the national director for press of the National Office of Mass Media of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the diocesan press directors, publishers, editors and other members of the editorial staff of publishing houses, press agencies, newspapers, and magazines including campus publications, free-lance writers, press photographers, artists, Schools of Journalism. It also extends to individuals of other faiths who subscribe to the objectives of the Association. A candidate for membership must apply first in writing and be sponsored by a member of the Association, after which he is admitted, subject to the acceptance of the Membership Committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Association has four charter members: the General Assembly, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the National Council.

The General Assembly is composed of all the members of the Association. It will convene once a year, or in as many years as the members will subsequently determine; the time, place and agenda of the meeting will be communicated to the members at least one month prior to its holding. Each member is entitled to one vote. On matters of general interest, the Assembly votes as a whole, while on matters that directly and exclusively affect the operation of member institutions, only the institutions concerned may vote. As usual, two-thirds majority of votes cast is required to amend existing statutes of the Association or to decide questions of membership referred to the General Assembly.

The Board of Trustees, on the other hand comprises seven members elected by the General Assembly. Its job is to manage the affairs of the Association, the trustees elect among themselves (or, if ruled otherwise, the Assembly elects) a President, a Vice-President, and a Treasurer. The Trustees then appoint an Executive Secretary who need not be as member of the Board. Among the powers of the Board are: to form standing committees deemed necessary to further the aims of the Association, among them the Membership Committee, which need not include Trustees; to take any action or decision to fulfill the objectives of the Association, including the power to open and operate a bank account, when and where necessary, and to accept or expel members, the latter power residing in the Membership Committee appointed by the

Board, subject to the review of the Board and to appeal in the General Assembly.

The managing officers of the Association, numbering the President, the Vice-President and the Treasurer, constitute together with the Executive Secretary the Executive Committee. Its role is to execute the decisions of the General Assembly, the National Council, and the Board of Trustees, as well as to manage the affairs of the Association between meetings of the Board.

Constituted to facilitate consultation and communication between the Board of Trustees and the members of the Association, the National Council is composed of the Board of Trustees and a representative body consisting of a vice-president for each region of the country, and one for each category of institutional members (publishing Schools, Schools of Journalism, etc.). Vice-presidents representing regions or institutions are elected or designated by their own constituents with whom they consult from time to time. Meetings of the National Council may coincide with the General Assembly, but the Board of Trustees or its Executive Committee may refer questions to the Council at any time. The voting when called for may be done in person, in writing, or by written proxy. Provided that on matters directly and exclusively affecting a region or category or institutions, only the representatives of the members concerned are consulted.

LEAVEN OF THE PRESS

The tentatively approved statutes of the CPAP as stated above show that the Association is well-organized, the better to provide strong support to its members. In the long run, it will prove to be the leaven of the press that it intends to be, setting the records straight where they need to be straightened, and to imbue in the press, be it Catholic or secular, the awareness that the printed word is not an end in itself, nor can it find its ultimate end in the temporal service of the people, but rather in helping the human being develop totally in himself, in his community and in his God by the means it has at hand.

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BIBLE STUDY

Eleventh of a series

THE KINGDOM OF GOD PREACHED BY JESUS

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD TO JESUS' CONTEMPORARIES

The Kingdom of God and the Last Days

The idea of the kingdom of God is intimately associated with the last days which Peter in Acts 2 was proclaiming. As such, it belongs to the heart of the earliest Kerygma of the apostles and consequently, to the teachings of Jesus. It refers to what the prophets envisaged of a future time when God's rule will be established once and for all, when all the nations will recognize the sovereignty of the God of Israel and God's Law will be observed in the spirit of a new covenant.

Ideas Concerning the Kingdom of God

The Pharisees during the time of Jesus interpreted this age to come or the kingdom of God in such a way that it consisted mainly of the universal acceptance of the Torah, thereby excluding those who are ignorant and sinners. The zealots and other nationalistic elements in the Jewry, however, interpreted the kingdom of God in terms of a political victory of Israel over all nations. The idea of a Messiah who will be God's instrument in driving the foreigners out of Palestine is but a part of this nationalistic obsession. Still, there were those apocalyptists who were waiting for a more dramatic and spectacular intervention of God in the form of the son of Man who will come in his cosmic glory to act as judge and harbinger of peace.

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD PREACHED BY JESUS

The gospels tell us that the good news proclaimed by Jesus was the arrival of the Kingdom of God (Mk. 1:15). The Kingdom of God has come upon Israel, as symbolized by Jesus exorcism of those possessed by demonic powers.

"When a strong man, fully armed; guards his own palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he assails him and overcomes him, he takes away the armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoil." (Luke 11:21:22). The coming of the Kingdom of God thus eluded the astrological observations of the apocalypticists. When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God will arrive, he answered. "The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17:20).

In this context, therefore, the answer of Jesus to John the Baptist's messenger assumes meaning. To the question "Are you he who is to come or shall we look for another?" he answered:

"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind received their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" (Luke 7:22).

For this reason, the presence of the Kingdom is a cause for feasting and not for fasting. "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them. As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast" (Mark 2:19).

The Future Aspects of the Kingdom

In spite of the presence of the Kingdom, however, its full realization is yet to come. The believer in this have to pray for its accomplishment "Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom Come" (Luke 11-2). And one's prayer should persevere to the end since "If you, who are evil, know how to give gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

The growth of the Kingdom is compared to a seed: "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed upon the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he knows not how. The earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear" (Mark 4:6-29). Thus, the kingdom has an internal power to grow silently but steadily.

The full realization of the Kingdom of God, however, is not something that lies in the vague future, but rather something that is quite imminent so as to demand the urgency of a decision. "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom" (Mt. 16:28).

III. THE IMPERATIVES OF THE KINGDOM

Vigilance

Since the Kingdom of God is already reality whose full realization lies in the imminent future, it demands that man should be vigilant. For "when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mk. 4:29). Similarly, Jesus warned that the end will come like the thief in the night who enters the house when least expected.

Commitment

Commitment to Jesus' gospel should be uncompromising since he who is not for him is against him, and he who does not gather with him scatters (Luke 11:23). Similarly:

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day" (Mt. 6:24-34).

The value of the kingdom then is absolute. One must abandon everything for its sake.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sell all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Mt. 11:44-45).

Existential Decision

The recognition of the kingdom calls for an existential decision as in the face of an imminent crisis such as in the case of the unjust steward who was facing ouster by his master (Luke 16:1-9). Before committing oneself to the kingdom of God, one should first carefully weigh all the demands it makes.

"For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:28-33).

Norm of Man's Behaviour

The coming of the kingdom of God reveals the initiative and generosity of God. Man's then, should be one of positive response to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. He should be perfect as his heavenly father is perfect. "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:44-48). One should, therefore, treat his fellow man the way God dealt with us making no distinction between caste or race (See Luke 10:30 on the parable of the Good Samaritan). Man should forgive as God had forgiven him (see Mt. 18:23-35 on the Parable of unmerciful Servant).

Consequently, what defiles a man in this age of God's reign is not unclean food but unethical feelings and actuations:

"And he called the people to him again, and said to them, 'Hear me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him.' And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, 'Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot define him, since it enters, not his heart but his stomach,

and so passes on?" (Thus he declared all food clean). And he said, 'What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thought, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and they defile a man' " (Mk. 7:14-23).

IV. SUFFERINGS AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As mentioned earlier the future aspect of the kingdom demands perseverance from the believer. For violence will characterize the coming of the kingdom.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it" (Mt. 10:34-39).

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men! for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver up brother to death, the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel, before the Son of man comes.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master" (Mt. 10:16-24).

Sufferings and persecutions, therefore, are not incompatible with the idea of the kingdom of God. They are to be seen as the necessary birth pangs of the kingdom.

CASES AND QUERIES

ON THE USE OF CHURCH PROPERTY BY A POPULATION CONTROL GROUP

QUESTION

1. Is it right or wrong for Church authorities to cooperate with a Population Control group that tells people — what methods are approved by the Church and what are not —, but leaves them free to choose what they like, before helping them practice the method of their choice?

2. In particular, could the cooperation be limited to the renting of a Cursillo House (in the Church grounds) to such a Population Control group? — How would the answer to this question be affected by the following considerations:

- a) The Church stands to gain from the arrangement for the Population Control group is committed to renovate the Cursillo House and pay a monthly rent of ₱200.00.
- b) The contract is good for only one year, but may be extended to several years.
- c) The people are in fact scandalized by the action of the Church authorities, since they say that they preach one thing, while helping others propagate practice contrary to Church teaching.
- d) The Cursillo House can no longer be used for Cursillos nor for the meetings of the Church associations that had helped to raise funds to build it.

G. N. P.*
Tagbilaran, Bohol

Comment and Answer

A brief answer to this question may turn out to leave our consultant and persons concerned rather confused; to avoid this I shall

* Slightly edited.

preface the answer to this little problem with some distinctions mindful of the old maxim that to be manly means to distinguish:

1. Our inquirer-informant tells us that the Population Control group in question — a) 'tells people what methods of fertility control are approved by the Church and what are not'; b) 'that it leaves persons concerned free to choose the particular method or way they like'; c) 'once this is done, it helps them practice the method of their free choice'.
2. Our consultant asks: — "In particular, could the cooperation be limited to the renting of the Cursillo House (in the Church grounds) to such a Population Control group?"

The **cooperation** referred to becomes a problem because as just stated (sect. c), the P.C. group helps persons practice methods of fertility control which are condemned by the Church, i.e. artificial means, mechanical, chemical, etc., if they freely choose these means or methods. Manuals of moral theology call this cooperation **remote material cooperation** (cfr. Moral and Pastoral Theology. A Summary. Henry Davis, S.J. — Sheed and Ward, London, 1951, p. 36; Handbook of Moral Theology. D. M. Prummer, O.P.; Mercier Press, 1956, nn. 233-234).

Our inquirer-informant continues: "How would the answer to this question be affected by the following considerations?", the four considerations just stated?

The fact that the Cursillo House is within the Church premises — 'in the Church grounds' — and is being used for meetings of Cursillistas and religious associations does not make the building a — 'sacred place', and I confidently say there must be available to Cursillistas and religious associations other places in town, perhaps less comfortable, wherein they can meet, in the meantime. — The Population Control group in virtue of the contract is committed to (i) renovate the Cursillo House; (ii) pay a monthly rent of ₱200.00; (iii) to provide information on fertility control methods both those the Church approves, as well as those contrary to Church teaching. This is a widely, keenly felt need our Catholic communities experience, and sad to say, very few are the Catholic qualified groups willing to offer this service; (iv) to help each one in the way and method he chooses. The objectionable feature of the program is that it offers the same service to those choosing means and ways the Catholic teaching disapproves.

The contract is valid for only one year, but it may be extended to several years. — This gives members of the Catholic community

ON THE USE OF CHURCH PROPERTY 313

a blessed opportunity to bring to the knowledge of the Church authorities, facts and experiences which may come under their observation and considered objectionable to the Catholic side, thus providing the Church authorities additional assistance bearing upon the extension or termination of the contract in question, if the new findings truly render the renewal of the contract morally undesirable.

That the people are in fact scandalized by the Church authorities' action since they see and say that the Church preaches one thing, while helping others propagate practices contrary to Church teaching. — Is this scandal of the "weak" or rather "pharisaic" scandal? — Honestly I see not much solid ground for scandal of the "weak", in the light of the foregoing statements of our inquirer. If there be misunderstanding of the Church course of action, it is for Cursillistas and members of religious associations to enlighten those concerned and thus do away with the misunderstanding. It is not possible to have an ideal situation.

The Church authorities, I'm sure will provide religious groups in the parish with adequate meeting facilities elsewhere, for as long a time as the Cursillo House is being rented. It will take some time to get used to the new headquarters or meeting place, but this is not a 'critical' problem, on which the very life of the religious groups concerned, depends!

In short, the renting of the Cursillo House to the Population Control group, under conditions specified above may appear "**prima facie**" morally objectionable; but on second thought, and on the strength of the above considerations and of the light of the principles governing the morality of this kind of cooperation, it seems obvious that this here and now remote-material cooperation may be permitted. At the end of the one year contract, prudence may point out, perhaps, to the termination of the contract.

Fr. F. del Rio, O.P.

DIALOGUE

Reacting to our January issue Dialogue: "Some Bishops speak on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal", a reader sent us the following item.

AGAINST PENTECOSTALISM POPE PAUL VI'S WARNINGS

From "The Remnant", Sept. 15, 1973:

Repeatedly in recent months Pope Paul VI has warned against the growing phenomenon of 'pentecostalism'. In fact, as long ago as 1969, the Pope cautioned against "the illusion of a free and charismatic Christianity" which, in his words, "does not build, but demolishes".

On the following September he returned to the subject, saying that some "have recourse to gratuitous charismatic suppositions in order to fill up the interior emptiness created by their loss of confidence in the guidance of the Church."

Again, on September 25th of that year, he spoke of the dangers latent "in claims of personal prophetic insight". And he continued:

"Many who talk about the Church today say they are inspired by a prophetic spirit and appeal to the Holy Spirit as if the Divine Paraclete were at their disposal at all times. May God grant that this presumption, of elevating a personal experience into a criterion of religious doctrine, may not cause havoc!"

"May He not allow the treating of these private opinions as charismatic gifts to lead astray so many good and well-meaning people."

Last week again, Pope Paul warned, according to an NC report from Castelgandolfo, against the tendency today to falsely distinguish between a 'charismatic Church' and the 'institutional Church'. "What Church in fact did Jesus found?" the Pope asked at his general audience of Aug. 29.

"Jesus founded His Church," answered the Pope, emphasizing the word 'His.' "He founded it on the apostles. He did not found others. Different kinds of churches do not exist. There exists only one Church, full and perfect from its inception, and it is upon this Church that Jesus sent the Holy Ghost in order that the institutional Church might live by the animation of the Holy Spirit" (NC dispatch).

Address of "The Remnant": 2539 Morrison Ave.,
St. Paul, Minn. 55117

ON FR. ABESAMIS' ARTICLE

The Editor
Boletín Eclesiástico

Dear Editor:

I have read the article of Rev. C. Abesamis, S.J., in the February 1975 issue of the Boletín. Since you are inviting readers to send in comments on the said article, I am sending the following:

The article is a magnificent piece of sacralized socio-politics and theological nonsense.

First: The Christian Religion and Faith are something essentially supernatural. How can you Filipinize something that is essentially supernatural? For that effect, you can't even Filipinize mathematics or the metric system; you can only adopt them. Whereas, the ecclesiastical set-up and administration can be indigenized, if there are sufficient elements for that effect, the Christian Faith and Religion cannot be indigenized except in the accidents of their external expression and means. We should not forget that we profess a "catholic" Faith and Religion.

Second: After ten years of post-Conciliar attempts at dialogue, where have we arrived at? We are still at the very start. Why? because dialogue is a professional means that can be successfully and fruitfully carried only on the professional and dispassionate level. What happens, however, is that the matter of religious be-

liefs, just as political ideas, and even ideas about sex and contraception, so involve the individual, that they are not rid of emotional involvement to be an apt subject matter for platonic discussion and dialogue.

Third: If the mission of the Church in Asia today is the work towards the establishment of the grandiose socio-political and secular new world envisioned in the article, then the Church is a rather irrelevant institution. Other institutions can do a better job in that direction. The Church is not equipped with the means and know-how to do such kind of a job in one Asian country alone, letting aside the whole of Asia.

There is no originality in this piece of "Liberation" Theology. It follows the Marxist line of dangling out **nationalism** and a **rosy new order**, which the article of Rev. Abesamis presents dressed up under heavy biblical phylacteria.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) Fr. Manuel Piñon, O.P.

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MARRIAGE STATISTICS

Recent trends show civil ceremonies are fast becoming popular among couples. According to the latest survey conducted in 1972 by the National Census and Statistics Office (NCS), out of the total 248,261 marriages performed during the year, about 7,894 or 30.37% were contracted through civil ceremonies. Weddings solemnized in Catholic churches, on the other hand, numbered 141,884 or 57.15% of the total. Other religious marriages numbered only about 30,357 or 12.2%. — Permissive times have also caused Filipino couples to generally marry young. The NCSO said the highest number of married couples was concentrated in age group 20-24 with 110,154 or 44.4% of the total. The second highest number was concentrated in age group 25-29, numbering about 67,879. The third group, under 20 years, totalled 33,497, of which 20,355 or 60.8% were solemnized in Roman Catholic ceremonies; 9,411 or 28.1% in civil ceremonies and 3,731 or 11.1% by other rites and unspecified ceremonies.

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 SOLUTION TO FRAGMENTATION

Dear Editor:

The title of your editorial in the *Boletin* of January 1975, No. 544 is very well chosen: **Solution to Fragmentation.**

I fully agree on that. What we have right now is fragmentation in the Church.

As you rightly pointed out: "The different stands taken by different Church leaders on the February 27 Referendum has demonstrated once more that the Catholic Church in the Philippines is a fragmented Church".

Although the Conference of Bishops of the Philippines took a stand on the issue of the Referendum, others like the Association of Major Religious Superiors of Men in the Philippines and the PPI took completely different stands.

Now, this is a most serious development and, of course, the average Catholic is now at a loss. The question arises: Whom to follow? Who is in charge in the Church?

All this reminds me of the last pages of an excellent book by Fr. H. O'Connell C.S.S.R.: **Keeping Your Balance in the Modern Church**, where Fr. O'Connell writes: "At this point, the average Catholic may be tempted to throw up his hands in despair" and cry out: "How, then, am I to discover truth?" and he adds: "The answer is very simple and very clear: Listen to the teaching authority of the Church. And this means to the Pope and to the bishops. They alone are the official teachers of the Church. They alone are the successors of the apostles to whom the commission was given to go

forth and teach in Christ's name." And he concludes: "The faithful Catholic knows that Christ, upon leaving the earth, established His Church, which He sent forth in his name with authority to teach, to govern and to sanctify all mankind until the end of time. In obedience to Christ's Church, he finds unity, security and the certainty of doing God's will. For Christ has said: "He that hears you hears me" (Luke 10:16).

It is clear, therefore, that the authority of the Church is the source of her unity, and the solution to the fragmentation we all witness can only be: respect for the legitimate authority of the Church (the Pope and the Bishops in communion with the Holy See) coupled with the ability of the shepherds to make their authority respected.

I beg you place this letter in your interesting section: **Communication**. With all good wishes, I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,

Alfonso Natividad

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COR-MANILA

Latest and welcome addition to the local Catholic Press world is Cor-Manila, monthly publication of the Archdiocese of Manila. Edited by Fr. Ted Buhain (P.O. Box 132, Manila), the publication intends to:

- focus attention to the on-going process of pastoral and religious renewal, to different approaches that effect change in the Archdiocese, spotting breakthroughs, assessing present trends and suggesting directions;

- assist in the molding of the Archdiocese into one heart — a heart that feels the pulse of our people in their aspirations for justice, peace, love, truth and freedom — by establishing a continuum of vertical and horizontal communication within the Archdiocese;

- promote the spirit of service among the people of God in the Archdiocese by pointing to ways of Christian love of God and neighbor.

HERE AND THERE

NEW ARCHDIOCESE AND DIOCESE

His Holiness Pope Paul VI, in acceding to the desire of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, has elevated the Diocese of San Fernando (Pampanga) to an Archdiocese and at the same time has announced the appointment of the Most Reverend Emilio Cinense as its first Metropolitan Archbishop.

Likewise, the Holy Father has created the new Diocese of Balanga (Bataan) for pastoral and administrative reasons and to ensure a more effective apostolic

action in the province of Bataan. There are at present 15 secular priests serving the 13 parishes of the new Diocese with a population of 216,210 of which 196,946 are Catholics.

The Ecclesiastical Province of San Fernando (Pampanga), the Diocese of Tarlac, the new Diocese of Balanga (Bataan) and the Prelature of Iba (Zambales). Until recently the new Archdiocese with its suffragan circumscriptions fall under the Ecclesiastical Province of Manila.

MSGR. CAPALLA NAMED DAVAO AUXILIARY BISHOP

The Apostolic Nunciature of Manila has officially informed the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines that His Holiness Pope Paul VI has appointed Very Rev. Monsignor Fernando Capalla of Jaro as Titular Bishop of Grumento Nova and Auxiliary Bishop of Davao.

The new bishop-elect will assist His Excellency Monsignor Antonio Ll. Mabutas, Archbishop of Davao in the administration of the vast Archdiocese of Davao.

Monsignor Capalla is a native of Leon, Iloilo, born on November 1, 1934. He studied for the priest-

hood at the Jaro Seminary and was ordained on March 18, 1961. He finished M.A. at St. John's University in Washington DC, and took a special course in Journalism.

Aside from being a curate of La Paz, Iloilo, he has held important positions in the Archdiocese of Jaro such as: Rector and professor at St. Joseph Junior Seminary, Ecclesiastical Superintendent of Catholic schools, "Lawyer" at the Matrimonial Court of Jaro, Chairman of Commission "Opus Vocationum" and Coordinator of Western Visayas Pastoral Secretariat.

ALTAR DANCE AT BACLARAN

A play-and-dance Easter presentation at the Baclaran Church last Black Saturday midnight has met with mixed reactions from Church elements.

One well-known priest was horrified (and he was quite vocal about his horror) that some sort of a "pandanggo sa ilaw" — costumes and all — should be staged in something as solemn as an Easter rite.

Another priest exclaimed "bravo," saying this is what the people have been waiting for all these years.

The experimental Easter presentation involving non-professional churchgoers playing a part in the reenactment of Christ's passion was staged inside the church, right before the altar.

The presentation included the youth acting out the lines being narrated by a priest, the crowd

delivering the "sinagoga" verses, semi-professional folk dancers in Filipino costumes doing their candle-lit number as part of the Liturgy of the Lights, "salakots" and other purely Philippine items used as church decor. It was a brainchild of the prefect of Baclaran Church, Fr. Vincent Warren, CSSR.

This exercise in a more people-oriented form of worship marked one of the first few steps intended to put in concrete form Father Warren's ideas on bringing The Word closer to the people.

"It is silly to give a western style of liturgy to a people with a Filipino heart," said Father Warren. "Liturgy should speak to the people of the place."

An enterprising Parafique matron organized a choir of children and another prompted a dance group to do some interpretative dancing.

THE DOMINICANS IN 1975

OAKLAND, Calif. — The 40 Dominican provinces throughout the world exemplify best "the character" of the order, Father Vincent de Couesnongle, Master General, said in an exclusive interview here.

The provinces "are more and more conscious of Dominican originality and authenticity in the world." Their major contribution to their Order and to the Church lies in their ability to adapt themselves to local conditions and local needs.

"Dominicans look at the world in which they live and tie themselves to the leg of that particular

world. This means that in one place, like in the United States, the Dominican life — the Dominican apostolate — will be somewhat different from, let's say, in Vietnam or Latin America. Therefore, there is a certain variety; but the basic characteristic is that the Dominicans do try today to really respond to the needs of the local situations in which they live."

"A very concrete example of that adaptation and that response to the world is Latin America, in which the Dominicans there are much more conscious of the social questions of poverty, of social differences and divisions, and are concerned how to give to the Gospel

and to their apostolate a social dimension."

"They investigate what this social dimension really means, what it means politically, what it means in relation to poverty and how theology applies. Dominicans realize that the theology they have learned to interpret is really very rich; that the theology of liberation which is important in Latin America is all a part of their concern in translating the entire Gospel into practical terms to the people."

"It doesn't mean, of course, that everybody is involved in that: that all the Dominicans are active in that one area. The example, however, does show that when

people, including priests, are concerned, they can form their own vision of the world and project that into the formation of the students with whom they are working, with people to whom they are preaching. In other words, they proceed from the theology to concrete situations."

"On research study, we can point out that the spirituality of the order is very much supported and related actually to intelligence and intellectual life. Consequently, the aggiornamento of Vatican Council II is really in line with our constant objectives and our orientation. The Vatican Council has helped us to keep on our chartered course."

POPE'S DIRECTIONS TO JESUITS

VATICAN CITY. — The Pope, in an hour-long audience with the Jesuit superior general voiced his continued concern about the actions of the Jesuits' current 32nd general congregation and called on the superior to enforce stronger discipline within the Society of Jesus.

The audience with the superior general, Father Pedro Arrupe, came on February 20 following a handwritten letter of a page and a half from the Pope. In the letter the Pope told Father Arrupe he would not approve any changes regarding the Jesuits' fourth vow of special obedience.

Furthermore, he asked the congregation to send all documentation of the meeting to the Vatican. The Jesuits have hitherto had the privilege of enacting legislation without seeking Vatican approval, save in the case of amendments to their constitutions.

Father Arrupe read the papal letter to the general congregation

which had been meeting in Rome since early December to discuss vital questions facing the order. The congregation then voted to send the superior general and a Jesuit general assistant, Father Vincent O'Keefe of the United States, to the Vatican for a "clarification" of the papal letter.

News of what was discussed by the Pope and Jesuit general is fragmentary, but NC News has learned that the Pope virtually ordered the general congregation to submit all decrees for Vatican examination before they are promulgated.

Jesuit sources say that the Pope also seemed worried by a lack of discipline in the order, and asked Father Arrupe to correct it. Precisely what lack of discipline the Pope was referring to was not made known.

Members of the general congregation were reported upset by the Pope's fears about their forth-

coming decisions. But a Jesuit spokesman said that the congregation was striving to carry out all of the Pope's wishes.

The congregation had already set up a seven-member commission to ensure that the congregation should act in accord with the Pope's December 3 speech to them, with a 1973 letter to Father Arrupe and with recent letters specifically regarding the general congregation. That commission stated explicitly that the congregation was following "almost all of the papal directives," according to Jesuit sources.

The Pope had already indicated to the general congregation that he was greatly concerned over their actions because he believes that other religious orders will be greatly influenced by them as well.

The general congregation ended on March 7 after approving a number of documents and decrees. The congregation had already approved a brief document on the identity of the Jesuits describing members of the order as men in search of faith and justice with Christ. The document, the first of its kind ever to be written in a language other than Latin, is in English.

RELIGION PROVES 'DURABLE' UNDER RED REGIMES

LONDON. — The Times of London, at the end of a survey of religion in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe, concluded: "Almost the only valid generalization is that religious practice and belief have proved remarkably durable."

It observed no slackening in the basic ideological confrontation between Marxist materialism and any theological system. It also pointed to a political confrontation where religious organizations are viewed by Marxist regimes as rival centres of moral authority.

"But the real issues now are the practical, political and moral ones of how to co-exist when neither system can eradicate the other in the foreseeable future."

Believers must still pay some penalty either in their own careers and in their children's education or through 'the acute dilemma' growing out of the collaboration with a state whose principles and practices are contrary to their own conscientious convictions.

CATHOLIC-PROTESTANT CATECHISM PUBLISHED

A common Catholic-Protestant catechism, the first jointly produced presentation of Christian belief since the churches separated 4½ centuries ago, is ready for issuance in the United States.

Called "The Common Catechism: A Book of Christian Faith," it is being published at Easter, by Seabury Press, (\$10.95).

The 720-page summation of faith, intended mainly for adults, was produced over a period of five years by a team of 40 Church scholars, 20 Protestants and 20

Catholics. It was originally published in West Germany and Switzerland two years ago.

The Catechism grew out of conversations at Vatican Council II between Rev. Lukas Visser, the top theologian at the World Council of Churches, and his friend Father Johannes Feiner, who was later appointed to the Pope's theological commission. Although Visser and Feiner edited the book, it lacks official Protestant status, and the Holy See has made no comment.

HOMILETICS

by

Fr. Efrén Rivera, O.P.

I. BIBLICAL NOTES

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 6, 1975)

First Reading: Zechariah 9:9-10

Second Reading: Romans 8:9.11-13

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:25-30

A. The First Reading is taken from the second part of the book of Zechariah. While the first part of the book was addressed to the actual situation of the people at the time of the Persian Emperor Darius I (522-486 B.C.) shortly after their return from Babylonian Exile (587-538), the second part is mostly eschatological in character. The oracle in 9:1-11 is a poetic description of the coming of the Kingdom of God, marked by the destruction of worldly powers and the gathering of the dispersed People of God. This is the first link with the Gospel Reading, which is taken from that part of Matthew which treats on "the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven."

The second link is more particular, inasmuch as this and the Gospel Reading both describe the Messiah as "humble". This humility is expressed in a picturesque way when the Messiah is described as "riding on a donkey" — a prophecy fulfilled in the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem commemorated on Palm Sunday (Matthew 21:4-5).

To appreciate the significance of the image of a Messiah riding on a donkey, it is best to read I Kings 1. One of David's sons, Adonijah, had the ambition to succeed his father on the throne.

To force the issue, he started acting like a mighty king: "he procured a chariot and team with fifty men to run in front of him." But Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet opposed him and succeeded in persuading old king David to designate Solomon as his successor. To end the intrigues, Zadok, Nathan and their allies "mounted Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him to Gihon" where he was anointed king.

For an equivalent contemporary image we may say that when the Messiah comes he will not be riding a jet plane nor even a car of the Mercedes-Benz type, but just a tricycle — the quickest transportation ordinarily available to barrio people.

B. The Gospel Reading consists of a triple strophe reminiscent of Wisdom writings. The first two strophes (verses 25-26; verse 27) are also found in Luke 10:21-22 but with a different context (that of rejoicing over apostolic success). The second strophe (verse 27) is said to have a "johannine flavour" (see John 1:18; 3:35; 10:15 and 3:11), leading some authors to call this the "johannine pericope" in Matthew. The third strophe (verses 28-30) is found in Matthew alone.

In Matthew's context this pericope comes after Jesus severely criticizes his contemporaries' blindness to the mission of John the Baptist and his own (10:16-19), and after his lament over the refusal of the lake-towns to harken to his call for repentance (10:20-24).

With this background it is clear that the "learned and clever" are the leaders of the wayward Jews — the Scribes and Pharisees — who are not properly disposed to participate in the mysteries of the kingdom. The "mere children" to whom the wisdom of the Kingdom of heaven is imparted are the disciples.

MESSAGE.

1. God's revelation is directed to all, as shown by the fact that Jesus preached publicly and not just to a secret group. But it is accepted only by those who have the disposition of "little children" — those who have the childlike openness to a heavenly Father, — those who let their hearts be touched by the messengers of their heavenly Father. It is rejected by those who have "out-grown" docility to their heavenly Father but have instead followed human teachers (like the Scribes and Pharisees) who mislead their minds with useless discussions and fix their hearts on worldly things.

2. The revelation of God is not complete in the Law and the Prophets — this is the Jewish belief — but, rather, it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who brings it to completion. This completion shows that divine revelation is an **invitation** to enter into a divine Father-Son relationship. It means getting involved in the life of a divine Father who is a person and his Son who is also a person. Revelation is not something that can be contemplated from a distance: it is a life into which one must be immersed.

3. We must free ourselves from the yoke of the Law fashioned by the Scribes and Pharisees and take the yoke of Christ. This yoke is submission to the reign of God. When a man makes this submission he finds that the burdens of life become easier to bear. He is liberated instead of subjugated. Humility and Faith in Christ provide the key to liberation.

C. **The Third Reading**, which treats on the work of the Holy Spirit in the faithful, complements the Gospel Reading to produce a trinitarian picture of the new life given to the faithful.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 13, 1975)

First Reading: Isaiah 55:10-11

Second Reading: Romans 8:18-23

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:1-23 (or 13:1-9)

A. By comparing the word of God to rain and snow that **drop to the ground**, the short parable which constitutes the **First Reading** finds an echo in the Gospel Reading which is the Parable of the Sower (and its explanation) wherein the seed that **drops to the ground** upon sowing is the word of God (Mark 4:14; Luke 8:11; but see the comments below). In this Old Testament parable the dynamism of God's word is brought out more clearly than in its New Testament counterpart. The Word is compared to the rain and snow inasmuch as they make the earth yield and make plants grow. Besides, an explicit statement is made: the word carries out the will of God and succeeds in what it was sent to do.

B. **The Gospel Reading** is the first parable in Matthew's parabolic discourse on the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A reader today gets disconcerted by the explanation of the parable because of the ambiguity of what the seed symbolizes. In

spite of the statement that "the seed is the word" (in Mark 4:14) or "the word of God" (Luke 8:11), and the suggestion that the different kinds of ground on which the seed falls symbolize different kinds of people, these symbolisms are not consistently maintained and with a sudden twist the seed is also made to symbolize people. For example, "the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy" is compared to the rocky ground; but he is also compared to the seed that begins to grow in such ground, because it is said that "he has no roots in him, he does not last; let some trial come, or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once".

Similarly, the man who hears the word, but lets the worries of this world and the lure of riches choke the word, is compared to the thorny ground; but at the same time he is compared to the seed that falls in such ground because it is said that "he produces nothing". Finally, the man who hears the word and understands it is compared to the rich soil and at the same time to the productive seeds: "he is the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now sixty, now thirty."

The ambiguity of the symbolism of the seed and the different kinds of ground is explained by many authors today as being due to the transformation of what was originally a pure parable into an allegorizing parable.

If the parable of the sower is taken as a pure parable, what it teaches is not to be sought in what the seed or the different kinds of ground symbolize, but in the whole sense the story makes. That sense becomes evident after making the following observations:

a) A tenfold yield was considered a good harvest in Palestine. Hence 30-fold and 60-fold yields signify bumper crops and 100-fold is altogether extraordinary.

b) It was not unusual in Palestine for one and the same field to have different patches of soil: soil hardened by walking (the "short-cut" trail), rocky soil, thorny soil and good soil.

c) The seed that falls on the three types of bad soil are lost. But the loss is compensated for by the bumper crop. Thus, if out of 1,000 seeds, 750 are wasted, but the remaining 250 yield 60-fold or 15,000 the sower still ends up with 15 times his original number of seeds, although 75% of the original were lost. Besides, comparing this "average" yield of the seed in the story, it is 5,000 more than the usual 10-fold yield.

The message therefore is that a few excellent seeds dropping on excellent ground yield a harvest that more than compensates

for the majority of seeds lost in bad ground. So also, the preaching of Jesus, though apparently wasted on many, is taken to heart by the few who become his true disciples, and this more than compensates for the lack of response of the crowds. The true disciples will make Jesus' preaching yield fruits 30, 60 and 100 times.

This message, which seems to be the **ORIGINAL LESSON** of the parable, must have been originally addressed to the **disciples** in order to prevent them from getting discouraged because the crowds, after their initial enthusiastic reception of Jesus, had started to turn away from him.

The **EARLY CHURCH** allegorized the parable:

- a) by teaching that "the seed is the word";
- b) by addressing the parable to the "crowds", that is, to all who, somehow, have been reached by Christian preaching;
- c) by making the different kinds of ground, and what happens to the seed therein, represent different ways of reacting to Christian preaching: (1) there are people who hear but do not believe; (2) there are people who hear and believe but do not persevere because they lack endurance in trials and persecutions; (3) there are people who do not persevere because of "worldliness"; (4) there are people who hear, believe, and persevere.

MATTHEW further retouched the lessons brought forth by the Church:

a) He emphasizes that the right reception of the word and perseverance in it depends on understanding (greek verb *sunieimi* or *sunieo*: verses 13, 19 and 23) the mysteries of kingdom of heaven (see verses 11 and 19). Matthew alone identifies the seed as "the word of the Kingdom" although the three Synoptics mention the mystery (Mark 4:11) or the mysteries (Matthew 13:11; Luke 8:10) of the Kingdom of heaven in connection with Jesus' answer when his disciples questioned him about his choice of teaching in parables.

b) He notes in verse 11b that such understanding was given to the apostles but not to the "crowds" of the Jewish people i.e. not to the Jews as a nation.

MESSAGE

1. At the historic level of Christ's own preaching, the parable teaches that the disciples should not be discouraged by the crowds' disillusionment with Jesus, because they — the faithful disciples — will yield a bumper crop of believers.

2. At the level of adaptation to the situation of the Early Church, the parable warns people who are attracted by Christian preaching that they may not make it to the faith if they let Satan influence them. To Christians the warning is that they might not persevere if (a) they are "scandalized" by trials and persecutions or (b) if they let themselves be carried away by worldly worries and the concerns of wealth. The parable also encourages Christians to bear the fruit of goodworks — a hundredfold if possible.

3. At the level of Matthew's theology, the parable is an invitation to seek a proper understanding of the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" as set forth in this and the other parables and in fact in the whole book he has written.

C. **The Second Reading** recalls the present painful condition of man, even after redemption, a condition shared also by the whole of creation. But just as redeemed man is on his road to glory, so also creation, which is included in Christ's redemptive work, is on its way to its perfection in Christ. Matter is not evil *per se*, as some Greek philosophers would have it. If it is evil it is nevertheless redeemable and has been redeemed by Christ. If it presently pulls man down, man has, in Christ, the power to lift it up with himself to glory.

The preacher might want to connect the theme of this reading with what the parable in the second reading says about "the worries of this world and the lure of riches" being like thorns that choke the word.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (July 20, 1975)

First Reading: Wisdom 12:13-16-19

Second Reading: Romans 8:26-27

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:24-43 (or 13:24-30)

A. Lenience hand in hand with absolute sovereignty is the attribute of God admired by the Wise Man in the **First Reading**. This lenience is the characteristic of God's justice or judgement. This theme introduces the lesson of the Gospel Reading, and, more importantly, complements it. While some might get the idea from the parable of the darnel ("tares," "cockle") that some people are

bad from beginning to end — although this might not be evident immediately — this reading makes it clear that God has given his sons “the good hope that after sin (he) will grant repentance” (verse 19b). Hence, in imitation of God, “the virtuous man must be kindly to his fellow men” even when they err (verse 19a).

B. A parable with its explanation, found in Matthew alone, constitutes the **Gospel Reading**. Since there are no parallels with which we could compare the parable, it is difficult to know the original form in which Christ taught it. The explanation (v. 36-42) allegorizes the parable and is most probably the work of the Early Church.

The following should be noted:

a) The “good seed” now clearly symbolizes “the subjects of the kingdom”, and no longer “the word” as in the Sower Parable;

b) Although the text says “the field is the world” (v. 38), it in fact symbolizes the Church in this world: in it the darnel (bad seed) together with the good seed will grow, and this darnel represents those who in the “kingdom” of the Son of Man “provoke offences and do evil” (verse 41).

c) Darnel (called “cockle” or “tares” in old English translations and “weeds” in the Today’s English Version), is a weed that has a resemblance to wheat. It cannot be clearly distinguished from wheat until the time of grain-bearing. Hence, implicitly, we have here an echo of the doctrine: “by their fruits you shall know them” (Matthew 12:33).

d) By the time the wheat starts to bear grain it is too late to start pulling out the weeds. They are usually pulled out **after** the harvest, so that they may not harm the next crop. But in the parable, as allegorized, the weeds are to be gathered first, and burnt, and only then is the wheat gathered into the barn. This certainly points to lessons. (1) The Church will be purified before the return of the Son of Man. (2) When the Son of Man returns, the virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father — they will be like wheat with stalks filled with grain, in a field which has been weeded.

MESSAGE

1. The good and the bad will exist together in the Church in this world. It will not always be easy to recognize who are the really bad persons and what are the really bad things for the Church, but “by their fruits you shall know them.”

2. In the end, Christ will purify his Church.

C. The help that the Holy Spirit will secretly afford to the

true sons of God is the theme of the **Second Reading**, which is very short. We need this help especially in situations when it is not clear just what is good for the Church — those situations when, in the viewpoint of the Gospel parable, it is hard to distinguish the wheat from the darnel.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 27, 1975)

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

Second Reading: Romans 8:28-30

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:44-52 (or 13:44-46)

A. First Reading. Given the opportunity to receive anything he likes as a gift from God, Solomon asks for "a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil". God praises him and grants his wish. It is wisdom like this, perfected by the light of Christ, that is also needed by the "scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven", according to the Gospel Reading.

B. Gospel Reading. This concluding portion of Matthew's account of Christ's parabolic discourse has no parallels in the other Gospels.

It should be noted that these parables in Matthew's context are addressed to the disciples apart from the crowd. In matthean theology, therefore, the collaborators of Christ are like the man who sells everything he owns to buy the field wherein he uncovered a treasure, and like the man who sells everything he owns to buy the pearl of great value.

Pursuing this line of thinking, the parable of the dragnet has special application to the apostles. They are the fishermen who cast the net and bring in the haul, which will include "all kinds". In catching, they need not discriminate. It is, however, the angels, at the end of time, who will separate the wicked from the just.

C. Second Reading. This is the principal text in the New Testament about predestination. It states the stages (from the human viewpoint) of God's plan for human salvation foreknowledge, predestination, vocation, justification and glorification. It is really not as problematic as the scholastic debate on predestination: (a) because it considers only the care of the man who has actually been called and justified — according to Paul such a man has been the object of God's foreknowledge and predestination, and is on his way to glorification — and (b) because it prescinds from the question of how human liberty is part of God's scheme (on this see Philippians 2:12 and I Corinthians 9:27).

II. HOMILIES

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 6, 1975)

POPULAR RELIGIOSITY

THEME. Popular religiosity should not be suppressed but channeled so that it will lead us to a life of greater union with Christ and better collaboration with Him.

OUR HUMAN CONDITION. In recent years it has become generally accepted in some circles to look down on popular religious practices like novenas, processions, pilgrimages, fiestas. Sometimes priests and nuns are the most vocal critics of these practices. But experience has taught us all a lesson. When church leaders deprive people of popular forms of devotion and have nothing to give them in exchange, religion is not reformed or renewed. It just deteriorates further. And so today, churchmen in Latin America and the Philippines are re-evaluating the value of popular forms of religiosity. Our Bishops spoke their mind on this matter in their Pastoral Letter "Ang Mahal na Birhen", Mary in Philippine Life Today (nn. 69-86).

THE GOOD NEWS. We must recognize that the basic disposition for receiving the Good News of Salvation is to be found in the deep natural religiosity of the people. If we disregard this and start offering them a sophisticated theology, we become like the Scribes and Pharisees who are ironically called "wise and learned" in our Gospel Reading for today, but are far from the true wisdom given to the children of God.

No. We must not give up our devotions like the Holy Rosary and the Way of the Cross; nor practices like the Angelus, morning and night prayers, prayers before meals, Flores de Mayo, etc.; nor processions, pilgrimages, fiestas; nor customs connected with birth, marriage, death and burial. We must just make sure that all these devotions and practices lead us closer to Jesus and strengthen us in serving him in our fellowmen.

OUR RESPONSE. Let us cultivate the religiosity that God placed in our hearts. Let us direct it to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this way learn true wisdom and humility.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
(July 13, 1975)

DO AND DON'T

THEME: The basic "do and don't" of Christian life is found in the parable of the Sower.

OUR HUMAN CONDITION. When two young people want to get married and they want their marriage to be permanently happy, they consult their friends and elders to find out the do's and don'ts of a successful marriage. Years after the honeymoon, it will still be helpful for the married couple to review the good advises and guidelines given to them before their marriage.

THE GOOD NEWS AND RESPONSE TO IT. The parable in our our Gospel Reading today tells us basic do's and don'ts of Christian life. Let us take a good look at it.

(At this point the preacher might want to use the information given in our Biblical Notes).

We should pay special attention to what the parable says about the seed falling on rocky ground and among thorns. The rocky ground is like people who let trials and persecutions kill their Christian religion. For example, there are people who lose their faith when one calamity after another strikes them: their loved ones die, their house is burnt, they lose their job, etc. These indeed are severe trials, but if they come to our life, let us hold on to Jesus. Let us not let our faith wither and die. This part of the parable, therefore, tells us: don't expect Christian life to be all rosy; be ready for trials.

The ground full of thorns is like people who let worldly cares and concerns choke their faith. This is the opposite of the previous case. It teaches us that, not only troubles but excessive wealth and pleasure can make our faith fruitless. It is bad for Christians to be greedy: to have more and more money without becoming better persons. It often happens that, the more money a man has, the worse person he becomes. We must reject this danger to our faith. The lesson in the thorny ground image of the parable is: don't be carried away by the greed for more and more wealth.

The seed growing in good ground in the parable is an image of perseverance. Hold on. Through temptations by the devil, through calamities of life, through the tensions of daily business, hold on to Jesus Christ. This is the basic "do" of the Christian religion. If we pay attention to it, our faith will bear fruit a hundredfold.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (July 20, 1975)

AVOID OVERKILL

THEME. Good practices stemming from popular religiosity exist together with abuses. While we must try to correct these abuses, we must not destroy popular religiosity.

OUR HUMAN CONDITION. Good and evil exist together, even in the Church. This is true whether applied to persons or practices.

THE GOOD NEWS AND RESPONSE TO IT. The sure way of knowing what is good and what is bad is to look at the fruits (cfr. Matthew 12:33). Once we take this as a rule, we have to look at popular devotions in a new light. In recent years, some priests, nuns and lay people have campaigned to do away with manifestations of popular religiosity such as the veneration of images, the praying of devotions and novenas, the holding of processions, etc. But as a result of these campaigns, religious life has not become better but worse.

Now, more and more theologians and church leaders recognize that popular religiosity is a good thing. It is a "beautiful gift of God which is the seed of our authentic faith" (see Pastoral Letter "Ang Mahal na Birhen", n. 71). In particular, this popular religiosity has manifested itself in devotion to Mary which is "the safeguard for the preservation of our faith and the principle of deeper and fuller evangelization" (Ibid. n. 73).

It is true that expressions of popular religiosity need reform (see Ibid. n. 77-86). But, following the logic of today's parable, it is better to let popular devotions exist together with their deviations, than to take such drastic measures as to kill both the excesses and the spirit of popular religiosity.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 27, 1975)

RADICAL CHANGES

THEME. The situation of the Church in the Philippines today seems to require radical changes. But what direction should we take? when? how? We need wisdom.

OUR HUMAN CONDITION. It is always difficult for us to take a risk because we want security and stability. Yet, it is only by taking risks that we grow, personally as well as collectively.

THE GOOD NEWS AND RESPONSE TO IT. Christianity offers risks as well as security. This is the lesson of the parables in our Gospel Reading today. It is certainly not a small risk to give up everything you own. But we have Christ's assurance that, if you give up everything for love of Him, you will not be the loser.

In our days, the Church in the Philippines and in particular Religious Congregations are faced by great risks in their apostolate. In the past years most of the congregations for Sisters have concentrated their apostolate in schools. Now they feel they will be more effective in doing an apostolate with the poor both in urban and rural areas. Some Congregations of Sisters have already phased out or have started to phase out schools so that more Sisters could be fielded among the poor.

These are radical changes in the Philippine Church. Does Our Lord Jesus Christ really want them? Is the concentration of apostolate among the poor the hidden treasure or the pearl of great value for the Church in the Philippines today?

The answer is not clear. But he have to take risks. So let us ask for the wisdom to do God's will in our present situation.

SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Horst, Ulrich: *Cuestiones Candentes de Ecclesiología. Colección Controversia*, no. 18. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1974 —312 págs. — Rústica 240 pesetas.

Many Catholics of our age profess a sort of selective faith: they choose those doctrines of the Church which they want to believe, while rejecting others. They are material schismatics or heretics, though not formal ones. The Pope does not deserve full credence, they say, and thus when Paul VI condemned the use of the pill, a big segment of Catholics, including theologians and priests, had the effrontery to say that "each should stick to the dictates of his or her conscience," the Pope notwithstanding. On the other hand, the faith of the People of God is a norm of faith. Thus is it high time we revert to the simple faith of apostolic times unencumbered with so many definitions by ecumenical councils and Popes.

The present book discusses and hangs under fire such problems as the origin and edition of the gospels, the concept and role of the Church, the meaning of dogma, the infallibility of the Pope, and his relations with Bishops, etc.

This book is not intended for every man of the street, but for Bishops, theologians and others who are fully qualified to discern truth from its questionable alloy, and to readily adapt truth to different situations.

Kampmann, Theodvich: *Conocer Para Educar* (tomo II: Edad juvenil). Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1974 —288 págs. —Rústica 320 pesetas; tela 400 pesetas.

The author had previously published the first volume of his work with the same title, which is an up-to-date, authoritative pedagogy of the infant and child. This second volume is a masterly study of pedagogy of the adolescent and the young. Solutions and aids to the common and peculiar problems of teen-agers and of the marriageable but still single are varied, modern, practical and genuinely Christian. Though written primarily for European readers, it should be useful for catechists, teachers in general, parish priests, confessors, guidance-counsellors, vocation-directors and even all the young of both sexes in America, Africa and Asia, because the problems of the young are almost identical in all times and climes.

Küng, Hans: *La Encarnación de Dios*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1974 —784 págs. —Rústica 850 pesetas; tela 950 pesetas.

Many a Catholic theologian runs the risk of being a "one-tract" mind for their sheer lack of interest in secular sciences. But not Hans Küng. With the same aplomb he can discuss Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, as well as the Cartesian coordinates, the theories of Marx and Hegel, the tenets of existentialism, and so forth. The present work is for well-grounded Catholic and Protestant readers, who want to learn what influence Hegel exercised in the formulation of — the "death of God" theology, existentialism, deism and atheism, and the negation of the historicity of Jesus Christ. Of course, all those systems or hypotheses have had their heydays and presently considered as fads that have blown over. If even as a philosopher Hegel is a "has-been," it is rather odd that Hans Küng should resurrect him as a Christologist. Still we must gape in wonder at his encyclopedic erudition.

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