

# **BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS**

**WHY SUSPEND THE CURSILLOS?**

**Editorial**

**PATERNA CUM BENEVOLENTIA**

**Paul VI**

**STUDY OF CANON LAW**

**S. Cong. for Catholic Education**

**NEED FOR PLURALISM**

**Yves Congar, O.P.**

**REFLECTION ON PLURALISM**

**Philippe Delhaye**

**EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES IN HISTORY**

**Franz Mussner**

# BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

THE OFFICIAL INTERDIOCESAN ORGAN

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## EDITORIAL

### Why Suspend The Cursillos?

A little more than 10 years ago the "Cursillos in Christianity" took Catholic Philippines by storm, sweeping away the lethargy and apathy of countless dormant men and women lay apostles. Thanks to the movement, they experienced a religious and apostolic awakening that they missed even in our best Catholic Schools. Thanks to these new leaders fired with apostolic zeal many worthwhile religious and social action projects were initiated and coaxed to development.

But, as in the parable of the Darnel, when no one was looking, an enemy sowed bad seed in the Cursillo field. Many Cursillo graduates were so enthused by their experience that they wanted all their friends to "get in". Soon the Cursillo centers duly set up or recognized by the Bishops were unable to cope with the number of applicants jostling with one another for a berth.

Since the Cursillo offered a stereotyped course, it was relatively easy to imitate. Soon unsanctioned Cursillo houses mushroomed all over the country, to receive the overflow from the official centers. Church leaders were worried about this development but, in general, decided not to take any drastic step to stop it.

The unauthorized Cursillo houses prospered. The Cursillo turned out to be a good source of income. Profits from Cursillo fees were substantial since cursillistas did not mind being packed into buildings with substandard facilities. The demand for Cursillo items like guide-books, pins, banners, diplomas, etc., gave rise to profitable business endeavors.

Worse than the commercial taint that soon attached itself to the Cursillos, psychiatrists started to have more and more "cursillista" patients. In the meantime, the lay apostolate, after an initial burst of fervor, was back in the old rut and, in some cases, worse off.

As the Cursillo lost its luster and the number of applicants took a plunge, a number of those involved with unofficial Cursillo houses turned racketeers. Money was solicited to sponsor non-existent candidates. The ignorant and the guillible were trapped into "taking the Cursillo".

So today we have a badly mangled Cursillo movement, running out of control. We cannot but support the decision of the Bishops of Manila, Lipa, Malolos and other dioceses to prohibit Cursillos until further notice.

But did Christ not say, in the parable of the Darnel, that he does not want the weeds to be eliminated "because when you weed out the Darnel you might pull up wheat with it"? (Matthew 13:29). Why suspend all Cursillos including the official ones, in an effort to eliminate the unscrupulous operators?

Pulling up bad plants is inadvisable when there is danger of pulling up the good plants too. But suspending all Cursillos, while being a death blow to the "imitations" is a move to strengthen the real Cursillo. Continuous operation is necessary for the business-oriented Cursillos to survive. The official Cursillo, however, can resume its original vitality even after years of suspension. Pruning the fruitless branches of the grape vine allows the fruit-bearing branches to develop rich harvest (John 15:1-2).

## In This Issue

**PLURALISM** is an umbrella that covers many stirrings in the Church today – the rejection of Church institutions by the young who, nevertheless, have very authentic Christian values; the proliferation of small local groupings of fragmented interests (like Bible circles, prayer groups, task forces for social action, etc.) that reflect the complex and fragmented existence of modern man; the cropping up of "small basic communities"; the trend toward greater autonomy for local Churches; the moves for the indigenization of Liturgy and even

of Theology, etc. Father CONGAR believes that the Church should keep the umbrella of pluralism wide open. It will not conflict with unity, in his view, if it is guided by pneumatology. According to Mons. Philippe DELHAYE, however, some people speak of pluralism in the Church to try to justify serious divergences in the field of faith and morality. With Pope Paul VI he rejects a "pluralism of dissent" but affirms a "pluralism of concord".

The Apostolic Exhortation, "**PATERNA CUM BENEVOLENTIA**", given by POPE PAUL VI, on reconciliation within the Church, gives some guidelines regarding pluralism.

The spotlight of this issue is clearly trained on pluralism. There should be no difficulty in relating to it such diverse subjects as the **Study of Canon Law**, the meaning of the pallium conferred on Archbishop Sin as an **Apostolic Honor**, and Franz Mussner's article on the **Evangelical Principles in History**.

## **APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION** **"PATERNA CUM BENEVOLENTIA"**

ON RECONCILIATION WITHIN THE CHURCH

**POPE PAUL VI**

**To the Episcopate, to the Clergy,  
and to all the faithful of the entire world**

Venerable Brothers  
and dear Sons and Daughters:  
Health and the Apostolic Blessing

With affection, confidence and hope we turn to all of you, our brothers in the Episcopate, the beloved members of the clergy and Religious Families and the Catholic laity. We do so just before the celebration of the Holy Year in Rome at the Basilicas of the Apostles, now that you have already celebrated the Jubilee in the local Churches with piety and with harmony of sentiments and resolves.

It is a moment of great importance for the entire world, which is looking to the Church. But principally so for the sons and daughters of the Church herself — those who are aware of the riches of her mystery of holiness and grace, which the recent Council has opportunely shed light upon. And therefore we address ourself to them with a cordial invitation to charity and to mutual union in the spirit of reconciliation proper to the Holy Year, in the bond of the one love of Christ.

In fact, from the moment in which on 9 May, 1973, we manifested our decision to celebrate the Holy Year in 1975, we likewise manifested the primary goal of this spiritual and penitential celebration. This goal was to be reconciliation, founded on conversion to God and the interior renewal of man, and which would heal the rifts and disorders which mankind and the very ecclesial community are suffering from today.<sup>1</sup>

Since the beginning of the jubilee celebrations which began by our decision in the local Churches at Pentecost 1973, we have neglected no opportunity of accompanying those celebrations with our doctrinal and pastoral interventions and with pressing reminders of the goal to be reached — a goal which we consider to be in perfect harmony with the most authentic spirit of the Gospel and with the guidelines of renewal formulated by the Second Vatican Council for the entire Church.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. AAS 65 (1973), p. 323 f.

This Church, established by Christ as a permanent sign of the reconciliation accomplished by him in accordance with the will of the Father<sup>2</sup>, has the task "under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and his Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible".<sup>3</sup> In order that this task may be even better fulfilled, it has therefore seemed to us necessary to underline the urgency for everyone in the Church to promote "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of the peace" (Eph. 4:3).

With the Solemnity of Christmas imminent — the date which we established for the opening of the universal Jubilee in Rome<sup>4</sup> — we present this Exhortation to the Pastors and faithful of the Church, that they may all become agents and promoters of reconciliation with God and with their brethren and that this coming Christmas of the Holy Year may truly be for the world the "Birth of Peace"<sup>5</sup>, as was the birth of the Saviour.

## I

### The Church: a reconciled and reconciling world

From the very beginning of the transformation wrought by Christ's redeeming action the Church has been aware and has joyfully proclaimed that through that action the world has become a radically new reality (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17) — a reality in which men have rediscovered God and hope (cf. Eph. 2:12) and even here and now have been made sharers in the glory of God "through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have already gained our reconciliation" (Rom. 5:11).

This newness is owed exclusively to the merciful initiative of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Col. 1:20-22) — an initiative that comes to meet man who having withdrawn from God by his own fault, was no longer able to find peace once more with his Creator.

This initiative of God was then actualized through a direct divine intervention. God in fact has not simply pardoned us, nor has he made use of a mere man as an intermediary between us and himself: he has established his "only begotten Son an intercessor of

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 3; AAS 57 (1965), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 21: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1041.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bull *Apostolorum Limina*, 23 May 1974: AAS 66 (1974), p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Saint Leo the Great, *Serm.* 26, 5: PL 54, 215.



peace".<sup>6</sup> "For our sake God made the sinless one into sin so that in him we might become the goodness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). In reality, Christ, by dying for us, has cancelled out "every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the Cross" (Col. 2:14). And by means of the Cross he has reconciled us with God: "In his own person he has killed the hostility" (Eph. 2:16).

Reconciliation, effected by God in Christ crucified, is inscribed in the history of the world. That history now includes among its irreversible elements the event of God having become man and having died to save man. But reconciliation finds a permanent historical expression in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, in which the Son of God calls together "his brethren from all peoples"<sup>7</sup> and, as her Head (cf. Col. 1:18), is her principle of authority and of action that constitutes her on earth as a "reconciled world".<sup>8</sup>

Since the Church is the Body of Christ and Christ is the "Saviour of his body" (Eph. 5:23), in order to be worthy members of his Body all must in fidelity to the Christian commitment contribute to preserving it in its original nature as the community of those who have been reconciled — a community having its origin in Christ, who is our peace (cf. Eph. 2:14) and who "makes us reconciled".<sup>9</sup> In fact, once reconciliation has been received, it is, like grace and like life, an impulse and a current that transform their beneficiaries into agents and transmitters of the same reconciliation. For every Christian the credential of his authenticity in the Church and in the world is this: "First make peace with yourself, so that when you have become peaceful you may bring peace to others".<sup>10</sup>

The duty of making peace extends personally to each and every member of the faithful. If it is not fulfilled, even the sacrifice of worship which they intend to offer (Mt. 5:23 ff.) remains ineffective. Mutual reconciliation, in fact, shares in the very value of the sacrifice itself, and together with it constitutes a single offering pleasing to God.<sup>11</sup> In order that this duty may be effectively fulfilled and that reconciliation which takes place in the

<sup>6</sup> Theodoret of Cyr, *Interpr. Epist. II ad Cor.*: PG 82, 411 A.

<sup>7</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 7: AAS 57 (1965), p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Saint Augustine, *Serm.* 96, 7, 8: PL 38, 588.

<sup>9</sup> Saint Jerome, *In Epist. and Eph.* 1, 2: PL 26, 504.

<sup>10</sup> Saint Ambrose, *In Luc.* 5, 58, PL 15, 1737.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Saint John Chrysostom, *In Matth., Homil.* 16, 9: PG 57, 250; Saint Isidore of Pelusium, *Epist.* 4, 111; PG 78, 1178; Nicolas Cabasilas, *Explic. div. Liturg.* 26, 2: *Sourc. chrét.* 4 bis, p. 171

depths of the heart may have a public character just like the death of Christ that brings it about, the Lord has conferred on the Apostles and on the Church's Pastors, their successors, the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18). "Taking on as it were the person of Christ",<sup>12</sup> they are permanently deputed "to build up their flock in truth and holiness".<sup>13</sup>

The Church therefore, because she is a "reconciled world", is also a reality that is by nature permanently reconciling. As such she is the presence and the action of God, who "in Christ was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). This action and presence are expressed primarily in Baptism, in the forgiveness of sins and in the Eucharistic celebration, which is the renewal of the redeeming Sacrifice of Christ and the effective sign of the unity of the People of God.<sup>14</sup>

## II

### The Church: the sacrament of unity

Reconciliation, in its double aspect of peace restored between God and men and between man and man, is the first fruit of the Redemption, and like the Redemption has dimensions that are universal both in extent and in intensity. The whole of creation therefore is involved in reconciliation "till the universal restoration comes" (Acts 3:21), when all creatures will again meet Christ, the "first to be born from the dead" (Col. 1:18).

And since his reconciliation finds a privileged expression and greater concentration in the Church, the latter is "a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind".<sup>15</sup> It is the source from which radiate union of men with God and unity of men among themselves, which, through progressive affirmation in time, will find completion at the end of time.

In order to be able to express fully this sacramentality of hers, with which is bound up the very reason for her existence, the Church must be a meaningful sign, as is demanded of every sacrament. That is, there must be realized and verified in her that

<sup>12</sup> *Saint Cyril of Alexandria, In Epist II ad Cor.: PG 74, 943 D.*

<sup>13</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* 27: AAS 57 (1965), p. 32.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 11: AAS 57 (1965), p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> Second Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 1: AAS 57 (1965), p. 5.

harmony and consistency of doctrine, life and worship which marked the first days of her existence (cf. Acts 2:42) and which ever remain her essential element (cf. Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 1:10). This harmony, in contrast to any division that might attack the solidity of her structure, cannot but increase the force of her witness, reveal the reasons for her existence and throw clear light upon her credibility.

In order to cooperate with God's plans in the world, all the faithful must preserve in fidelity to the Holy Spirit, who unifies the Church in "fellowship and service" and "by the power of the Gospel... makes the Church grow, perpetually renews her, and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse".<sup>16</sup> This fidelity cannot fail to have happy ecumenical effects upon the quest for the visible unity of all Christians, in the manner laid down by Christ, in one and the same Church; and this Church will thus be a more effective leaven of fraternal oneness in the community of the peoples.

### III

#### Obscuring the sacramentality of the Church

However, "although by the power of the Holy Spirit the Church has remained the faithful spouse of her Lord and has never ceased to be the sign of salvation on earth, still she is very well aware that among her members, both clerical and lay, some have been unfaithful to the Spirit of God during the course of many centuries".<sup>17</sup>

In reality, "from her very beginnings there arose in this one and only Church of God certain rifts, which the Apostle strongly condemns".<sup>18</sup> Therefore when there occurred the well-known breaches that no one knew how to heal, the Church overcame the situation of internal dissension by clearly reaffirming as the irreplaceable condition of communion the principles that make it possible to preserve intact her constitutive unity and to manifest that unity "in the confession of one faith, in the common celebra-

<sup>16</sup> Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 4: AAS 57 (1965), p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 43: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1064.

<sup>18</sup> Second Vatican Council, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 3: AAS 57 (1965), p. 92.

tion of divine worship, and in the fraternal harmony of the family of God".

But there appear equally dangerous, and such as to warrant this clarification and call to unity, the ferments of infidelity to the Holy Spirit existing here and there in the Church today and unfortunately attempting to undermine her from within. The promoters and the victims of this process, who are in fact small in number of comparison with the vast majority of the faithful, claim to remain in the Church, with the same rights and opportunities of expression and action as the rest of the faithful, in order to attack ecclesial unity. Not wishing to recognize in the Church one single reality resulting from a double element both human and divine, analogous to the mystery of the Incarnate Word, which constitutes her "here on earth... the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible structure" through which Christ "communicates truth and grace to all",<sup>20</sup> they set themselves up in opposition to the hierarchy, as though every act of that opposition were a constitutive aspect of the truth of the Church that has to be rediscovered as Christ instituted her. They question the duty of obedience to the authority willed by Christ; they put on trial the Pastors of the Church, not so much what they do or how they do it but simply because, so it is claimed, they are the custodians of an ecclesiastical system or structure that competes with what was instituted by Christ. In this way they cause bewilderment to the whole community, introducing into it the fruits of dialectical theories alien to the spirit of Christ. While making use of the words of the Gospel they change their meaning. We observe this state of things with regret, even though, as we have said, it is very small in comparison with the great mass of the Christian faithful. But we cannot but inveigh with the same vigour as Saint Paul against this lack of loyalty and justice. We appeal to all Christians of good will not to let themselves be impressed or disorientated by the undue pressures of brethren who are unfortunately misguided, and yet who are always in our prayers and close to our heart.

As for ourself, we reaffirm that the one Church of Christ "constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside her visible structure".<sup>21</sup> We likewise reaffirm that these Pastors of the Church,

<sup>19</sup> Second Vatican Council, Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2: AAS 57 (1965), p. 92.

<sup>20</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 8: ASS 57 (1965), p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 8: AAS 57 (1965), p. 12.

who also preside over the People of God in his name, with the humility of servants but also with the frankness of the Apostles (cf. Acts 4:31) of whom they are the successors, have the right and the duty to proclaim: "For as long as . . . we occupy this see, for as long as we preside, we have both authority and power, even though we may be unworthy".<sup>22</sup>

#### IV

#### Sectors which obscure the sacramentality of the Church

The process that we have described takes the form of doctrinal dissension, which claims the patronage of theological pluralism and is not infrequently taken to the point of dogmatic relativism, which in various ways breaks up the integrity of faith. And even when it is not taken as far as dogmatic relativism, this pluralism is at times regarded as a legitimate theological stand that permits the taking up of positions contrary to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff himself and of the hierarchy of bishops, who are the sole authoritative interpreters of divine Revelation contained in Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

We recognize that pluralism of research and thought which in various ways investigates and expounds dogma, but without disintegrating its identical objective meaning, has a legitimate right of citizenship in the Church, as a natural component part of her catholicity, and as a sign of the cultural richness and personal commitment of all who belong to her. We recognize also the inestimable values contributed by pluralism to the sphere of Christian spirituality, to ecclesial and religious institutions and to the spheres of liturgical expression and disciplinary norms. These are values which blend together into that "one common aspiration" that "is particularly splendid evidence of the catholicity of the undivided Church".<sup>24</sup>

Indeed we admit that a certain theological pluralism finds its roots in the very mystery of Christ, the inscrutable riches whereof (cf. Eph. 3:8) transcend the capacities of expression of all ages and all cultures. Thus the doctrine of the faith which necessarily

<sup>22</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, *In Epist. ad Coloss.*, Homil. 3, 5: PG 62, 324.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10: AAS 58 (1966), p. 822.

<sup>24</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 23: AAS 57 (1965), p. 29.

derives from the mystery — since, in the order of salvation, “the mystery of God is none other than Christ”<sup>25</sup> — calls for constant fresh research. In reality the dimensions of the Word of God are so many, and so many are the viewpoints of the faithful who explore them,<sup>26</sup> that harmony in the same faith is never immune from personal characteristics in the assent of each individual. Nevertheless, the different emphases in the understanding of the same faith do not prejudice the essential content of that faith, since these emphases are unified in common assent to the Church’s magisterium. This magisterium, which is the proximate norm determining the faith of all, is also a guarantee for all against the subjective judgement of every varied interpretation of the faith.

But what is to be said of that pluralism that considers the faith and its expression not as a common and therefore ecclesial heritage but as an individual discovery made by the free criticism and free examination of the word of God? In fact, without the mediation of the Church’s magisterium, to which the Apostles entrusted their own magisterium<sup>27</sup> and which therefore teaches “only what has been handed on”,<sup>28</sup> the sure union with Christ through the Apostles, who are the ones who hand on “what they themselves had received”,<sup>29</sup> is compromised. And once perseverance in the doctrine transmitted by the Apostles is compromised, what happens is that, perhaps, in a desire to avoid the difficulties of mystery, there is a quest for formulas deceptively easy to understand but which dissolve the real content of mystery. Thus there are built up teachings that do not hold fast to the objectivity of the faith or are plainly contrary to it and, what is more, become crystallized side-by-side with concepts that are even mutually contradictory.

Furthermore, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that every concession in the matter of identity of faith also involves a lessening of mutual love.

In fact, those who have lost the joy that derives from the faith (cf. Phil. 1:25) are driven, to the detriment of fraternal communion, to seek glory from one another and not to seek that glory which comes only from God (cf. Jn. 5:44).

<sup>25</sup> Saint Augustine, *Epist.* 187, 11, 34: *PL* 33, 845.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Saint Ephrem the Syrian, *Comment. Evang. concord.* 1, 18: *Source. Chrét.* 121, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 7: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 820.

<sup>28</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 10: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 822.

<sup>29</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum*, 8: *AAS* 58 (1966), p. 820.

It is impossible to substitute the spirit of faction, which leads to discriminating choices, for the sense of the Church, which recognizes in all the same dignity and freedom of the children of God,<sup>30</sup> and in this way also to deprive charity of its natural support, which is justice. It would be vain to try to improve ecclesial communion in accordance with the type shared at the level of factions.

Must not we all, on the contrary, make ourselves perfect through the Gospel? And where does the Gospel manifest fully operative its divinely begotten power if not in the Church, with the contribution of all believers without distinction?

Finally, this spirit of faction reflects negatively also upon the necessary harmony of worship and of prayer, and it manifests itself in an isolation dictated by a spirit of presumption which is certainly not in accordance with the Gospel and which precludes justification before God (cf. Lk. 18:10-14).

We try hard to understand the root of this situation, and we compare it to the analogous situation in which contemporary civil society is living, a society which is divided by the splintering up into groups opposed one to another. Unfortunately, the Church too seems to be in some degree experiencing the repercussions of this condition. But she ought not to assimilate what is rather a pathological state. The Church must preserve her original character as a family unified in the diversity of her members. Indeed, she must be the leaven that will help society to react, as was said of the first Christians: "See how much they love one another!"<sup>31</sup> It is with this picture of the first community before our eyes — a picture that is certainly not idyllic, but one that was matured through trials and suffering — that we call upon all to overcome the illicit and dangerous differences and to recognize one another as brethren united by the love of Christ.

## V

### Polarization of dissent

When the internal oppositions affecting the various sectors of ecclesial life become crystallized into a state of dissension, they reach the point of setting up in opposition to the single institution

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 9: AAS 57 (1965), p. 13.

<sup>31</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, XXXIX, 7; *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina I, 1, p. 151.

and community of salvation a plurality of "dissenting institutions of communities". These are not in accordance with the nature of the Church which, with the creation of opposing factions fixed in irreconcilable positions, would lose her very constitutional fabric. There then occurs the "polarization of dissent", by virtue of which all interest is concentrated on the respective groups, in practice autonomous, each one claiming to be giving honour to God. This situation bears within it and, as far as it can, introduces into the ecclesial community the seeds of disintegration.

It is our lively hope that the voice of conscience will lead individuals to a process of reflection which will bring them to a wiser choice. We exhort each and every one of them: "Search out the innermost secrets of your heart and diligently explore all the pathways of your soul".<sup>32</sup> And in each one we would like to reawaken the longing for what he has lost: "Think where you were before you fell: repent, and do as you used to at first" (Rev. 2:5). And we should like to exhort each one to reconsider the wonderful things which God has achieved in him and to draw his attention to what this calls for before the Lord: "For there is nothing that a Christian should fear so much as being separated from the body of Christ. For if he is separated from the body of Christ, he is not one of his members, he is not nourished by Christ's spirit. Who-soever does not have the spirit of Christ, says the Apostle, does not belong to Christ".<sup>33</sup>

## VI

### Ethic and dynamic of reconciliation

It is therefore vitally necessary that everyone in the Church — bishops, priests, religious and lay people — should take an active share in a common effort for full reconciliation, so that in and between them all there may be re-established that peace which is "the nursing mother of love and the begetter of unity".<sup>34</sup> Let all then show themselves to be ever more docile disciples of the Lord, who makes reconciliation between us the condition for being forgiven by the Father (cf. Mk. 11:26) and mutual charity the condition for being recognized as his disciples (cf. Jn. 13:35). Whoever therefore feels that he is in any way implicated in this state of division,

<sup>32</sup> Saint Leo the Great, *Tract.* 84 bis; 2: *Corpus Christ.* 138 A, p. 530.

<sup>33</sup> Saint Augustine, *In Io. Evang.*, 27, 6: *PL* 35, 1618.

<sup>34</sup> Saint Leo the Great, *Serm.* 26, 3: *PL* 54, 214.



let him return and listen to his own voice irresistibly insisting, even when he is about to pray: "go and be reconciled with your brother first" (Mt. 5:24).

In different degrees and ways according to the position and standing of each individual, and pondering anew God's salvific work for us, let all in unison commit themselves to creating a climate in which reconciliation can become effective. Since we have been reconciled with God through the exclusive initiative of his love, let our conduct be marked by good will and mercy, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven us (cf. Eph. 4:31-32). And since our reconciliation springs from the sacrifice of Christ who freely died for us, may the Cross, set up as a mainmast in the Church to guide her in her voyage through the world,<sup>35</sup> inspire our mutual relations so that they may all be truly Christian. Let none of these relations ever lack some personal renunciation. From this there will follow a fraternal openness to others such as will allow willing recognition of each one's ability and will permit all to make their proper contribution to the enrichment of the one ecclesial communion: "Thus through the common sharing of gifts and through the common efforts to attain fullness in unity, the whole and each of the parts receive increase".<sup>36</sup> In this sense, one can agree on the fact that unity, properly understood, permits each individual to develop his own personality.

This openness to others, sustained by the willingness to understand and the capacity to make sacrifices, will give stability and order to the performance of that act of charity commanded by the Lord: fraternal correction (cf. Mt. 18:15).

Given that this can be done by one of the faithful to every brother in the faith, it can be the normal means of healing many dissensions or of preventing them from arising.<sup>37</sup> In its turn this impels the one who corrects his brother to take the plank out of his own eye (cf. Mt. 7:5), lest the order of correction be perverted.<sup>38</sup> Thus the practice of fraternal correction becomes the beginning of encouragement towards holiness, which alone can confer upon reconciliation its fullness. This fullness consists not in an opportunist making of peace which would conceal the worst of enmities<sup>39</sup> but in interior conversion and in the unifying love in Christ which

<sup>35</sup> Saint Maximus of Turin, *Serm.*, 37, 2: *Corpus Christ.* 23 p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Second Vatican Council Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 13: AAS 57 (1965), p. 17 f.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Saint Thomas, *Summa Theol.* II-II, q. 33, a 4: *Opera Omnia*, Leonine ed., t. VIII, p. 266.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Saint Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 19, dub. 4: *Opera Omnia*, ad Claras Aquas, t. IV, p. 512.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Saint Jerome, *Contra Pelagian.*, 2, 11: *PL* 23, 546.

flows therefrom, such as is effected principally in the sacrament of reconciliation, Penance, whereby the faithful "obtain pardon from the mercy of God for offences committed against him. They are at the same time reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins",<sup>40</sup> provided that "this sacrament of salvation . . . is, as it were, rooted in their whole life and is an impulse towards more fervent service of God and fellowmen".<sup>41</sup>

It is still the case, however, that "in the building up of the Body of Christ there is a variety of members and functions",<sup>42</sup> and that this diversity provokes inevitable tensions. These can be met with even in the saints, but "not such as would kill harmony, not such as would destroy charity."<sup>43</sup> How can these tensions be prevented from degenerating into divisions? It is from that very diversity of persons and of functions that there derives the sure principle of ecclesial oneness. In fact the primary and irreplaceable element of that diversity is the Pastors of the Church, constituted by Christ as his ambassadors to the rest of the faithful and for his purpose endowed with an authority which, transcending the individuals' positions and choices, unifies these last in the integrity of the Gospel, which is precisely the "word of reconciliation" (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20). The authority with which the Church's Pastors set forth this word is binding no through acceptance on the part of men but because of its conferral by Christ (cf. Mt. 28:18; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 26:17 ff.). Since therefore whoever hears them or rejects them hears or rejects Christ and him who sent him (cf. Lk. 10:16), the duty of the faithful to obey the authority of the Pastors is an essential requirement of the very nature of Christianity.

The Pastors of the Church, moreover, by nature form a single undivided body with the successor of Peter and in dependence upon him; hence from the harmonious fulfilment and faithful acceptance of their ministry there depend the oneness of faith and communion of all believers,<sup>44</sup> a manifestation to the world of the reconciliation brought about by God in his Church. Let a gracious hearing then be granted to the common invocation to the Saviour: "Be ever present in the College of Bishops united with our Pope, and

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<sup>40</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 11: AAS 57 (1965), p. 15.

<sup>41</sup> *Ordo Paenitentiae, Praenotanda*, 7, Vatican Polylot Press, 1974, p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 7: AAS 57 (1965), p. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Saint Augustine, *Enarrat. in Ps.* 33, 19:PL 36, 318.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Introduction: DS 3050; Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 18: AAS 57 (1965), p. 22.

grant them the gifts of unity, charity and peace".<sup>45</sup> Let the sacred Pastors, as they represent Christ himself and take his place in an eminent and visible way<sup>46</sup> thus imitate and infuse into the People of God the love with which he was immolated who "loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her" (Eph. 5:25). And may this their renewed love be an effective example to the faithful, in the first place to those priests and religious who may not have lived up to the demands of their own ministry and vocation, so that all in the Church, "united, heart and soul" (cf. Acts 4:32), may return to a commitment "to spread the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15).

Like a mother, the Church looks with sorrow on the departure of some of her sons on whom the priestly ministry has been conferred or who have been consecrated to the service of God and their brethren by some other special title. Nevertheless she finds consolation and joy in the generous perseverance of all those who have remained faithful to their commitments to Christ and to her. Being supported and comforted by the merits of this great number, she wishes to change also the sorrow which has been visited upon her into a love that can understand everything and in Christ pardon everything.

### Conclusion

We who, as the successor of Peter, certainly not through our personal merit but in virtue of the apostolic mandate transmitted to us, are, in the Church, the visible principle and foundation of the unity of the sacred Pastors as also of the multitude of the faithful<sup>47</sup>, make our appeal for the full re-establishment of that supreme good of reconciliation with God, within us and among us, so that the Church may be an effective sign in the world of union with God and of unity among all his creatures. This is a demand of our faith in the Church herself, "which in the creed we recognize as one, holy, catholic and apostolic".<sup>48</sup> To love her, to follow her, to build her up we earnestly exhort all men, making our own the words of Saint Augustine: "Love this Church, remain in such a Church, be such a Church".<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Liturgia Horarum*, IV, Vatican Polyglot Press 1972, p. 513.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 21: AAS 57 (1965), p. 25.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 23: AAS 57 (1965), p. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 8: AAS 57 (1965), p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> *Serm.* 138, 10: *PL* 38, 769.

This is the invitation that we extend with this Exhortation to all our sons and daughters, especially those who have the responsibility of guiding the brethren. We have wished it to be pastoral and full of confidence, dictated by a spirit of peace. To some perhaps it may seem severe. But it has arisen from a detailed study of the situation of the Church on the one hand, and of the unrenounceable demands of the Gospel on the other. But it has sprung especially from our heart: we have the duty to love the Church with the same spirit of the allegory of the branch that must be pruned in order to bear more fruit (cf. Jn. 15:2). This Exhortation, finally, is backed by a great hope, a hope that the heavy burden of our apostolic mandate has never altered. We are grateful for the fidelity of God. We hope that the Holy Spirit will stir up an irresistible echo to our words: he is already present and working in the inmost heart of each member of the faithful, and he will lead all, in humility and peace, along the paths of truth and love. It is he who is our strength. We know that the vast majority of the Church's sons and daughters has been awaiting such a call and is prepared to receive it profitably. We trust that the entire People of God — this is our ardent wish — will set out with us, as on Biblical journey, undertake with us the stages of sanctification of the Jubilee, and be one with us, so that the world may believe. And we trust that they will allow themselves to be guided by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the love of God the Father and by the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We entrust these wishes to the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin "who shines forth to the whole community of the elect as a model of the virtues . . . and by her profound sharing in the history of salvation unites in a certain way and mirrors within herself the central truths of the faith".<sup>50</sup> And to strengthen the common desire for sanctification and reconciliation we cordially impart our Apostolic Blessing.

Given at Saint Peter's in Rome, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the eighth day of December in the year 1974, the twelfth of our Pontificate.

**Paulus PP. VI**

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<sup>50</sup> Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 65: AAS 57 (1965), p. 64.

## **S. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

### **ON THE TEACHING OF CANON LAW TO THOSE PREPARING TO BE PRIESTS\***

**To local Ordinaries (including Hierarchies of the Eastern rites)  
to Major Religious Superiors  
and to the Rectors of Major Seminaries and Scholasticates**

In recent years the study of Church Law has undergone, for various reasons, a lessening of interest, especially among ecclesiastical students. This has had a certain, disorienting effect upon the Church.

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, having been asked about this situation from many different sources and conscious as well of its responsibilities in the field of theological and priestly formation, feels that it has the duty to call the attention first of all of local Ordinaries (including Oriental rite Hierarchs) and Major Religious Superiors to the necessity for the study of Canon Law. Study of Church Law is needed in the preparation of all future shepherds of souls as well as to provide men for the Church who will be particularly qualified in the canonical-legal field, competent in interpreting and diligent in defending and enforcing both the Law as it now stands and the future Code.

It does not seem superfluous here to have a look at the difficulties that are commonly met today concerning this study, even among those students aspiring to be priests. These can be basically reduced to two problems: a) the supposed disuse of the present Code of Canon Law along with the lack of a new Code; and b) an imperfect and sometimes false interpretation of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council.

The first difficulty vanishes when one remembers that the Code of Canon Law is not abrogated. Furthermore, it will be impossible

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\* The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education is not making reference directly in this letter to the Faculties (Schools, Institutes, Departments, etc.) of Canon Law. However, it is obvious that some of this text applies to them. This can be determined from the context and meaning.

to have prudent pastors of souls, teachers, ecclesiastical tribunal officials, scholars, and executives of Church Law if the men in these roles have not previously mastered juridico-historical skills in Canon Law and have not a firm grasp of the Law that is now in force. Also, consideration must be given to the fact that, after the recent Council, a great number of official documents have been issued touching upon the application of conciliar dispositions. Many of these documents have a profoundly juridical character. They need to be thoroughly taught and learned. It is clear that this large amount of material must be studied not only by canonical specialists, but also by all who are preparing to be priests and by students in Faculties of Theology and Canon Law.

The **second difficulty** is somewhat more subtle inasmuch as it touches on the basic reason for disinterest in canonical disciplines. It requires some reflection in order to comprehend how the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council actually solicits the promotion of the "Law" in the Church.

### I. THE FUNCTION AND THE ROLE OF CANON LAW IN THE CHURCH

The Ecumenical Council recently concluded, especially in the Dogmatic Constitution, **Lumen Gentium**, sets forth a deeper understanding of the Church in her twofold aspect: charismatic and institutional. The outlook here is, above all, Christocentric, that is, the Church is seen as the continuation of the Incarnation and of the Easter Mystery. Among the co-essential elements of the Church, first place is given to the ontology of grace, the communication of the Divine Life. The sacramental and hierarchical structure of the Church serves as means to this end, namely to the communication of the Divine Life.

The Council, after emphasizing the sacramental structure of the Church, has underlined the fact that both the Society which is constituted by an organic hierarchy and the Mystical Body of Christ, the visible community and the supernatural entity, form only one complex reality, an element that is twofold, human and divine. The Church is compared by analogy to the mystery of the Incarnate Word "Just as the assumed nature inseparably united to the Divine Word serves Him as a living instrument of salvation, so, in a similar way, does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit, Who vivifies her by building up her Body". (**Lumen Gentium**, n. 8); "(The Church) united on behalf of heavenly values and enriched by them . . . has been constituted and organized in the world as a Society by Christ and is equipped with those

means which befit her as a visible and social unity. Thus the Church, at one and the same time a visible community and a spiritual community, goes forward together with humanity..." (*Gaudium et spes*, n. 40).

This view of the Church makes it easy to see how, in her totality and in her unity, the Church is inseparably, although under different aspects, a community of grace and a hierarchical Society. One can also see that her structures are and must ever be profoundly determined in their nature by a supernatural point of view. Between the divine and human elements in the Church the kind of relationship must be maintained which was established by Christ Himself.

In the light of this conciliar ecclesiology, therefore, the place and the necessity of Canon Law appear more clearly. The "Low" acquires greater value because its function in the Church's life is better understood.

Certainly, a primacy must always be accorded to charity, "but love without a justice that is expressed in law cannot exist. Both of these (charity and justice) must go together and complete each other conjointly, coming forth as they do from one source which is God. For the rest, Saint Paul says, the kingdom of God is justice, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14, 17)". (Pope Paul VI to the participants in the "*Cursus renovationis canonicae pro iudicibus aliisque tribunalium administris*" held at the Pontifical Gregorian University A.A.S. (1974) 12).

While first place is assigned to the spirit and to the interior life, nevertheless belonging organically to the Body of the Church, the presence of Church authority, and submission to this authority always remain as irreplaceably necessary elements willed by the Divine Founder of the Catholic Church. In the Church "freedom and authority are not terms of opposition, but rather values complementing one another. Their mutual cooperation promotes the growth of the community and at the same time the capacity for initiative and enrichment of its single members. In calling attention to the principle of authority and to the necessity for a juridic order, nothing is being taken away from the value of freedom or from the esteem in which it ought to be held. This recalling to authority rather serves to stress the need for a secure and efficacious safeguarding of the goods which all have a right to possess, including the basic one of exercising freedom itself. Only a social system that is well ordered can guarantee liberty adequately. As a matter of fact, what would freedom be worth to

an individual if it were not protected by wise and suitable norms?" (Pope Paul VI to the Judges of the Sacred Roman Rota, January 29, 1970, A.A.S. (1970) 115).

Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council, particularly in the Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen gentium*, provides for a better understanding of the role and function of Canon Law also in the local Church. The principle of subsidiarity demonstrates that, beyond the norms that are valid for the Universal Church, there could be norms particular to the local Churches as well.

## II. THE NEED FOR STUDYING CANON LAW

The above considerations can help to shed more light upon the necessity of promoting canonical learning not only in a universal context, but also on every organizational level of the Church. Competent canonists are needed in teaching theology, in the structures of diocesan curial offices, in regional Church tribunals, in the governmental structure of Religious Families, etc. The Bishop's Conferences, various Synods, diocesan Ordinaries and Religious Superiors need to have people to rely on who are juridically prepared. Such men not only can help in canonically forming future priests and in correctly interpreting general laws, but they also can be useful in formulating, with appropriate competence, local laws, that is, they can help to draft these laws in the best way from the point of view of content and form. They can also assist in the application of these particular laws.

It is not useless to mention here that, following a period of experimentation as set out in the *Motu Proprio* "Ecclesiae Sanctae" of 1966, work is presently going on to revise particular laws, (constitutions), and to study new structures in Religious Institutes.

What is being touched upon, consequently, as irreplaceable is the collaboration of canonists with the authorities of the Church in their function of governing her (which cannot be separated from their function of giving her "pastoral care"). The purposes of this collaboration are an orderly and peaceful development of the social life of the whole Christian Community, the promotion of the Church's apostolate, and the correct protection of the rights of everyone.

It flows from this that there is severe need for the proper preparation of canonists. Nobody can deny that even a priest who is directly occupied with the care of souls needs an adequate training in law to carry out suitably his pastoral ministry in the way a good shepherd should.



From all that has been asserted here, it follows that Bishops and Major Religious Superiors must become more conscious of their obligation to promote and encourage the study of Canon Law. Thus, it is to local Ordinaries (including Eastern rite Hierarchs) as well as to Superiors of Religious Families that the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, in accord with the Sacred Congregations for the Oriental Churches, for the Evangelization of Peoples, and for Religious and Secular Institutes, confides these reflections, certain that they, fully conscious of this problem in the Church and filled with their usual careful and customary pastoral attention, will make a decisive contribution to the hoped-for solution.

### III. PRACTICAL DIRECTIVES

In order to facilitate the concrete realization of what has been stated above, the following dispositions are enacted:

1. No Major Seminary or Scholasticate (and *a-fortiori* no Faculty, School, Institute, or Department of Theology) may be without a professorship of Canon Law. (cf. "Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis" n. 34) The teaching of Church Law must be ranked with the necessary disciplines.

2. In the lessons imparted to the students, they should be taught the general theological foundation of all Canon Law and also the theological basis of each particular juridical institute. In this general way, the spirit that animates the Law of the Church, a Law that is different from other laws, should be shown to the seminarians. They should also be taught to see the pastoral function of Canon Law.

3. Instruction in Church Law must be given in such a way that future priests will grasp the principles and norms of the Code, comprehending these principles and norms as ordered to the pastoral life. In the course of the canonical formation given, if and when needed, there should be no hesitation in teaching the history of various laws, linking them up with the theology of historical periods. Seminarians should also receive a sufficient amount of information about the civil laws of their proper country insofar as these might touch upon Canon Law. They should be taught especially those areas of competence where the jurisdiction of Church and State overlap. (Of course, this is even beyond Concordat Law which naturally should be taught to seminarians in those places where it exists.)

4. Given the exigencies of ecumenism and the obedience which is due to ecclesiastical legislation in this matter, instruction in Canon Law must treat the questions touching upon ecumenism which have juridical implications, especially those things involving the liturgical and sacramental fields.

5. So that their formation in Canon Law will not be only theoretical, seminarians should be introduced to canonical practices, both administrative and judicial, by learning and using appropriate and precise formularies, by viewing juridical procedures (with analysis of their various phases of development), etc. To accomplish this practical end, it would be very useful to organize visits of the seminarists to chancery offices and to diocesan and regional tribunals as well as to invite to the seminary judges, defenders of the bond, etc. to give some lectures.

6. More particularly, with regard to the method of teaching:  
a) The way that Canon Law is taught in seminaries ought to be different from the way it is done in Faculties or Schools of Canon Law, since there is a diversity of finality involved in these two different kinds of institutions. Left aside in seminaries, then, should be disputed questions and the deep study of monographic research, unless it is seen that some of this kind of material has an importance for the pastoral formation of the students. b) In the "*Ratio institutionis sacerdotalis*" for each single country (See the Decree *Optatam totius* n. 1) or for each Religious Family, there must be listed specifically the matters that are to be taught. With even more specific character the study program for each Major Seminary and Religious House of Studies must set out these canonical matters along with a list of the precise number of hours assigned to the study of Canon Law.

7. Those who teach Canon Law must keep in close contact with those teaching other theological disciplines so that, in a spirit of fraternal collaboration, they might make their contribution both to the planning and the implementation of the seminary's study program (which, in its turn, ought to be a carrying out of the "*Ratio*" of the National Episcopal Conference or Religious Family).

8. Local Ordinaries (including Eastern rite Hierarchs) and Major Religious Superiors should be certain that those who teach Canon Law themselves regularly take updating courses. Such courses for this purpose should be organized and offered not only by Canon Law Faculties or similar entities but also by the very Conferences of Bishops and Major Religious Superiors.

9. In promoting the continuing education of the clergy, care should be taken to arrange that in the courses (even in various

kinds of pastoral institutes) some treatment be imparted of canonical and legal questions.

10. Finally, local Ordinaries (including the Hierarchs of the Oriental rites) as well as Major Religious Superiors should not neglect to send some of their priests to study at the various Faculties of Canon Law so as to have available for their needs a suitable number of Canon Law teachers. Some other priests might be sent to specialize in aspects of law that need to be known in a particular Diocese or Religious Family. Also Latin rite Ordinaries in whose Dioceses there are faithful belonging to the Eastern Churches, whether Catholic or Orthodox, should take care that some of their priests attend specialized courses in Oriental Church Law or even attend the Faculty of Oriental Canon Law which exists at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome.

Certain that your gracious and generous collaboration in these matters will make a contribution toward solving a troublesome problem in the Church, we assure you of our sentiments of respect and esteem. We are

Very truly yours in Christ Jesus,

**Gabriel-Marie Card. Garrone**

† J. Schröffer, Secr.

Rome, April 2, 1975

# PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Aptam Ecclesiarum sendicecesium dispositionem maxime ad fide-  
lium utilitatem et bonum conferre nemo est quin videat, cum  
praesertim de iis agatur, quae nimis pateant territorio. Hac prop-  
terea mente ducti, sententiam accipiendam esse putavimus Con-  
ferentiae Episcopalis Insularum Philippinarum simulque vota, ut  
ex ecclesiasticis provinciis Manilensi et Lingayensi, Dagupanensi  
alia quaedam constitueretur. Explorato igitur quid hoc super ne-  
gotio sentirent Venerabiles fratres Archiepiscopi Manilensis et  
Lingayensis-Dagupanensis, necnon Apostolicus in Insulis Philippinis  
Nuntius, seu Venerabilis frater Bruno Torpigliani, Archiepiscopus  
titulo Mallianensis, ac demum Venerabilis frater Noster S.R.E. Car-  
dinalis Praefectus Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, sequentia  
decernimus. **Apostolica Nostra potestate dioecesim Sancti Ferdi-**  
**nandi a provincia ecclesiastica Manilensi separamus eamque ad ar-**  
**chiepiscopalis et metropolitanae gradum evehimus, iustis tributis**  
**privilegiis.** Venerabilem autem Fratrem Aemilium Cinense, adhuc  
Episcopum Sancti Ferdinandi, dignitate Archiepiscopi atque Metro-  
politae eiusdem Sedis insignimus, iustis cum iuribus. Sic condi-  
tam provinciam archidioecesis Sancti-Ferdinandi tamquam metro-  
politana constituet, ac sequentes Ecclesiae tamquam suffraganeae:  
dioecesis **Tarlacensis**, a provincia ecclesiastica Lingayensi-Dagu-  
panensi separata; dioecesis **Balangensis**, hac ipsa die condita; prae-  
latura **Ibana**, a provincia ecclesiastica Manilensi separata. Haec  
omnia ad effectum adducat Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani,  
quem diximus, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos. Qui vero negotium  
perfecerit, congrua documenta de more exaret eaque ad Sacram  
Congregationem pro Episcopis mittat, rite signata sigilloque im-  
pressa. Has Litteras sive nunc sive in posterum ratas esse volu-  
mus, contrariis nihil obstantibus. Datum Romae, paud S. Petrum,  
die septimo decimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo non-  
gesimo septtuagesimo quinto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

† JOANNES CARD. VILLOT  
Secretarius Status

† SEBASTIANUS CARD. BAGGIO  
S.C. pro Episcopis Praewectus

GODOFRIDUS MARIANI, Proton. Apost.  
JOANNES COPPA, Proton. Ap. s.n.

**PAULUS EPISCOPUS**  
**SERVUS SERVORUM DEI**  
**AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM**

Quoniam ad recte universum Christi gregem gubernandum Nobis sunt aptiora in dies incepta suscipienda, sententiam accipiendam esseputavimus Conferentiae Episcopalis Insularum Philippinarum, quae videlicet, de consensu Venerabilis Fratris Emili Cinese, Episcopi Sancti Ferdinandi, ab hac Apostolica Sede petiit, ut, quodam ex hac eadem dioecesi territorio separato, nova conderetur ecclesiastica circumscriptio. De consilio igitur sive Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigliani, Archiepiscopi titulo Mallianensis atque in Insulis Philippinis Apostolici Nuntii, sive Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis sequentia decernimus. A dioecesi Sancti Ferdinandi, quam diximus, territorium separamus civilis provinciae "Bataan" appellatae eoque dioecesim constituimus nomine **BALANGENSEM**, cuius fines iidem erunt ac civilis provinciae "Bataan"; sedes in urbe, quam "Balanga" appellant; episcopalis magisterii cathedra in templo Deo dicato in honorem Sancti Joseph, quod in eadem urbe exstat, congruis eidem tributis iuribus et privilegiis. Episcopis vero, praeterquam iura debita damus, obligationes imponimus eorundem officiarum propria. Conditam praeterea dioecesim suffraganeam facimus metropolitanae Sedi Sancti Ferdinandi; item Episcopum iurisdictioni Metropolitanae subdimus. Mensa episcopalis constabit Curiae emolumentis, fidelium sponte oblatis pecuniis atque bonis, quae dioecesi obvenient ad normam canonis 1500 C.I.C. Consultores dioecesani ad normam iuris deligantur, usque dum Canonico collegium per alias sub plumbo Litteras non condatur. Ad Seminarium quod atet, servantur praescripta communis iuris, normae Decreti Concilii Vaticani II "Optatum totius" ac peculiare Sacrae Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica regulae. De sacerdotibus statuimus, ut, hisce Litteris ad effectum adductis, Ecclesiae illi censeantur addicti, in cuius territorio officium vel beneficium habeant; ceteri vero sacerdotes, clerici Seminarii que thrones, ei, in qua legitime degant. Denique omnia documenta, quae ad

novam dioecesim pertinent, a Curia Sancti Ferdinandi ad Balangensem transferantur, in tabulario custodienda. Haec quae praescripsimus ad effectum adducat Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem diximus, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos, suetaque documenta exaranda curet, ad Sacram Congregationem pro Episcopis mittenda, de more signata sigilloque impressa. Has vero Litteras ratas omnino esse volumus, contrariis quibuslibet non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die septimo decimo mensis Martii, anno Domini millesimo nongentesimo septuagesimo quinto, Pontificatus Nostri duodecimo.

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# THE NEED FOR PLURALISM IN THE CHURCH\*

by

Yves Congar, O.P.

*Young people increasingly find that the Church-as-institution does not satisfy their needs. The need to build up community at local level, personal relations rather than structures, the need to see the Church universal as a communion of local Churches, each with its own initiatives and own colouring, for its own good and to the benefit of the whole.*

## REJECTION OF INSTITUTIONS?

Some time ago in the course of an interview, the following point was put to Cardinal Danielou: 'Christianity is an institution and the institutions in which we live today are — as Nietzsche said — in the process of being slowly "drained" of their significance. The universities are being drained and the army too: people are looking for something else' (J. Duignaud, Figaro, 1 May 1972). It is, of course, open to question whether this criticism of institutions is universally valid. The term itself covers many very different realities. It covers realities which I would give my life without hesitation — the Eucharist, for example. We also hear criticism of the 'apparat' or the 'establishment', terms which, however vague, do have a meaning. They imply that here is a social structure whose allegiance is to the past and that those who must submit to it have no say in its management.

It is the young who are in the forefront of the rejection of institutions of the establishment. An excellent study from the Centre 'Pro Mundi Vita' (no. 33, end of 1970) on the theme 'Western Youth and the Future of the Church' has this to say: 'To many young people, the Church-as-institution seems increasingly remote, occupied with vague matters, apparently unreal and often of little interest... It is a matter of little concern to millions of young people whether it speaks or remains silent' (p. 12). We have here a fact — not a universal one, certainly, but still very widespread — of a break, of disinterest, of alienation. We

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\* A slightly abbreviated translation (by Honor Rynne and Austin Flannery, O.P.) of a lecture delivered at the Centre d'Etudes Saint Louis de France, in Rome, October 1972. The title of the lecture was *Initiatives Locales et Normes Universelles*. — First published in *Doctrine and Life*, Vol. 24, July 1974, pp. 343-353.

must also attach more importance to the fact that the youth of today represent some thousand million human beings, and, to quote the admirable saying of Paul Valéry: 'The young prophesy by their very own existence — they are the future!'

### YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

The *Pro Mundi Vita* study has this to say about the rejection of the Church by young people: 'For many young people the Church as an institution has lost significance because it is proving incapable of truly expressing the values by which they live, and because the Church as a community of faith offers a model of community life which, they find, does not measure up to the communal values to which they themselves aspire' (p. 20). A small but significant enquiry carried out by the French section of the Secretariat for Non-Believers on the subject of unbelief amongst young people born into Christian families offers some examples of criticisms levelled by young people against their parents and against the Church:

Friendship, solidarity, justice: these are their essential values (militant lobby of Catholic Action Society of Lyon).

Our children accuse us, for example, of being Christians with a tranquil conscience even while war is raging everywhere and people are dying of hunger (a northern agriculturalist).

Our daughter, indeed, others like her have really had us more than once with our backs to the wall. They often react in a more Christian way than we do in financial matters, choosing poverty deliberately, lending and giving away their possessions and asking us why we do not use our goods to help others (a doctor from the west).

What they want is a truly communal participation and not a strict obedience to the rites and practices, more or less traditional, whose sense escapes them totally. In spite of our research, we have not yet found any such community in existence. (*Bulletin INF*, July 1972, pp. 16-19)

### DEATH AND BIRTH

'The young feel that the doctrinal system to which they are exposed does not have within itself the values by which they live... They cannot perceive any model capable of giving an authentic form to the values to which they subscribe' (*Pro Mundi Vita*, no. 33, pp. 19-20). Even in their very abandonment and denial of things there is a positive motivation — perhaps idealized to an excessive degree, but it is there all the



same. In the same way, there is a positive side to the present ills that afflict us. Failures we have seen, departures from the ministry. But we have also seen the birth of new movements and enterprises, small things, issuing from local initiatives in response to real needs, and often having within themselves a deep evangelical significance.

A statistic about French religious orders in the year 1970 showed that their numbers were diminishing from year to year and that they were, alas, still diminishing despite the very remarkable *aggiornamento* carried out by many orders. But if it is a question of establishment — houses, schools, catechism services, parochial services — think on this: if 1,500 of them have disappeared from the 17,300 which were in existence at the beginning of the year, 2,000 have been born! My interpretation which is not based, I admit, on a systematic enquiry, but which corroborates several empirical observations, is that the big institutions have disappeared and that many micro-foundations have been born locally. Furthermore, these are not built from the top down but from responses and initiatives at ground level, and they often have, I repeat, a very great evangelical significance.

### THE ROLE OF THE LAITY

The latter statement is also true of the part played by the laity in the mission of the Church. It is no longer a question of their being mere helpers of the priests, who hold a pastoral monopoly. The laity have been brought to the point of taking on real ministries, even pastoral functions. I see this, for example, all around me in the new town of Evry now being built. Here the laity, in households or little teams, look after the Christian reception of the new arrivals; or again, in a parish like the neighbouring one (Saint-Germain-les-Corbeil) which has not got a priest and which the laity take charge of. We are already face to face with a new situation which will, in time, take on massive proportions.

### RURAL AND URBAN PARISHES

The Church in the past succeeded in ministering to man's pastoral needs in parish, diocese, province. The same kind of organization was used in the cities. The Church also responded to man's secular needs. It established its own institutions, which, when society became 'laicized', non-religious and even hostile, had constituted a kind of parallel world, a Christian double of secular organizations — third-level schools, hospitals, orphanages, gymnastic societies, even Christian cinemas and Christian trade unions. Thus a certain kind of Christianity has been prolonged for a long period of time. We are now witnessing its demise.

On the one hand we have the lamentable decrease of entries into the seminaries and novitiates. The average age of priests goes up from year to year while their absolute number (and even more so their relative number in relation to the population) decreases. Evidently new thinking is needed here. We must have celebrants! We cannot have failed to understand the resolution of the last Synod of Bishops on the eventual ordination of married men, because it is clear to us now that this must come about. On the other hand, daily life is becoming more and more secularized, and the Church itself has come to a realization that it no longer needs to carry out certain tasks which secular society can undertake, and indeed, carry out very efficiently. Existence has become complex and fragmented. It is no longer just centered on one locality where one finds all one's needs. There is the place where we live — often two places! — the place where we work and the place where we spend our leisure hours. School is yet another place and so is wherever we are politically active. There is no worldly structure in existence at present which can regroup all these fragments and answer the needs of all men. Of course there will always be a need for a place where God's people can assemble to bear witness and express their unity. But for everyday needs, I believe that in France we are moving towards small local groupings — whether one calls them parishes or new pastoral unities — which do not presume to cover all contingencies because they just cannot. Thus, one can have a catechism class, a Bible circle, or just a prayer reunion, or again, a group formed to visit the sick and prisoners. Certainly, the celebration of the Word and the Eucharist should, on set occasions, bring everyone together.

### THE SMALL COMMUNITIES

I, for one, see in this scheme of things an answer to the needs of the times, *quod tempus requirit*, as St. Bernard says; a multiplicity of initiatives and small groups operating at ground level. I use the words 'small groups'. Here again, we have a reality which commands our attention. Later on we shall see what significance this has for the Catholic Church as a whole and its requirements, both of unity at the universal level and of pluralism at the local level.

We are not speaking now of the young, but of men and women of thirty to forty-five or fifty years of age. Basically, the need is the same: to try and find again the meaning of life; to live and express this meaning in a coherent fashion; to unify one's life. What is in question here, too, is authenticity. It is a question of finding one's coherence and unity as a man; as one who believes, who desires the Eucharist and is also socially and politically committed. But we know that in social

and political matters we can only draw certain concrete conclusions from the gospel and even from the social teaching of the Church: a total, militant commitment presupposes an analysis and options which are, properly speaking, political and which each Christian must achieve for himself. The Christian's problem is: how does my faith penetrate, behave and find expression in social and political matters? He must find it within himself and through others close to him and with whom he can freely share and exchange ideas. This will quite often be with other Christians — Protestants for instance. The Church-as-institution will not give him the formula for unifying his life, and scarcely the means of discovering it. Here is this 'secular ecumenism' about which George Casalis is so enthusiastic. Sometimes the Christian may find what he seeks among non-believers, provided the overall dominant theme is that of authentic human progress.

## COMMUNITY

One of the characteristic traits of the present change is the seeking of personal community relations, and the priority given to these rapports rather than to ready-made institutions or organizations. It is a sane reaction against the modern conditions of life with their unsocial specializations, their planning and all-engulfing pace. But it is also evident that the present striving for communion between people in the heart of the community is consonant with the innermost meaning of Christianity. We should respond to this as Christians, but we would need to improve. Catholic Christianity, indeed, carries magnificent possibilities but at the same time suffers from several difficulties.

The objectivism of Catholicism, which can be a help towards ritualization, is a richness but also an embarrassment. An excellent sociologist, Jean Seguy, has studied the integration of blacks into the Churches of the United States. He came across this fact: while the Catholic Church has been the least segregationist — it stands for universality, equality and fraternity in principle — while its communion table is open to black and white alike (and indeed the latter often take second place there), it still cannot count more than a limited number of blacks in its ranks. What is more, the Baptists, and above all the Methodists have incomparably larger numbers of blacks. How does this happen? It happens because here (at least before the liturgical reform and the Second Vatican Council) sacramental communion was not accompanied by what Jean Seguy calls 'sociological communion' — that is, human, personal, real in every sense. Each one returns to his place from the eucharistic table, arms crossed, eyes downcast. Nobody speaks, nobody shakes his neighbour's hand, nobody is called by his name, his Christian name, nobody recognizes anyone else. This is where the very real need comes

in — the need for a human fellowship: to be called by one's name, one's Christian name, to share and exchange within this Church, this generous Church. The Church-as-institution needs to be complemented by something else; something which is still the same Church, but on another level.

The fashion in which Catholic social cohesion or ecclesiastical unity has been lived and formulated until now is also relevant here. You are, I am sure, familiar with the remarkable commentary by Cardinal Cajetan on the definition of schism by St. Thomas. Wishing to define the precise unity which schism attacks, Cajetan distinguishes between the unity obtained by obedience to one head, of being 'under one: *sub uno*' and the deeper unity that exists between the living parts of one whole. Indeed we have, at least up to now, thought of unity too exclusively in terms of being under one head. That this concept has a long history — back to Ignatius of Antioch as far as the individual Churches are concerned — shows that it has undeniable value. I too recognize this value, but have seen, in studying the history of ecclesiology, that a process has been at work whereby structures and developments have separated from the group, the people, the community for which they existed. Think of the development of a certain Marian theology (and devotion), of the sacraments in relation to the Church, the primordial sacrament, of the priesthood in relation to the worshipping community, even of the Roman Pontiff in relation to the episcopate and even to the *ecclesia* — 'ex sese'. We are at present witnessing a movement towards re-equilibrium. Think of chapter three of *Lumen Gentium* on collegiality; of chapter two on the people of God; on chapter eight on the Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and of the Church, etc. Sometimes the movement goes too far: certain people would dissolve the power of the celebrant in the community and the power of the Pope in the college. But as it is, the movement is necessary and good. It is good, it is necessary to see the Church more clearly as a community where all have received the gifts of the Spirit in a way that shows this Church is built from the ground up and lives on by the grace of these various charisms, initiatives and services.

The latter is not merely true of individual persons or little groups only. The Council has also spoken of the gifts for the individual or local Churches (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 13, pars. 2 and 3; 23, end; *Ad Gentes* 4, par. 1; *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 14). It is on the subject and on this level that we must now examine our subject: local initiatives and universal norms.

## LOCAL CHURCHES AND UNIVERSAL NORMS

There are different gifts: there is one Holy Spirit. The same is happening in the world at large. The world is becoming more unified, but at the same time, people and national cultures seek self-expression more than ever before. The Catholic Church, truly 'catholic' in its principles and in its deep reality, cannot, however, be always as effectively catholic as it would wish. The Church is, in a sense, a victim of the admirable and powerful culture which it has created in several centuries of western civilization during the Middle Ages and the Counter-Reform. It is linked with this history, with this culture, for its liturgy and for the spirit and form of its canonical life, for the expression of its faith, and for the ordinary exercise of its magisterium powers. All this led almost to the danger of confusing unity and uniformity. It is certain that such a state of affairs cannot be acceptable or satisfying to the countries formerly called 'mission' countries, and now more correctly called young Churches, nor to the countries of ancient Christianity.

For a long time now popes and theologians have been proclaiming that in order to save the unity of the faith one must respect the various laws and customs of the different countries. Adaptation has been spoken about and even practised for a long time now. But is this term adaptation exact and sufficient? Does it not presuppose that there is already in existence, fully constituted, a universal law which one then adapts to varying local situations? But this is not what is needed. I will give here a few examples, borrowed, for the most part, from a theologian who had had a lot of experience in the Far East where he was born, and in Africa where he has worked for fourteen years. His name is Adrian Hastings. To take the liturgy for example: how do we establish the same forms of expression in an industrialized, urbanized, super-intellectualized western world and in a rural Africa where men read little (even though schooling is progressing rapidly) and where on the contrary they can grasp the reality of things by a gesture or an expressive rite, rather than mentally, cerebrally, in an abstract formula? In the service of the poor: can one follow the same rules in the rich countries and in the poorer countries? in countries where racial problems don't exist, or hardly at all, and in countries where such questions are a burning issue? under a socialist regime and under capitalism? in countries where the Church has been linked with the structure of exploitation and in countries where she has managed to keep free from such structures? In the case of the clergy and the ministry, will the problem of celibacy be the same for Brazil as for India, where many priests and priestesses are celibate? Ecumenism poses a particularly difficult and special problem. On the one hand the situations are so varied, and the multiplicity and complexity of the divisions are

tolie — as the decree *Christus Dominus* has shown. It follows that each local Church carries within itself the grace of catholicity and unity and the demand for them. On the other hand, the universal (i.e. catholic) Church must needs assume to itself all that God has so widely distributed. It is catholic because it is localized throughout the world.

We have striking examples of this in the apostolic Church and in the period when the Church was being constituted, which is also the moment where one has the strongest feeling that the unity of the Church is a reflection of the unity of God. The constitutive witness of our faith is not monolithic but pluralist. We cannot identify Mark with John nor Jude with James or Paul, nor Jerusalem with Corinth, or again, as our colleague André Feuillet showed quite recently, Pauline theology with Johannine theology. However, the Church has placed together these diverse witnesses in one symphony in its canon of scripture. It has retained four different witnesses to the same gospel and that, I repeat, at a time, as Isidor Frank has recently shown, when it was insisting on the principle of the unity of the canon, in the full awareness of its mission to preach the one true God.

### TRINITY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

I should like to end on this more profound note. This one God is not a God of a theistic, pre-trinitarian faith. He is the God who is substantially one in three persons. He is the God who is three persons in the substantial unity and oneness of the same nature, the same wisdom, the same glory. He is God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is also an aspect of the ecclesiology of the last Council which has not, unfortunately, received to date all the attention it merits, except in the writings of Heribert Muhlen. Unfortunately the faithful have not enough realization that our God is the Trinity: interrogated on this subject, 65.5 per cent of young Belgians from Catholic schools replied that to believe or not believe in the Trinity didn't change anything very much in their daily lives (*Pro Mundi Vita*, no 33, p. 21). That means work for us, theologians and priests, because it is just to that point that one must press forward to establish a full ecclesiology of communion.

We must also have a better answer to the reproaches often brought against us by Orthodox and Protestant observers at the Council. and that

is of lacking a pneumatology. Pneumatology adds something to a theology of the third person which it would be unjust to accuse the Latin Catholic of having neglected. One can develop such a theology in the treatise *De Deo* without it having a true impact on ecclesiology. It did in fact have little impact on ecclesiology, except in so far as the Holy Spirit was regarded as influencing the Church conceived as a pyramid, as something static, almost mechanical. All that was gained was that the Holy Spirit was considered in the context of personal spirituality as inhabiting the souls of the just. We need to go further: to see the Holy Spirit spreading his gifts where he wills, for the common good. He is the source at the same time of both pluralism and unity, he is the conductor of the symphony. Pneumatology is the principle of an ecclesiology of a communion which assumes local initiatives, into a unity, not of mere uniformity but of symphonic harmony.



### NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS IN THE WORLD TODAY

According to the most recent statistic supplied by the various Congregations, there are some 200,000 male religious (exactly 216,872) in the world today. The statistics are for 1973-74. Among this number there are 143,709 priests, 654 deacons, 30,867 seminarians, and 41,642 coadjutor brothers.

There are also statistics for lay Congregations and religious women, which were published in the "Activities of the Holy See, 1974" as follows: 34,279 members of lay Congregations, of whom 123 are priests. There are 609,369 Sisters in the world. Of these 49,450 are novices and temporarily professed, while 559,919 have taken final vows.

According to Continents, more than half the Sisters are in Europe, 343,370; more than one-fourth are in North America, 128,990; while 82,229 are in the other Americas. In Asia there are 31,272 Sisters; in Africa, 13,992, and in Oceania, 9,516.

# REFLECTION ON THE PROBLEM OF PLURALISM IN THE CHURCH

by

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## 1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE

Our intention is to present here some information and some reflections on pluralism in the Church such as the problem is raised today. The word pluralism nearly always causes a shock; when you give lectures on this subject, you are almost certain that it will arouse enthusiasm in some, hostility in others,

Twenty years ago, perhaps, the term "pluralism" had a very precise meaning in philosophy: it denoted the systems of thought that recognized a plurality of being in opposition to monism which saw in things and men

mere exterior and deceptive manifestations of one reality<sup>1</sup>. In that case, practically everyone was a pluralist! But in the last few years there has been a clear semantic evolution and pluralism now presents itself as a claim for diversity, reaching the point of heterogeneity, if necessary, both on the geographical plane and on the historical plane. From a pluralist civil society in which various religions coexist peacefully<sup>2</sup>, we arrive more or less at the point of speaking of pluralism in the Church to try to justify serious divergences in the field of faith and morality<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See in this connection the *Vocabulaire technique de la philosophie* by Lalande and F. J. Thonnard, *Précis d'histoire de la philosophie*, fifth edition, Tournai, 1966, p. 528, note 1. For the different meanings today, documentation will be found in *Le pluralisme, histoire, sociologie, philosophie*, 1972 Symposium in Montreal, published by the Fides publishing house of that city in 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Vatican II spoke twice of pluralism, on the plane of civil society only, to combat a monopoly of schools that would destroy the freedom of Christian teaching: "...Excluso scholarum monopolio, quod nativis humanae personae iuribus... pacificae civium consortioni necnon pluralismo in permultis societatibus hodie vigenti adversatur" (*Gravissimum Educationis*, n. 6). In n. 7, the term occurs again in connection with civil societies that recognize the legitimate freedom of parents in the exercise of the duty of bringing up their children, "pluralismi hodiernae societatis ratione habita et debita libertati religiosae consulentes".

<sup>3</sup> This author, who claims a faith without a dogma, wrote recently (*Signal*, 18 December 1974): "Today there is no longer ONE Church, ONE interpretation of the dogmas, but different churches, the message of crystallizes round the person of Christ."



### Rapid change

That language should evolve, is a natural fact, especially at a time of rapid change such as is the case today. But it must be clearly seen also that this evolution may be a trap; let us recognize this without gloominess or pessimism but with lucidity. Apparently, it is harmless to replace the word "abortion" with "interruption of pregnancy". But from the evolution of polemics on this painful subject, it can be seen that this is prompted by the desire to set aside a word that traditionally connotes reprobation in favour of another which opens the door to attempts at legitimization. The same holds good with regard to the word "morality". To begin with, people dared not attack it directly, in spite of the difficulties that morality always brings with it as a result of the

effort and asceticism, even the renunciations, that it involves. "Moralism", which condemned certain excesses, was called into question, just as it was attempted in the past to combat "Augustinianism" by pretending to confuse it with Jansenism, the errors of which were recognized. Once "morality" was discredited by its closeness to "moralism", other formulas were brought forward to replace it: "ethics", "ethos", "praxis", etc. They may be harmless and perfectly acceptable in the sense that some people give them but in most cases they imply an evolution from "right" (what must be done) to "fact" (how people live in practice) or else the passing from a normative science implying an obligation to a purely descriptive sociology.

### Present Crisis

This means that we will have to distinguish very carefully the different meanings of the term "pluralism" and even more the different fields to which it is desired to apply it. But for this same purpose it is important to look for the reasons why man now towards the end of the 20th

century is so fascinated by pluralism in any area whatsoever. We would be wrong to envisage the present religious crisis as a "hortus conclusus"; it is actually bound up with a whole crisis of civilization<sup>4</sup>. The students who enter a theology faculty have studied Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger,

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<sup>4</sup> In his Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* of 8 December 1974, the Holy Father pointed out precisely that the dialectics of unity and diversity lived in the Church can be compared "to the similar situation in which civil society is living today... Unfortunately, the Holy Father writes, the Church seems to be suffering a little from the backlash of these circumstances; but she must not assimilate what is rather a pathological state."

and they apply their cast of mind to the religious sciences. The faithful who listen to the homilies of their parish priests and who study the teaching of the Magisterium, are also men whose way of thinking and feeling has been remodelled by the mass media. TV and radio in the different countries of the world create an outlook and an opinion that compel recognition all the more so in that most listeners are unaccustomed to think for themselves or, at the end of a day's work, too tired to do so.

Many readers are probably aware that the international theological Commission studied the problems of pluralism for several years. They are perhaps acquainted with the volume on its work which was published in 1973<sup>5</sup>. They might be afraid that I am merely summarizing this volume here. I wish to reassure them. For, from the work carried out until 1973, I would like, on the contrary, to take into account the evolution of the problem. This evolution is particularly clear in the first place on the plane of psycho-sociology and philosophy, revealing how the religious pluralist movement has its roots in a far greater whole, a crisis of civilization. But on the other

hand, precisely on account of these developments, the value judgments that we can and must pass on the phenomenon and pluralism in the name of Christian authenticity can be more selective and clearer.

It is fashionable today to formulate, right at the beginning of an exposition, a working hypothesis, a guiding idea. I will therefore say at once that it is all the easier to understand and practise Christian pluralism the more it is set in the framework of the Christian plan of divinization and humanization. To the extent to which Christians live by grace and the Revelation of Christ, they are assumed into the unity of the Christian mystery and united in charity (Col. 4, 1 ff.). Their diversity in human groups and their individuality as human persons nominally loved by God (Gal 2, 20) are not suppressed, however, for "grace does not suppress nature" or, if a richer formula is desired, "the divine does not suppress the human", it gives it its whole meaning, it purifies it and perfects it. A plurality of persons and groups compatible with unity in Christ, will not be threatened, therefore, by it. The only plurality that will not be Christian will be that of

<sup>5</sup> These works and the book based on them were directed by Prof. J. Ratzinger: *Internationale Theologen-Kommission, Die Einheit des Glaubens und der theologische Pluralismus*. Einsiedeln, Johannes Verlag, 1973. An Italian translation has appeared; Spanish, French and English editions are being prepared.

the group that withdraws into itself, persons who refuse *koinonia* and who thereby reject the de-

mands of human dignity just as much as the demands of divinization<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. THE CHURCH IS BOTH "ONE" AND "CATHOLIC"

### A) 20th century man torn between "planetization" and "isolation".

If we try to relate the problem of religious pluralism to the great movements of thought today, we must consider in the first place that now, towards the end of the 20th century, men are more and more unified and, at the same time, seek to save a certain autonomy which seems to them to be the very condition of their identity. *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 6) had already made the following remark, in this direction. "...a man's ties with his fellows are constantly being multiplied. At the same time 'socialization' brings further ties, without, however, always promoting appropriate personal development and truly personal relationships ('personalization')."

Sociologists in the last few years do not differ in their conclusions. With MacLuhan, they have realized that the world has become "one planetary village"<sup>7</sup>, in which all men and all women live more or less in the same way. There are still differences, it is true—alas cruel ones—between the first, the second and the third

world, but they tend to become less distinct. There cannot be an earthquake thousands of miles away, there cannot be a drought in distant countries without our being informed of it within six hours. Newspapers and TV put before our eyes tragic photos of starving or abandoned children, to give us a psychological shock and create an impulse of solidarity. Within each of the "words", in Europe, for example, people drive the same cars, read the same books and see the same films. We are rightly proud of these similarities, which tone down local differences.

However, if man today has the impression he is a citizen of a "planetary village", he also feels, on the other hand, that he is isolated, that he has become a being without roots and without solidarity. The old groups of the past are dissolving: the "patriarchal family" is tending to give way to the molecular family composed of father, mother and child, without the grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. Nationalism is dying out and many young people feel uneasy in the presence

<sup>6</sup> The connection between the community of men in grace and their natural solidarity in society and respect, was stressed by *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 41 and n. 42.

<sup>7</sup> Marshall MacLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *Guerre et paix dans le village planétaire*, Paris, 1973.

of anything reminiscent of the fatherland; from one point of view their reserve with regard to military service can be explained in this way. The professions are becoming international: doctors working in research and engineers can be utilized in foreign countries by multinational companies in whose eyes they are interchangeable. So there comes into play a defence mechanism, "regionalization". Abroad, people pay particular attention to their fellow countrymen and, with them, they try to keep their identity, in order not to be completely assimilated. At home, they stress regionalization: in nearly all the West European countries which have united in the Common Market and which are playing very loyally the card of economic and cultural expansion, there are, on the other hand, local or regional movements. In Italy, in France, in Belgium, the "regions" are taking on new importance.

In short, one would think that, taking for granted an inevitable rapprochement in ever larger groups, men today are taking out a reinsurance policy in the opposite direction by stressing local differences, and cultural and ideological pluralism.

#### B) Equilibrium of unity and diversity in the Church of Vatican II

In the Church, this twofold play of centripetal and centrifugal forces is manifested in the same way. The Church has desired to come into closer contact with the different civilizations as well as with other Christian denominations, with all religions as well as with the "world" itself. The result was a movement of differentiation and pluralism which, in the spirit of Vatican II which promoted it under the guidance of John XXIII and Paul VI, was in perfect agreement with the unity of the Church and her necessary role for salvation<sup>8</sup>. In the whole of history, Vatican II certainly represented—at least on the plane of intention—a particularly happy moment of equilibrium in the consciousness of a Church which is both "one" and "catholic", that is, adequately present to all peoples, to their particularities, to their desire to be themselves.

"The chosen People of God is one: 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism'," recalls *Lumen Gentium* (n. 32) in accordance with Ephesians 4, 5. Factors of unity are at once put forward: "As members, they share a common dignity from their rebirth in Christ. They have the same filial grace and the same vocation to

<sup>8</sup> I will not go into technical discussions here and I refer readers for further information to the work, still so valuable, of the late Mons. G. Philips, *L'Eglise et son mystère au deuxième Concile du Vatican. Histoire, texte et commentaire de la Constitution Lumen Gentium*, Tournai, Desclée. 2 vols, 1967--68.

perfection. They possess in common one salvation,<sup>9</sup> one hope, and one undivided charity". As the visible sign and guarantor of this unity, Vatican II, referring explicitly to Vatican I, recalls the special role of Peter, the head of the apostolic college as the Pope is the head of the episcopal body. "Christ placed blessed Peter over the other apostles, and instituted in him a permanent and visible source and foundation of unity of faith and fellowship" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 18).

But on the other hand the Church recognized unreservedly and without any difficulty the diversity of cultures and the protection due to them (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 56). In the name of the ties between faith and cultures, the Council declares: "Faithful to her own tradition and at the same time conscious of her universal mission, she (the Church) can enter into communion with various cultural modes, to her own enrichment and theirs too" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58, 4). "Living in various circumstances during the course of time, the Church, too, has used in her preaching the discoveries of different cultures to spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, to probe it and more deeply understand it, and to give it better expression in liturgical celebrations and in the life of the diversified community of the faith-

ful" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58, 2). The decree *Ad Gentes* (n. 22) devotes a special section to "Diversity in unity," where we read in particular:

"The seed which is the Word of God sprouts from the good ground watered by divine dew. From this ground the seed draws nourishing elements which it transforms and assimilates into itself. Finally it bears much fruit. Thus, in imitation of the plan of the Incarnation, the young Churches, rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance. From the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences, these Churches borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Saviour's grace, or the proper arrangement of Christian life." Here, we are given as an example the same faith in Christian Revelation, explained by the *Magisterium*, which, according to St. Anselm's formula, "seeks for understanding" (*fidem quaerens intellectum*) taking into account the "philosophy and wisdom of these peoples" in such a way that errors will be eliminated while the presentation will be adapted. "Thanks to such a procedure,

<sup>9</sup> The necessity of the Church as the sacrament of salvation, offered to everyone, is very clearly recalled in n. 14 of *Lumen Gentium*.

every appearance of syncretism and of false particularism can be excluded, and Christian life can

be accommodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture" (*Ad Gentes*, n. 22)

### One sole reality

#### C) Imbalance of radical pluralism

We may well wonder whether, ten years after the Council, this equilibrium still exists, at least among a noisy minority, which must not, however, cast doubts on the faithfulness of the vast majority of Catholics to Christ<sup>10</sup>. For this noisy, active minority, three essential Christian ideas are questioned, so that a real "crisis of identity" arises.

In the first place "they will not recognize in the Church one sole reality, the result of a dual human and divine element, similar to the mystery of the Word Incarnate, which makes her a "community of faith, hope and charity on earth, a visible whole", by means of which Christ spread truth and grace for everyone. Consequently they oppose the Hierarchy, as if any act of opposition of this kind were a constituent moment of the truth about the Church, which was to be discovered such as Christ had established her"<sup>11</sup>. In such a perspective, contestation is sought as a means of saving the individual or small group from an authority which is declared a

priori to be oppressive. Thus we arrive at the radical pluralism of "quot capita, tot sententiae". Little groups, small theological circles, claim for themselves the authority they have denied to the hierarchical Church.

If this guarantee of doctrinal unity has been swept away, it is easy to see that two other essential Christian ideas are questioned: Revelation, and salvation by Christ. Revelation is no longer the manifestation of Christ bringing men truth and making them participate in divine nature (*Dei Verbum*, n. 2). It is only, according to a famous Protestant exegete, awareness of what man needs to be better as a man. Consequently the Christian plan could be summed up in a very general directive, on the transcendental plane, "be a man", and all doctrine or categorical precept would have to be borrowed from human sciences.

It is quite certain that the new human sciences can render the faith great services as Platonism and Aristotelianism did in the past. But the Fathers who

<sup>10</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia* (n. 3) emphasizes the contrast between "the vast majority of the faithful" and "the ferments of unfaithfulness to the Holy Spirit which are found here and there in the Church today and which are trying, alas, to undermine it from inside. The promoters and victims of this process" are "actually not numerous"...

<sup>11</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 3.

utilized these philosophical doctrines did not think for a moment of putting them in the place of Christian Revelation. Today, on the contrary, some people do not hesitate to look elsewhere than in God's Word preserved in the tradition of the Church for a doctrine to believe and to live. They claim a pluralism that breaks with everything, for they set up against the Faith of Tradition a view of man and a plan of liberation that no longer have anything in common with the Gospel. For example, some people will doubt the Resurrection of Christ and will say, that the real meaning of this belief is the new lease of energy the Apostles, left alone, draw from the realization that they must continue Jesus' work. Then, too, Christ will be presented as "such an extraordinary man that he can be called divine", but there will be no question of recognizing the eternal Word in Him.

If some Christians destroy the faith in this way and yet wish to remain in the Church in the name of a radical pluralism, how can we doubt the danger of the pluralism that is the basis of the theory of the "anonymous Christian" extolled by others? If we wish to see Christians unbeknown to themselves in all men of goodwill, in whom grace is at work, we simply recognize with Vatican II the truth of the *semina*

*Verbi* scattered in the world (*Ad Gentes*, n. 11 and 15) and the importance of *preparatio evangelica* (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 16). But there is a great difference between the appeal that Christ makes to all to call them to his kingdom, on the one hand, and the completion of this work in acceptance of the Gospel and faithfulness to grace, on the other hand. Now, some supporters of the theory of the "anonymous Christian" pay no heed to it so that for them faith, adherence to the Church, sacramental and liturgical life are unimportant. Provided a man be "of goodwill", he is a Christian without knowing it; it is useless to trouble him by preaching the Gospel to him with its demands regarding thought and life.

As can be seen, this conception of extreme pluralism, according to the penetrating analysis of H. Urs von Balthasar<sup>12</sup> "give rise to the impression that the visible Church is only an institution with a multitude of rules, laws and regulations indicating what we must believe and how we must live, while the living substance of this institution might just as well be scattered outside it in the world... If the real substance of Christianity is scattered among the whole of humanity, the only thing that remains to distinguish 'the Church of Christ' is the form,

<sup>12</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Dans l'engagement de Dieu*, Paris, 1973, p. 8-9.

the skeleton". Pluralism understood in this perspective is likely to be a pretext for no longer be-

longing to the visible Church or for carrying out "opposition from inside", as was said above.

### 3. TRUTH: COMMUNION OF THE SUBJECT AND THE OBJECT

#### A) Opening on the real

The problem of pluralism does not just lead us to study the reactions of 20th century man in search of his identity, which he runs the risk of putting in the wrong place. It also obliges us to study his "art of thinking". In religious, philosophical and scientific knowledge, there is always more or less a twofold pole: the object known and the subject knowing. Classical philosophy defines truth as "*adequatio rei et intellectus*"; it tries to open the way to truth by having recourse to intuition, induction, and deduction, the rules of which vary according to the different disciplines. Thus, we "know what is", we "know what must be done". In history, for example, the task of criticism is not to demolish, as some people have said rather hastily, but an investigation, an attempt to examine documents and testimonies in order to try to see the

event as completely as possible.

In this mentality, trust in the specialist, the "master", the expert, was not considered an abdication but the means of obtaining through someone else a conviction at which one could not completely arrive by oneself. In the field of morality, recourse to a revelation or to reason (according to whether it is theology or natural ethics) was the fundamental method, completed by trust in authors whose opinions made it possible to find practical directives. Under these conditions, as can be seen, not all pluralism was excluded, for the researches of each person as well as his trust in different masters could lead to various formulation and to one or other different conclusion. There remained, however, a vast common foundation and a historical constant, and above all the conviction that it was possible to arrive at the truth.

#### Principle of realism

#### B) Hypertrophy of the Subject

The Truth! Certain contemporaries find it hard to admit such a claim. They are led by the "masters of suspicion", and to those who speak to them of truth, they like to reply as Pilate did

to Jesus, when He said He had come to the world to hear witness to truth: *Quid est veritas?*" (Jn 18, 38).

Hegel implanted in the modern world the conviction that truth follows certain stages of develop-



ment, thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Nietzsche spoke of the creation of values by the different societies in the sense that they attach very great importance to the goods which they lack or for which they long. John Stuart Mill defended the thesis that it is vain to seek the truth and that we must be content with what is useful. Hence the contempt for rational justifications and the search for practical attitudes that can be linked up with very different systems. Orthopraxis, that is, effective and humanitarian action, adapts itself to the most radical pluralism as regards theoretical opinion, that is, it cares nothing about orthodoxy as it cares nothing about philosophical truth.

A certain sociology has taken over, claiming that all doctrines were conditioned by the environments that formulated them, even without their authors knowing it. Since the world has changed, since the fascination of certain researches holds out prospects of a new type of man, one would indeed be wrong not to admit relativism of scepticism. Marcuse who is the master of the cultural revolution of the years 1968-1970 wrecks "the principle of realism", which his master Freud had kept to counterbalance the "principle of pleasure".

Among some of those who mould opinion, the idea of objectivity is sometimes questioned. The attempt is no longer made to reach the facts but to describe

personal reactions. Sociological research — so useful in itself for those who wish to know states of minds — threatens to take the place of doctrinal and critical judgment. As can be seen, in all these tendencies we find the same hypertrophy of the Ego, of the subject. It is no longer a question of seeking or even esteeming the unity of truth but of recognizing and justifying differences of opinion among groups. A subsequent stage consists in demanding freedom for all opinions and all ways of acting, in the name of pluralism. Let us say incidentally that it will not be possible to overcome the present crisis of scepticism without a philosophical effort in the direction of realism and objectivity.

#### C) The I of the Christian and the divine You

It would be vain to hope that the faithful of today will completely escape the present scepticism. All the more so in that the latter is connected with an eternal heaviness, a resistance that man always puts up against divine truth. Called by his God, the Creator and Redeemer, man has always been tempted to retire within himself, to think what he wished and not what was — a *fortiori* "the One who is" — to will what he desired and not what he should do.

This is the underlying meaning of the story of Genesis, which starts with the break with God and ends with aggressiveness

against other men, whether it is a question of Cain killing Abel or the dispersion of the peoples at Babel. But God would not be defeated and he always recalled his people to monotheistic faith and brotherhood. In his Son, this story and this work of salvation was extended to all peoples, to whom grace and truth are brought: "**gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est**" (Jn 1, 17). Christ calls his apostles and through them, all those to whom they are sent, bringing them more life, light and charity than is in them. The religious "subject" does not disappear, for he must personally commit himself through real faith, hope and charity, but he has recourse, like all his brothers, to one mediator only: **Unus enim Deus, unus et mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus qui dedit redemptionem semetipsum pro omnibus** (1 Tim 2, 5-6).

Here unity is saved in God without, however, neglecting the subject's own characteristics, without ignoring the diversity of vocations, ministries and gifts as the Apostle of the Gentiles declares in 1 Cor 12, 1 ff. Not all pluralism, therefore, is ruled out: it could even be said that it is necessary: "**Si totum corpus oculus, ubi audius? Si totum auditus, ubi odoratus**" (1 Cor. 12, 17).

It will not be the same if it is sought to replace the pluralism based on the objectivity of the Faith to be believed and applied in life, with a pluralism in which everyone re-invents his faith and his morality more or less subjectively. It was this danger, a strangely contemporary one, that was pointed out in *Paterna cum benevolentia*: (n. 4): "What are we to say of a pluralism that considers faith and its expression not as a common and therefore ecclesial heritage but as an **individual rediscovery** of free criticism and free examination of God's word?" In fact, without the mediation of the magisterium of the Church to which the Apostles entrusted their own magisterium and which, consequently, teaches only 'what was transmitted', secure union with Christ through the Apostles, namely: 'those who transmit what they have themselves received,' is compromised. For this reason once perseverance in the doctrine transmitted by the Apostles is compromised it happens that, wishing, perhaps, to elude the difficulties of the mystery, formulas of illusory comprehensibility are sought which dissolve its real content; in this way **doctrines are constructed which do not adhere to the objectivity of the faith** or which are even contrary to it, and furthermore contain elements that contradict one another".

#### 4. PLURALITY OF PLURALISM

##### A) Pluralism of cohesion and pluralism of division

If an impression emerges from what we have just said, it is that the term "pluralism" must be understood in several meanings and that it is applied to very different fields, for which the value judgments must also be different. In the first place, it is necessary to stress the essential difference between a pluralism of concord or diversity and a pluralism of division and dissent. These terms appear in the Apostolic Exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* of 8 December 1974, not, certainly, as technical expressions, which would be out of place in this kind of document, but as very enlightening reference marks which theological work can and must utilize. I will quote only paragraph 4 of point VI: "The fact remains, however, that in the structure of the body of Christ there is a diversity of members and offices, and that this diversity leads to inevitable tensions. They can be met with even in the Saints, but not such as to kill concord .. to

destroy charity. How can we prevent them from degenerating into division? It is from that very diversity of persons and functions that the firm principle of ecclesial cohesion is derived".

It is easy to see in what these two attitudes differ. The pluralism that stresses diversities in the life of the Church and Christians, remains persuaded that Christian Revelation is the same for all and in all ages because it is centred on Christ: *Christus heri et hodie: ipse et in saecula* (Heb. 13, 8). It finds in the magisterium and pontifical authority a guarantee of the legitimacy of the pastoral adaptations which take into account the faith, morality and sacramental life common to all Christians (Mt 28, 18-20). That is why some people think that though the term "pluralism" was widely used from 1965 to 1970, when it was not yet ambiguous, it would now be better to use it less, with all the clarifications that are necessary, and to return more often to the language of "diversity" and "particularly" used by the Council<sup>13</sup>.

#### Essential distinction

The term "pluralism", in fact, is now taken by some people, as often as not, in the meaning of dissent. The essential difference

depends on the fact that the necessary unity in Christ, under the authority of the Hierarchy and the Magisterium, has disappeared,

<sup>13</sup> In the Vatican II text, alongside the pluralism of civil society mentioned above, the terms used when it is a question of the Church are rather *diversitas, varietas, multiplicitas, particularitas, peculiaritas*. Fr. de Lubac has recommended on several occasions a return to the vocabulary of the Council.

as can be seen from the following observations in *Paterna cum benevolentia*: "The process we have described (the obscuring of the role of the Church) takes on the form of a doctrinal dissent which claims to be sponsored by theological pluralism and which is not infrequently carried to the point of dogmatic relativism . . . The internal oppositions affecting the different sectors of ecclesial life, if they are stabilized in a state of dissent, lead to setting up against the one institution and community of salvation, a plurality of institutions or communities of dissent which are not in conformity with the nature of the Church"<sup>14</sup>. Already in 1971 Paul VI had asked the question: "Where is it headed, a certain indiscriminate doctrinal pluralism, arbitrary and centrifugal?"<sup>15</sup>.

Starting from this essential distinction, it can quite easily be seen how the problem of pluralism is raised in the different sectors of the life of the Church. A certain liturgical pluralism probably existed from the very first generation, for while the communities of Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch and Corinth certainly wished

to relive the Lord's Supper round the Apostles or their representatives, they did so in different languages and in different cultural environments which led to the difference of rites between East and West with a whole series of diversifications. We have perhaps forgotten this because, in the West, we are emerging from a time of fixity and uniformity.

But on the other hand we must not lose sight, under the pretext of creativeness and diversity, of the fact that there is a unitary structure of the Blessed Sacrament and that we cannot disregard the forms which the apostolic and post-apostolic generations gave it and which survive in the different rites. The Protestants themselves have kept numerous elements! Finally, ten years of creativeness have shown us that the faithful themselves do not appreciate change for the sake of change, diversity from one Sunday to another and from one parish to another. People always forget to speak of the "*sensus fidelium*" in this connection! Moreover, it is not in the field of the liturgy that the great difficulties of diversification are raised today<sup>16</sup>. They occur at the level

<sup>14</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4.

<sup>15</sup> General audience 21 July 1971.

<sup>16</sup> In the above-mentioned volume (n. 5) of the International Theological Commission there are numerous texts of the holy Father in favour of a pluralism of cohesion in the field of the liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and spirituality. They are summed up in the following sentence from *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4: "We also recognize the inestimable values that it (pluralism of cohesion) introduces in the field of Christian spirituality, ecclesial and religious institutions, as well as in the field of liturgical expressions and disciplinary norms: values which are found

of faith and theology, ecclesiology and culture. Let us study them in the aspect they have assumed recently.

**B) The problem of pluralism on the theological plane**

Two recent declarations of Paul VI (the Apostolic Exhortation of 8 December, the closing Address of the Synod on 26 October 1974), sum up well the official doctrine of the Magisterium in this connection. The Sovereign Pontiff recognizes the legitimacy of a pluralism of concord in theological research and in a more and more thorough investigation of the Christian mystery on condition that the unity of revealed datum, such as it was and is formulated by the Magisterium, be saved. On the other hand, he rejects a pluralism of dissent in the exposition of the Christian doctrine (theology in the widest sense) carried out by those who set themselves up as an anti-magisterium. Let us take a closer look at this.

The pluralism of concord is manifested in research work, which is evidently marked by the culture and personal characteristics of those who undertake it. In connection with this pluralism, the Pope declares: "We recognize pluralism of research and thought,

which explores and expounds dogma in different ways, but without eliminating its identical objective meaning, as having legitimate citizenship in the Church, as a natural component of catholicity; and a sign of cultural riches and of personal commitment on the part of those who belong to her"<sup>17</sup>.

In the last few years, the Sovereign Pontiff has often recalled the definitive character of "the doctrine sanctioned by pontifical and conciliar definitions"<sup>18</sup>, the "permanent up-to-dateness" of the Councils, and he specially mentioned Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451)<sup>19</sup>, Trent (1563), Vatican I (1871)<sup>20</sup>. But that does not mean that Christian thought has ground to a standstill and that, while taking into account what is definitively acquired, it is not possible to find presentations better suited to new cultures. It is in this sense that *Paterna cum benevolentia* sees a legitimate manifestation of pluralism of concord: "We admit, in fact," the Holy Father Paul VI continues, "that a balanced theological pluralism finds its foundation in the very mystery of Christ, the unfathomable riches of which (cf. Eph. 3, 8) go beyond the capacities of expression of all ages and all cultures. The

in this 'variety of local churches with one common aspiration (which) is particularly splendid evidence of the catholicity of the undivided Church'" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 23).

<sup>17</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Address to the Sacred College*, 23 December 1972.

<sup>19</sup> *Address after the Journey to Turkey*, 2 August 1967.

<sup>20</sup> *Address for the Centenary of the First Vatican Council*, 8 December 1969.

doctrine of the faith which is necessarily derived from this mystery — since, with regard to salvation, 'God's mystery is nothing but Christ' — calls for ever new investigations. As a matter of fact, the perspectives of the Word of God are so numerous, and the perspectives of the faithful who study it are so numerous, that convergence in the same faith is never exempt from personal particularities in the adherence of each one. However, the different stresses laid in the understanding of the same faith do not prejudice its essential content, for the latter finds its unity in common adherence to the magisterium of the church. This same magisterium as the proximate norm, determine the faith of all, and at the same time guarantees everyone against the subjective judgment of all divergent interpretations of the faith"<sup>21</sup>.

It is not a question, therefore, of blocking research or imposing undue uniformity: each theologian, in communion with the culture of his time and his people, has the mission of exploring further the unfathomable mysteries of Christ and of setting them forth in a way that is more and more

adapted to the different cultures. But this effort must not deform the message of Christ himself and transform it in such a way that theologians arrive at pluralism of dissent. This was the danger that the Sovereign Pontiff pointed out at the end of the synod. Speaking of "the necessity of finding a better expression of faith, corresponding to the racial, social and cultural environment". Paul VI added: "This is, certainly, a prerequisite for the authenticity and efficacy of evangelization. It would be dangerous, however, to speak of theologies diversified according to continents and cultures. The content of faith is either Catholic or it is not. All of us, moreover, have received the faith from an uninterrupted and constant tradition: Peter and Paul did not disguise it to adapt it to the ancient Jewish, Greek or Roman world, but they watched over its authenticity, over the truth of the one message, presented in the diversity of languages (Acts 2, 8)"<sup>22</sup>

Likewise unity based on Revelation and its authentic presentation by the Magisterium is endangered when certain theologians claim to submit the decisions of the Hierarchy to their own fa-

<sup>21</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4.

<sup>22</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Closing Address of the Synod*. 28 October 1974.

<sup>24</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 6.

vorable "reception"<sup>24</sup> or openly take up positions against them in the name of a theological plural-

ism of dissent which pretends to be a valid criterion, a "theological place" (*locus theologicus*)<sup>25</sup>.

### Unity endangered

#### C) Pluralism and ecclesiology

There has always been a certain ecclesial pluralism, for from the first generations the Judeo-Christian communities had features that distinguished them from the Hellenistic communities. At the present time, churches of Latin rite and Catholic churches of Oriental rite show differences in liturgy and canon law. Vatican II reaffirmed the legitimacy of a certain pluralism in these fields, but always in conformity with the directives that have been and may be given by the competent ecclesiastical authority. St. Paul spoke of the Church of the Thessalonians (1 Th 1, 1 and 2 Th 1, 1), of the Churches of Galatia (Gal 1, 2), the Church of God at Corinth (1 Cor 1, 2). But "the Church" also appears as one and universal; the word is used in the singular to indicate the group of local Churches established among the Jews and among the Gentiles. "This term Church in the universal sense," Mons. Cerfaux wrote "... has its roots in the past and looks towards the future. It re-

calls 'The Church of God' of the early community, and is thus linked up with the very first community of the Church (the Messianic assembly, symbolized in the desert Church), which St. Paul spoke of in his first epistle to the Corinthians. It looks towards the future, detaching the Christian people more from its local contingencies and promising a more marked idealization, as happened for the heavenly Jerusalem or the community of the Saints in the Apocalypse"<sup>26</sup>.

The awareness of unity has been asserted more and more in episcopal collegiality, in the ecumenical Councils but above all around the primacy of the Bishop of Rome. It was at these ecumenical Councils, at Nicaea and at Trent, that the Church strengthened her unity against the divisions which, alas, occurred.

Two dangers appear in this connection today. The stress on local particularisms, on the "little communities", on the demands of the Spirit, said to be opposed to structures, threatens to cause us

<sup>25</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 4: "This pluralism is sometimes considered as a legitimate *locus theologicus*, so as to permit the taking up of positions against the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff himself and the episcopal hierarchy, the only authoritative interpreters of the divine revelation contained in Sacred Tradition and in the Holy Scriptures."

<sup>26</sup> L. Cerfaux, *La théologie de l'Eglise suivant saint Paul*, Paris, 1965, page 253.

to lose sight of the unity of the *koinonia*. That is why Paul VI, in his address concluding the Synod, recalled that the Lord entrusted to the successor of Peter "the important, perennial, loving office of feeding his lambs and ewes, of strengthening his brethren, of being the foundation and sign of Church unity. His intervention, therefore, cannot be reduced merely to extraordinary circumstances. No: we say so trembling because of the responsibility that devolves upon us: he is and remains the ordinary Pastor of the whole flock.' Going on to recall the words of *Lumen Gentium* n. 22, 2, the Pope adds: "It is not a dialectic of powers that is at stake here: it is a question of a single desire, to correspond to God's will, with complete love, each with the contribution of the faithful accomplishment of his own office"<sup>27</sup>.

A second danger of false ecclesial pluralism is found at the level of non-Catholic ecumenism. In the last two or three years, this false ecumenism has considered that Christ's true Church is made up of the federation of the different Christian denominations which are all put on the same footing. Taking as a pretext certain expressions of Vatican II, which have been misinterpreted, these Christian denominations are said to have ministries that are in practice as valid as the apos-

tolic structures of the traditional ministry; episcopate, priesthood, diaconate. It has even been said that the infallibility of the Church could not be realized without the agreement of the communities of the 16th century Reformation. It is attempts of this kind which undermine from the inside the credibility of the Church of Christ<sup>28</sup> and question its unique and universal role, contrast the community of the disciples of Jesus with the present-day Church and contest the authority of Pastors. Referring once more to Vatican II, Paul VI reaffirms that "this Church, constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 8)<sup>29</sup>.

#### D) Pluralism and culture

Cultural pluralism is perhaps the one that concerns most Christians today. And yet, in principle, it could be said that the cultural sector is the one in which Christian pluralism is most at ease. Everything that is human is ours: these words of Terence were repeated by Paul VI in his famous address on pluralism delivered on 14 May 1969. Divine grace assumes human nature in all its geographical

<sup>27</sup> Address on 26 October 1974.

<sup>28</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *Paterna cum benevolentia*, n. 3.



diversity and in all its historical dimensions. Then, too, even if there is a constant exchange between faith and the various cultures (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 42, 43, 44), we are here in the field of

the "rightful autonomy of earthly affairs" (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 36) and of the distinction between faith and reason (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 59).

### Young churches

When we examine this problem concretely, however, as was often done at the 1974 Synod, we realize that it raises great difficulties. In spite of the great efforts made in the last few years, concurrently with the irreversible movement of decolonization, one gets the impression that the young Churches of the Third World feel the need to stress their independence with regard to the Western cultures which, willy-nilly, the first evangelizers brought with them. Whereas in the West cultural movements often take the form of a break with the past, the claims of the Third World (as *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 56 had already noted with an intuition to which not enough attention has been given, perhaps) are formulated in continuity with an "ancestral wisdom" which they feel is threatened. Hence the demand for an "authenticity" which seems legitimate in itself even if some people are tempted to speak of ingratitude.

The new Christian communities, faced with faithfulness both to the authenticity of their ancestral traditions and to the identity and singularity of Christianity, are re-

living the great hours experienced by early Christianity when it came into contact with Greek and Latin cultures in the 2nd century. The key to this work of adaptation is contained in a few instructions, also indicated by *Gaudium et Spes* (n.58): "to enter into communion with various cultural modes, make fruitful, as it were from within, the spiritual qualities and gifts of every people and every age" but also "to combat and remove the errors and evils resulting from sinful allurements". It is necessary, in fact, to beware of a two-fold exaggeration. Formerly the colonizing peoples often treated with supreme and paternalistic contempt the cultural values of the peoples in tutelage, or more exactly they often ignored them with astonishing ingenuousness. Today when these values are again put forward and when the traces of westernization are disappearing, one after the other, we must keep our heads and not consider all ancestral traditions positive and acceptable. The most obvious example that comes to mind, and which was mentioned several times at the Synod, is polygamy.

**Exclusive privilege**

But here again, the young Churches are merely repeating the process lived in the past by the churches of the Mediterranean world. Mention is often made of the remarks of apologists such as Tertullian and the author of *The Letter to Diognetus* which show the desire of their co-religionists not to conform with Jewish segregation in order to accept fully the ways of life of their environment, in politics, in social relations and in commerce. But it is forgotten, perhaps, that at the same time these Christians were aware of and full of wonder at, the specificity of the Christian vocation and the divine and human riches that Christ had offered them, not as an exclusive privilege but to be given to everyone. They know very well that their Christian vocation prevented them from accepting all the customs of their environment. Thus they undertook, for example, a campaign to arouse public

opinion against infanticide and abortion<sup>30</sup>.

Ontologically, in Christ, perfectly God and perfectly man, the divine and the human harmonize. In Christians, who know they are under "the perpetual threat" of sin (GS n. 58, 4), on the psychological plane, the human sometimes appears as an obstacle to divinization which grace and asceticism must overcome. But this effort does not aim at destroying the human, it seeks to "perfect and restore (it) in Christ" according to the expression of Ephesians 1, 10, repeated by *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 58, 4. It is the same for the different aspects of the various cultures. Those which cannot be reconciled with Christ will be abandoned with more or less regret. Cultural pluralism will seem to suffer as a result but actually it will survive in a purified form and will find a new meaning in the Lord and in the men who live by Him.

<sup>30</sup> *S. Congregatio pro Doctrina Fidei, Declaratio de Abortu procurato*, 1974, notae 6, 7, 8, 9.

**TWO NEW SAINTS**

Pope Paul VI has proclaimed two new saints of the Catholic Church. These are St. John Baptist of the Conception, a writer, mystic and reformer of the Trinitarian Order of the 10th century, and St. Vicenta Maria, founder of a congregation of the last century. Both of them are Spaniards.

At the long canonization ceremonies held May 25 in St. Peter's Basilica, a group of Spanish women presented the Pope with the traditional gifts of canonization — two jars of wine, two pieces of bread, two cages with birds and a bunch of flowers.

## **APOSTOLIC HONOR**

*Homily delivered on the occasion of the conferment of the  
Pallium on Archbishop Sin*

by

**Bishop Cirilo Almario, Jr**

A year ago, on this very date, we gathered in this magnificent cathedral, to witness the installation of the Most Rev. Jaime L. Sin, as Archbishop of Manila, succeeding the late Rufino J. Cardinal Santos. The splendor of the liturgical ceremonies, the sweetness of the liturgical music, the inspiring address delivered by the Archbishop himself, all are still very clear and vivid in our minds, as they picture to us the joy of the day, when the People of God in the Archdiocese of Manila, received their new Pastor and Father.

Today, we gather once more in this sacred place, for another liturgical ceremony — the solemn imposition of the “pallium” on the Archbishop of Manila — a ceremony, less important perhaps than last year’s installation, but no less meaningful and symbolic. For indeed, the imposition of the sacred “pallium” is but an expression of a reality already received and actually being exercised.

### **What a “Pallium” Is**

My dear friends: what is a pallium? It is a plain band of cloth, which is worn on the shoulders and breast in the form of an oval. It is worn by the Pope himself on certain occasion, and is sent to patriarchs, primates, archbishops, and in some very rare cases, even to bishops.

As the custom is, on the morning of January 21, each year, feast of St. Agnes, two lambs are brought to the church in Rome, bearing the name of the Saint. There they are consigned to the Nuns in charge. When the lambs are shorn, the wool is woven by the Nuns into “pallia”. These are then sent to the tomb of St. Peter, and laid there for one night on the eve of his feast. Later, they are sent to newly installed Archbishops throughout the world.

### A Symbol of True Pastorship

The symbolism is very clear. The Pallium is a symbol of true pastorship. It means that the recipient, with the fullness of his episcopal office, and in communion with the Holy Father, in Rome, is a true shepherd of souls. And so, like the divine Shepherd of the Gospel, he must seek his sheep and even lay down his life for them. He cannot simply glory in the splendor of his power and dignity, but must come down to the level of his flock whom he must serve, in much the same way, as Christ, during His time, went about doing good.

### A Sign of Responsibility

But more than a mere insignia of true pastorship, the "pallium" is a sign of responsibility. It should remind the recipient of his commitments to Christ and to his flock.

In a world such as ours, in which christianity is being assailed as meaningless and irrelevant, it is the responsibility of the shepherd of souls, to be there in the midst of his flocks, as a bulwark of faith. He must be able to show them that there is really nothing wrong with Christianity. He must be able to convince them that if christianity seems to fall, it is because there are those who simply make a caricature of it, by reducing it to a mere complex of moral rules and religious rites without relating them to one's personal and social life. He must be able to point out to them that if christianity appears to be irrelevant, it is because there are those who allow it to be based on mere superficialities, like the bowing of the head, the kissing of statues and the like. That if christianity is found to be meaningless, it is because of those who make it exclusively **man-centered**, whereas in reality and in truth, it must be above all, **God-centered**. As a shepherd of souls, the bishop has the responsibility to be a promoter of faith to his flock, giving meaning and purpose to their life on earth, instilling in them the principles that must guide their christian living.

The pallium is also a sign of responsibility in the moral order. Amidst world-wide laxity of morals, amidst the new sexual freedom, reflected in our movies and literature, as well as in actual life, amidst the social inequalities and injustices that we witness around us, the shepherd of souls must be able to provide the guidelines and patterns of christian behavior as expounded in the ten commandments, in the beatitudes and in the sermon on the mount. It is his responsibility too to work for justice, for human development and for the social amelioration of his people.

### **An Appeal**

My dear friends: as we felicitate the Archbishop of Manila for the honor conferred on him by the Holy Father let us not lose sight of the heavy responsibility placed on his shoulders. Alone he is nothing; with you, he is everything. With him, be true apostles of christianity, and witnesses of your faith. Under him, be able to relate the principles of your faith to your actual life and show to the world that there is a christian way of living one's life on earth, that each one must be able to maintain his christian sense of values in his approach to the things of the world.

Then and only then can you help make the sacred "pallium" which the Archbishop will receive, less burdensome and easier to carry, as he guides you along the path of goodness and righteousness.

### **Conclusion**

May I close with this short story: There was once a painter who wanted to paint the most beautiful thing in the world. And not knowing what he could paint, he went about asking. He met a priest and asked him: "Father, what for you is the most beautiful thing I can paint?" And the priest answered: "Faith, because as the Bible says: with faith, you can even move mountains". But then the painter said to himself: "How can I paint faith?" So he went further and met a bride. And he asked her: "What for you is the most beautiful thing in the world I can paint?". And she answered: "Love, because as they say, love conquers all". But again, the painter thought to himself: "How can I paint love?" And so he moved further on, and then met a soldier. And he asked: "What for you is the most beautiful thing in the world, I can paint?" And the answered: "Peace, because I have never known peace in my lifetime." But again the painter said to himself: "How can I paint peace". So, confused, he returned home, and as soon as he opened the door of his house, his wife and children met him, and he saw faith in the eyes of the children, he saw love in the eyes of his wife and he saw peace, reigning inside the house. So he decided to paint the most beautiful thing in the world for him: his own home, a christian home.

My dear friends: let us go a step further than that painter. In the name of the Archbishop of Manila, I invite you all to paint with him, in the beautiful Archdiocese of Manila, not only a christian home, but a truly christian community, where true faith, true love and true peace reign supreme.

## **BIBLE STUDY**

# **PROJECTION OR NULLIFICATION OF THE EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES IN HISTORY**

**by Franz Mussner\***

Principles are "guiding-ideas" that have the purpose of giving order to the thought and action of man and humanity. For this reason principles are also "regulating ideas", "axioms" or "maxims". The "evangelical principles" are principles that have been brought into the world by the Gospel. The "evangelical principles" have, in the world and its history, the function of "yeast" which must leaven the whole dough (cf. Mt 13, 33). This is the "founder's will. Three "guiding-ideas" in particular are stressed in the Gospel: Brotherhood, Love, Freedom. By the "Gospel" is meant here not only the four canonical gospels, but the whole of the New Testament.

### *First Principle: Brotherhood*

Jesus says to his disciples: "You are all brothers" (Mt 23, 5). It is particularly the evangelist Matthew who consistently sees in the community of Jesus a "community of brothers". "Church" is for him a community of brothers, in relationship, of course, with Jesus and his Father. Jesus himself is included in this community of brothers (cf. Mt 12, 50 and 28, 10) and this community is understood in a universal sense (25, 40, 45). The brotherhood of the disciples is extended to the brotherhood of all men. In the passage that deals with "the true kinsmen of Jesus" (Mt 12, 46-50), by "brothers" are understood not blood relations, but those who do God's will. With this Jesus breaks "clan particularism" and understands "brotherhood" in a universal sense. The consequences that result for the community are shown in Mt 18, 15-35. The passage deals with the fundamental organization of the "Kingdom of God", with the behaviour of brothers to one another. The fundamental demand is reconciliation and constant availability for comprehension: in this way peace is preserved in the community. Also the concepts of "servant", "serve", are associated with the concept of "brotherhood". "Brothers" must "serve one another" (cf. 23, 11). In the Synoptic tradition a universalizing tendency is seen in this connection, too, especially in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10, 29-37). What the parable offers as Jesus' teaching on one's "neighbour" is as follows: man's "neighbour" is not his compatriot

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\* Professor of Biblical Theology at the University of Regensburg.

or even his co-religionist — the Jews in Jesus' time did not consider the Samaritans compatriots or co-religionists. Your "neighbour" is rather anyone you meet in life. For Jesus it is not ties of blood, origin, race, culture, "party", "denomination", which make the other my neighbour, but rather loving and helpful dedication to the other. The conception of "neighbour" in Jesus' teaching is something that crosses the whole of mankind with all its barriers and its natural and artificial particularisms and continually overcomes them. In this way Jesus combats the permanent tendency to define and delimit a priori the circle of those who are "our neighbours". The ideologists of this world are continually proclaiming doctrines about "our neighbours" which are in clear contrast with the doctrine of Jesus. He who regulates his feeling and his action in accordance with the teaching of Jesus, builds up justice in the world.

According to the apostle Paul, Christ is "the eldest of many brothers" (Rom 8, 29; cf. also Heb 2, 11). Christ is the "eldest" not only as the risen Christ, but also as the crucified Christ. As such he is in solidarity with all those who are crucified, that is, with all the suffering, with all those who groan, who are despised but who at the same time hope, whose hope will be carried out in the resurrection of the dead. In this way the concept of brotherhood remains completely fixed to Christ, whose spirit is in us and invokes the "Father!" in us. The great brotherhood of men is not, however, something which is to come, a pure utopia of the future. There already exists one who unites men in brotherhood, the "second" or "last Adam" (1 Cor 15, 45, 47). As (second or last) Adam, Christ is the brother of all. "In this way there springs from Christ, together with a new way of being man, also a new human brotherhood, which exceeds and replaces the old one" (J. Ratzinger). All men will become brothers in Christ; they must already be brothers in the Christian community, if the latter wishes to be a sign in the world.

It is in this context that Paul can announce that for those who, through baptism, are "in Christ", the old distinctions — which, nevertheless, strongly characterize this period of history — such as "Jews", "Greeks", "slaves", "freemen", have no longer any value, but only "a new creation" (cf. Gal 6, 15; 1 Cor 12, 13; Col 3, 11). Here, too, the eschatological future shows itself as a real sign in the world. The differences that were so important before, that divided men into many different groups and beings according to nationality, social and sexual factors, are already outdated and will disappear definitively in the new creation. Then all men will be brothers. The concept of the brotherhood of all is one of those principles that were brought into the world by the Gospel.

*Second Principle: Love*

The principle of **love** is indissolubly connected with that of brotherhood. Where there is brotherhood there must be mutual love, and love on its side nourishes brotherhood. In the understanding of the New Testament love is not enlightened philanthropy, but imitation of God's love for men: "Let us love one another since love comes from God"; "we are to love, then, because he loved us first" (1 John 4, 7, 19). Love of God and love of one's neighbour are the essence of the whole law (Mk 12, 28-31). The commandment to love one's neighbour (Lev 19, 18) is compared by Jesus to the commandment to love God (Mt 22, 39). God's love for men is universal love which embraces the good and the bad, the just and the unjust (Mt 5, 45); consequently also our love for our neighbour cannot exclude anyone, but must embrace everyone. He who loves his friends only, is no different from "sinners" (Lk 6, 32 f.). Jesus puts reconciliation above religious duties (Mt. 5 23, f), love of one's neighbour above worship (9, 13; 12, 7) and the commandment of the sabbath (Mk 3, 1-6; Lk 13, 10-17). Love is the sign by which the true Christian is recognized (Jn 13, 35). All the commandments are summed up in the commandment to love one's neighbour (Rom 13, 8; Gal 5, 13). Love is therefore superior to all charisms (1 Cor 13, 1); what is more, charisms are of no use if they are not accompanied by love (13, 2 f). In the letter of St. James, the command to love one's neighbour is the "supreme law" (2, 8); so that even faith without works of love is dead (2, 26) and does not possess any force of justification. In this James is in full agreement with Paul, according to whom faith must be active through love (Gal 5, 6). For the New Testament love is the evangelical principle par excellence.

*Third Principle: Freedom*

The third evangelical principle that we wish to name here is the principle of **freedom**. The Gospel is a call to freedom. This was clearly shown by the apostle Paul particularly. "When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free" (Gal 5, 1). This clear sentence of the Apostle takes on the role of a programme for man: the salvific work of liberation has as its aim the freedom of man and of the whole creation (cf. Room 8, 21). Liberation and freedom are the ultimate purpose of the whole of salvation. For the Apostle, Christ is the great liberator.

From what did Christ liberate us? The answer that emerges from Pauline theology as a whole is the following: Christ frees us



from the law as the way to salvation. The law (and for Paul, law does not comprise only the ritual practices of the Torah) which, for Old Testament, is power of Life, becomes for Paul practically power of death (Rom 7, 10; Gal 3, 12); it becomes "the power of sin" (1 Cor 15, 56). Man living "in the flesh" was too weak to carry out the severe commands of the law, so that, through the law, he did not reach the space of freedom, but fell into the trap of the power of sin and death. By "law" Paul understands in the first place, of course, the Torah and its rabbinical explanations. But as the letter to the Galatians shows, it applies also to "slavery to the elemental principles" of the pagans (Gal 4, 3, 9). If the Jew expects salvation from service of the Law, the pagan expects it from "service of the elements". For Paul, on the contrary, the eschatological salvation of man and the world comes only from faith in the crucified and risen Christ, the grace of God become man: "God's justice that was made known through the Law has now been revealed outside the Law... through faith to everyone" (Rom 3, 21 f).

Does this doctrine of the Apostle aim at a world completely free from every power? No. Because the believer receives "another" Lord, "him who rose from the dead to make us productive for God" (Rom 7, 4). This "new" Lord of the world brings to the world with his work of liberation the principles of brotherhood and love, because his dominion is the rule of love. We are still "slaves", it is true, but "slaves" serving in the new being of the Spirit, not in the old one of the letter (Rom 7, 6). In this way the relationships of power are completely changed (cf. also Rom 6, 22).

Christ also frees from the deadly power of **sin**. Sin is for the Apostle a sovereign power (cf., for example, Rom 7, 11). Furthermore there is, for the Apostle, an indissoluble link between sin and law. Because it was just through the law that sin became manifest and recognizable in its essence (Rom 7, 7, 13). Sin is what, in the last analysis, evil carries out in man (Rom. 7, 18-20). Sin makes man a "prisoner" against his best intentions and in spite of his goodwill (Rom 7, 23). To express it in modern terms, owing to the power of sin man falls "into alienation". Only through liberation from sin can man become himself again. His dignity as a person is fully restored at the same time. For freedom is part of being a person in the full sense.

Christ also frees us from **death** as the eschatological power of evil. "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Rom 7, 9 f). The law, sin and death are, therefore, indissolubly connected. The death of which he speaks is "real" death, definitive separation from communion with God. But this death shows its terrible

essence also in physical death. Paul, of course, is well aware that our body is still subject to physical death but he also knows the new being in Christ who survives earthly death and who is thus in contrast with eternal death.

According to Rom 8, 21, creation will one day be "freed from its bondage to decay, to enjoy the glorious freedom of the children of God". The future liberation of the whole of creation which is preannounced by the Apostle here, has a double purpose: a negative one: "liberation" from the general submission to death, and a positive one: "liberation" for that freedom which in the Lord's Parousia will appear as "the glory of the children of God" after their resurrection from the dead. "With this there comes hope, not only for the believer, but for the whole of creation. For, since Adam's fall, the world lacks nothing but eschatological freedom, which alone can signify salvation for it too" (E. Käsemann). The world aims at freedom, which must not, of course, be confused with autonomy. Paul does not individualize salvation, as gnosticism once did and as existentialism does again.

The freedom for which Christ freed us is against individualism also because, as Paul teaches, it is liberation through love: "do not at this freedom give a foothold to the flesh. Serve one another, rather, in works of love" (Gal 5, 13). The concepts "the flesh" and "love" characterize two opposed worlds. While love is expressed in service of man, the flesh is expressed as a selfish withdrawal and narcissistic pursuit. Only he who loves is really free, because he is free of himself.

What Paul presents as a theological theory, had already been shown previously in the "practice" of Jesus. His acceptance of sinners, his meals with them, his miracles, are visible signs of the Kingdom of God, which is already making its appearance with him. In these signs the salvation that appears with the Kingdom of God is manifested. But this salvation is essentially liberation: liberation from the chains of sin, liberation from the shackles of obsession, disease and death. Also the clear criticism of concrete legalistic life prepared the way for the theology of Paul's law; it, too, aims at freedom. Jesus' radical reduction of the laws of the Torah to a few principles which are connected with the commandment to love God and one's neighbour, leaves a new space for freedom, in which the future appears.

### *Have the principles been effective?*

Three great "evangelical principles" connected with one another are clearly seen: Brotherhood (justice), love and freedom. Now the question we wish to ask is: how effective have these principles been in the

Church and in the world? Have they been effective in the history of mankind after Jesus and Paul, or not? Many sceptics and critics of our time would deny that they have had a great influence in history. Would it not be true that the three principles of the French revolution, "freedom, equality, brotherhood" have had far more effect on history than the three fundamental principles of the Gospel? But is it really true? Or should it be stated that the principles expressed by the French revolution could never have been expressed in this way without the Gospel and knowledge of its three fundamental principles?

It is true that in the thought of the ancient Greeks there was present a preparation for the Gospel, a "*praeparatio evangelica*", as the Fathers of the Church themselves realized, even as regards the idea of freedom. But did the Greeks know that freedom and the future, and freedom and the salvation of the world, are closely connected. And if, according to Hegel, "the history of the world... is progress in consciousness of freedom", he himself expressly states, on the other hand, that it was only through Christianity that this consciousness of freedom was awakened in the world. With the French revolution the three evangelical principles became political principles, which subsequently had an enormous influence on history, particularly through Marxism. But in this way the evangelical principles of brotherhood (justice), love and freedom have been drained of their meaning. As a matter of fact they have been torn out of their "context", to which the reality of "God" belongs above all, and put in another context, that of the (permanent) revolution of the secularized world. What is lost particularly in this new context is love, and without it the world becomes unbearable, history becomes a "butcher's bench."

To what extent is the Church guilty for the way things have turned out? The Church cannot avoid this question and in this case, too, must be ready for the continual conversion demanded by Jesus. Her task is to make ever greater efforts in theory and in practice so the love will be continually recognized as the fundamental principle in human reality, without which brotherhood and freedom are, in the long run, impossible in the world. The Church must see to it that her voice is listened to in a world in which the love of many seems to be growing cold (cf. Mt 24, 12). Only love makes the world a human world! The Church can give clear signs and these signs must be determined by imitation of Jesus. These signs must be concrete ones and so it is a good thing, in conclusion, to mention a name which has become an example of what the Church can and must do in the world today: Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Her exemplary work shows that the evangelical principles of brotherhood, love and freedom can produce a great effect even in the world of today and can still leave their mark on history.

# COMMUNICATION

## ON "BIBLIYA AT BUHAY"

Dear Father:

We, the Bible study group of San Sebastian Parish would like to forward to you a problem we encountered during one of our study hours. In a broadcast of the radio program "Bibliya at Buhay"\* regarding the gospel on the Transfiguration of Jesus on the Mount (Mt. 17-1-9), the group had a long discussion on the *cause* or *reason* why the three apostles (Peter, James and John) got afraid. Actually during the discussion our group was divided into two factions: one, saying that the disciples lacked a strong faith and so feared the "sufferings of Christ"; another, telling us that the disciples were sinful and so they feared to see the light coming from God. After hearing both sides, I gave my own view basing it on the very text and other explanations.

To clear up all doubts our study group wishes to seek your enlightenment and commentary on this particular problem. May we hear from you, Father. Moreover, if there is any information and suggestion on our regular Bible study hour that you wish to give us, we will appreciate it very much. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely in Christ,

(Sgd.) Rev. Fr. Henry Gueco

Bible Study Center, San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac, Tarlac.

Dear Father Gueco:

The fear of the disciples is mentioned not only because it occurred historically, but because it has symbolic value. It symbolizes man's encounter with God revealing himself in a strictly supernatural revelation. If we were to give an equivalent to Matthew's phrase, "overcome with fear", scholastics would say: they realized they were recipients of a strictly supernatural revelation. Biblical authors very often mention fear as man's reaction to a strictly supernatural revelation. For example, Moses was "afraid to look at God" when He revealed Himself at Sinai (Exodus 3:6); the first witnesses to the Resurrection were "terrified", "in a state of alarm and fright" (Luke 24:5,37), and had to be reassured not to be afraid (Matthew 28:10; March 16:6).

May I point out that the story of the transfiguration is read not only on the Second Sunday of Lent (February 23, 1975) but also on August 6 (this year the text of Luke 9:28b-36 is used). Best wishes to you and your study group.

Sincerely,

Fr. Efren Rivera, O.P.

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\* A radio program in Filipino language which aims to help priests prepare their Sunday homilies and to give guidance to parish bible study groups. Produced by the Catholic Bible Center in cooperation with the UST HOUR and *Radio Veritas* (860 KHZ). Aired every *Friday 7:30 p.m.*

# HERE AND THERE

## ARCHBISHOP UPHOLDS SUSPENSION OF CURSILLOS

Archbishop Jaime L. Sin of Manila, a few days after his arrival from abroad, declared that no cursillo classes in Greater Manila and the province of Rizal will be held until abuses in the cursillo movement are corrected and "impurities" eliminated.

The order suspending the Cursillos was issued by Auxiliary Bishop Amado H. Paulino while Archbishop Sin was on a pilgrimage to Rome.

At the same time, the Archbishop assured opponents of the suspension order that he, too, loves the cursillo very much and will allow resumption of its classes as soon as the movement is rid of abuses.

The suspension order said among other things that no cursillo class may be held starting July 1 and that all permissions previously given "are abrogated." It also warned recalcitrants that they would be subject to "administra-

tive sanctions" should they defy the order.

The archdiocese of Lipa and the diocese of Malolos followed suit in declaring a moratorium on the cursillo. The vicariate of Mt. Province with the episcopal seat in Baguio had already stopped the "mass production" of cursillistas as early as 1970.

The suspension order, Msgr. Paulino said, was strongly recommended by the Manila archdiocesan council composed of 15 priests of whom four are auxiliary bishops and the rest are cursillo directors themselves.

There are well-founded reports that many cursillo houses had been set up without due church permission and that commercialization had polluted the turnout of cursillistas. These accounted for the "mass production" of undeserving cursillistas who had given a bad image to the movement.

## ROSARY MOVEMENT

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, internationally known religious writer and lecturer, will be the main speaker at a mass rally on the rosary scheduled for 7 p.m., July 10, at the Araneta Coliseum. Sheen's talk will be part of a nationwide program initiated by Archbishop Jaime L. Sin for a renewal of faith through recitation

of the rosary. Pope Paul VI gave his papal blessing to the rally in a special audience granted Msgr. Sin in Rome three weeks ago. "The Philippines is the salvation of Asia," the Pope said, "and this rally for the rosary will be a powerful instrument in bringing about peace in that part of the world."

## FAMOUS CHURCHMEN PASS AWAY

Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty, former Archbishop of Esztergom, Primate of Hungary died May 6 in Vienna, at the age of 93. Pope Paul VI paid tribute to him during his general audience on May 7. He said: "An outstanding figure, as a priest and as a pastor, was Cardinal Mindszenty!" He also pointed out that Cardinal Mindszenty "was, and will certainly continue to be, a sign of contradiction, as he was the object of veneration and of violent attacks..." The Pope also expressed his condolences in letters addressed to Card. Luigi Traglia, Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, and to Cardinal Koenig of Vienna. The Pope first met Cardinal Mindszenty in September 1971 in Rome. Previous to the meeting the Cardinal spent 8 years in a Hungarian prison and 15 years of sanctuary at the U.S. diplomatic mission in Budapest.

Cardinal Charles Journet, outstanding Swiss theologian, died in Fribourg, Switzerland, on April 15, at the age of 84. His books, which included *The Church of the Incarnate Word*, *Grace and Introduction Theology*, were frequently used by the Pope for reference. In his early studies he was guided by Dominican teachers and he eventually became a professor of dogma at Fribourg at the age of 33.

Cardinal Lorenz Jaeger, once the forerunner of Cardinal Bea in ecumenism and later his collaborator, died at his home in Paderborn, West Germany, on April, age 83. He anticipated the Se-

cond Vatican Council in convening meetings of Catholic and Protestant theologians and founded an institute for ecumenical studies. He urged Pope John XXIII in March 1960 to use his papal authority to promote ecumenical relations. He was made a Cardinal in 1965.

Father Josef Andreas Jungmann, S.J. liturgist, catechist and scholar, died in Innsbruck, Austria on January 26. He was 85 years old. He was a lecturer at Innsbruck University in 1925 and professor of pastoral theology there in 1934. He revolutionized catechetics when in 1936 he boldly challenged seminary theology as incapable of conveying the Gospel message in all its simplicity and directness. He called for a *Kerygmatic Theology*—a historical and Christ-centered theology that would nourish the faith. Such a theology was quite distinct from the overspeculative, defensive and polemical theology of the 1930s. In 1939 he worked on his monumental book, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*. Today this two-volume work remains the most authoritative and complete work on the history and growth of the liturgy of the Roman Mass. Its influence was strong among those who initiated the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council. A group of prominent liturgists and liturgical students gathered at the Catholic University of America on February 28 to honor Father Jungmann and acknowledge his outstanding contributions to catechetics and liturgy.

# HOMILETICS

## I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES

by

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

### TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(Sept. 7, 1975)

**First Reading:** Ezekiel 33:7-9

**Second Reading:** Romans 13:9-10

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 18:15-20

**A. First Reading.** A prophet is God's mouthpiece (still more concrete in Hebrew: God's mouth), interpreting the mind and will of God for his People. If Ezekiel acquits himself well of his charge, he will not be made responsible for what befalls those who do not listen to him. But if he fails in his duty in declaring what is evil in God's sight and what leads to (spiritual) ruin, he will be made responsible.

**B. Gospel Reading.** The author has woven together several sayings as parts of a larger discourse on the attitudes and conduct of the members of the believing community, especially its leaders. The first saying is on fraternal forgiveness (v. 15). Since several of our earliest manuscripts omit "against you", it is possible that the original saying was a further application of the preceding parable of the straying sheep. Yet, the latest translations made from the original Greek keep the words "against you" and thus make the offense a personal one (see Luke 17:3). At any rate, the main thrust is mutual love in the community. Attached to v. 15 are further applications (vv. 16-17) made by the Early Church in meeting certain situations. These concern public correction, which if refused, is followed by exclusion from the community. These verses do not fit in the original milieu of Jesus and are an interpretation of second level, that is, of the Early Church's deeper understanding and application of the words of Jesus. V. 18 declares that the power

and authority given by Christ to the believing community is that which Peter exercises in his own person (Mt. 16:18), thus giving the basis for v. 17. Mention of the community brings in another saying (vv. 19-20) treating of the efficacy of its prayer, not only as a whole but also in smaller groups. The reason for its efficacy is the all-powerful presence of Jesus who is our mediator with the Father.

**C. Second Reading.** True brotherly love is the epitome of all the commandments ruling our conduct towards our fellowmen, because he who truly loves will not wish to do any least harm to anyone. (Love of God is not in Paul's perspective here, because all his examples are from the second part of the decalogue, and hence there is no contradiction to Mt. 22:17).

## FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

(Sept. 14, 1975)

**First Reading:** Numbers 21:4-9

**Second Reading:** Philipians 2:6-11

**Gospel Reading:** John 3:13-17

**A. First Reading.** In the book of Numbers, Yahweh is seen in the midst of his People as it wandered many years in the wilderness, guiding and protecting it, but also warning and chastising it severely, in order that Israel learn to be totally committed to his all-wise designs. One such chastisement was that of poisonous snakes, sent by the Lord as punishment for Israel's constant complaining and lack of faith. They are called "fiery" because their bite had an intense burning effect and was fatal. The incident is intended to bring out Yahweh's omnipotence, since the means prescribed for healing the fatal bite (a bronze serpent) were entirely inadequate for the purpose. In fact, the text suggests that it was faith in Yahweh who had Moses set up the bronze serpent, that brought recovery to those who looked upon it. Never again should Israel doubt his power and care. He is Israel's Savior.

**B. Gospel Reading.** These verses follow upon the discussion of Jesus with Nicodemus concerning the rebirth from God. The divine origin of Jesus who "came down" by entering into our very race and becoming one of us is the guarantee that he speaks authoritatively on things divine. He will bring about man's rebirth but first he must be "lifted up" (John's theological term with double significance), that is, exalted on the Cross and exalted in glory.



Then he will bestow life that never ends on all who accept him (believe in him). As the (ugly) bronze serpent was God's chosen means of deliverance for all who looked upon it with faith in Yahweh, so the Crucified Son of God is God's chosen means of salvation to all who accept him as such (see 1 Cor. 1:21-23), even though a crucified man is to mere human eyes anything but a sign of salvation. Through his being "lifted up" in death and glory, man is lifted up from death to life. V. 16 gives the quintessence of the Christian faith in capsule form: God's incredible love for man prompted him to give (again a term of double significance) the very best he had: his only Son, and he gave him even up to death, that man might obtain life. God is a God of love, a Saving God. But he does not save us without ourselves. The one thing required of man is to believe in this love, that is, to accept God's plan in the Paschal Mystery of his Son, and live it. Refusal spells man's own condemnation.

**C. Second Reading.** A hymn of superb depth and beauty, either composed by Paul himself or taken from an early Christian repertoire and inserted here by Paul as a trump card to bring home his point of self-effacement mentioned in vv. 3-4, the motivation for which is none other than the stupendous example of the Son of God in his grandiose act of self-abasement. The hymn consists of two strophes, vv. 6-8 giving the downward movement from the heights of divinity to the humiliation of death on the cross. Vv. 9-11 give the upward movement from the depths of the cross to the heights of divinity, with the Sacred Humanity now included. The symmetry is inescapable. It is also a good example of "inclusion" (v. 6 and v. 11 are the two similar end-terms). In becoming man, Jesus did not grasp at or insist on the divine honors and protocol which were his by right, but "emptied" himself. The Greek word (*kenoo*) is always used by Paul in the figurative sense of making no account of oneself, forgoing something which one could claim. On account of this willing obedience during his entire life and total kenosis even unto death on the cross, God exalts him on high, (The Jerusalem Bible leaves out the causal "because of this" or "therefore" which is very meaningful here since the exaltation is the reward). The exaltation includes the homage and adoration (symbolized by bending the knee) of the entire universe, and the universal acknowledgement that Jesus is Lord (that is Yahweh), entering into that glory which was his by right and is now his by conquest.

**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

(Sept. 21, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 55:6-9**Second Reading:** Philippians 1:20a-24, 27b**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 20:1-16a

**A. First Reading.** The passage is taken from the last chapter of Deutero-Isaiah (ch. 40-55) written in Babylonian exile by an unknown prophet in the spirit and along the lines of the great Isaiah. His chief aim is to encourage the exiles in their imminent deliverance and to prepare them for return to the homeland. These verses are a call to turn with the whole heart to the Lord, no matter what the past may have been, and discover the loving generosity of Yahweh. Though he is a mighty transcendent God, he is always near to little man, provided he recognizes his sinfulness and calls on God in his need. Man must not judge God's thoughts by his own puny thoughts, for God's ways are not man's ways.

**B. Gospel Reading.** Apart from all allegorical interpretation of details (such as the meaning of the hours, the wages, the order of payment, etc.), the meaning of the parable as such pertains to the call to participate in the Kingdom of God which in all respects is a free gift of God, and it does not affect one's standing in God's sight if this call is received earlier or later. Whether the "earlier or later" refers to the (earlier) call of the Jews over against the (later) call of the Gentiles (the pagan nations), or to the (earlier) call of the Apostles over the later disciples (so that the former may in no way consider themselves more important) is not certain. Both can be intended according to the respective level of interpretation.

In the liturgical setting, however, the parable would seem to have been chosen to bring out the point suggested in the first reading: God's ways are not man's ways. We would have expected the owner of the vineyard to have acted differently on several points, yet he does no injustice to anyone. Nor is the complaint of the grumblers on account of any injustice done to themselves, but on account of the owner's generosity to others with regard to the use of his money. And that is why the last question of the owner stands out: Are you envious because I am generous?

Who can fathom the thoughts and ways of the infinite God? They are often so different from human thinking. The Spirit dispenses his gifts as he pleases. Is man envious because God is

good? Will the "righteous" begrudge the life-long sinner a sincere death-bed repentance? Will long-standing Christian nations begrudge the rich flowering of faith in newly converted pagan nations?

**C. Second Reading.** Writing from imprisonment (it is not certain where), Paul is torn between two alternatives: to live on in order to make Christ more known and loved: This is his whole life, his entire ambition. Everything else in this life matters little. Yet he also has a burning desire to be united with Christ forever in glory. He feels confident that he will be released and live on to be of still more advantage to his Christians (see 2 Corinthians 4:11-12).

## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(Sept. 28, 1975)

**First Reading:** Ezekiel 18:25-28

**Second Reading:** Philippians 2:1-11

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 21:28-32

**A. First Reading:** Though Israel had often been instructed in its corporate responsibility as a nation, indeed as God's own People, the prophet here clearly states the responsibility of individuals. Chastisement will sooner or later overtake the unrepentant sinner, yet God is more pleased to pardon than to punish, for he is a God of mercy and love. No one who turns to him in sincere repentance will be turned away.

**B. Gospel Reading:** The parable is found solely in Matthew and is spoken by Jesus to his adversaries (vv. 31-b-32). It is also clarified by him. No mere lip service or mere claiming to keep God's Law (as many of Israel's leaders did) gives access to God's friendship and love, but a sincere metanoia (change of heart) no matter what the past, and acceptance of the message of those sent by God brings man close to God. Jesus could hardly have spoken more clearly that God does not respect a person's high station, or wealth or prestige, but only the heart, and man's humble endeavor to come to him in sincerity. A good illustration of this is Matthew 7:21-23: "None of those who cry out, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of God but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. When that day comes, many will plead with me, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? Have we not exercised demons by its power? Did we not do many miracles in your name as well? Then I will declare to them solemnly, I never knew you. Out of my sight, you evildoers!'"

**C. Second Reading.** See the notes on the 24th Sunday or Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

For the shorter reading: These verses are an exhortation to harmony. How is it to be obtained? Negatively by avoiding rivalry and conceit. Positively, through humility, esteeming all others superior to oneself, and through charity, considering one's neighbor's interests rather than one's own. This difficult advice is buoyed up by the powerful example of the Incarnate Son of God's stupendous example, introduced in v. 5.

## II. HOMILIES

### FORGIVENESS

**September 7, 1975: Twenty-third Sunday of the Year**

**The Human Situation:** How often in everyday life misunderstandings arise! A certain action or even a word is interpreted as a deliberate offense, and the result is anger, coldness, avoidance of communication and company. Yet, the offense may never have been intended and could have been so easily cleared by a confrontation. A newly appointed Spiritual Director of religious Brothers once went to the infirmary to visit an elderly Brother who had taken sick. Entering the room he approached the bed and called him by name. There was no response, though this was repeated twice. The sick man seemed to be coldly staring at the ceiling, refusing to speak. Troubled, the Spiritual Director withdrew wondering what he had done to deserve this treatment. Only later he learned that the sick Brothers had a glass eye which never went closed. He had been fast asleep, and no offense had been intended at all!

**The Good News:** Jesus knows well that in our daily lives there will occur now and then misunderstandings, offenses against charity, even deliberate sins, but he wants us to always keep in mind that we are brothers of the one family of God, and members of the believing community, not strangers or foreigners as actions sometimes seem to indicate. If someone has done something offensive to the community or even to you in particular, if false rumors have been circulated, and a certain aloofness or coolness has set in, the simple advice of the Savior is to have a brotherly encounter.

Ask what the reason for his behavior is. Find out what causes the rift. This may take courage but the very fact that such an approach is made may settle the matter at once. An imprudent action may have given a false impression, one that was never intended. Words taken out of context can at times have a completely different meaning than the original one. Not to endeavor to settle such trifles can be the beginning of serious breaches of charity. That is why the Lord wants us to use all means at our disposal to bring about a quick reconciliation. The humble man is willing to forgive. We may need the Spirit of divine Love to carry out the advice of Jesus, but this Spirit we can always obtain by asking, for the Lord said: Ask and you shall receive. Meanwhile our prayer for the offender may bring about a richer harvest than our mere words. God can soften the heart where human words do not succeed.

**Our Response:** True love is the epitome of all the commandments regarding our fellowmen. It is not quick to take offense, it does not brood over injuries, there is no limit to its forbearance (1 Cor. 13:5). Love alone makes us worthy followers of Christ, who gave his life for us while we were sinners (Rom. 5:8) and his first word hanging on the cross was one of forgiveness (Luke 23:34). Brotherly love will take the initiative in seeking reconciliation. Many a valuable friendship has been broken up by the mere fact that neither party would take the first step to clear up some trifling misunderstanding or offense. And we are all brothers in Christ. Let this Holy Year be a true year of renewal and reconciliation, not in word only but in deed. Then we can say the Our Father with sincere hearts: Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

## THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

**September 14, 1975: Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.**

**The Human Situation:** Suffering enters into everyone's life and it is often in the form of a cross that is difficult to bear, long drawn out, trying one's patience and wearing down the nerves. The thought that Christ is sharing with us the crucified phase of his Paschal Mystery bouys us up in the greatest suffering and enables us to look ahead to the glorious phase of his Paschal Mystery which we also will share if we have suffered with him (Rom. 8, 17). Our suffering is but the passageway to glory.

**The Good News:** The "lifting up" of Jesus on the Cross is in the eyes of the sacred writers an act of supreme divine glory. Why did the Father give his Son to such sufferings and to the death

of horrible crucifixion, when mankind could have been redeemed in other ways? The only adequate answer is that he wanted to demonstrate in clearest terms that he loved us even as he loves his only Son (see Jn. 17:23). By this outpouring of love, mankind would have the greatest possible proof that God really cared, that he was a Saving God, that he was Love.

Jesus fully entered into the plans of the Father and became obedient all during his mortal life. The Servant-phase of his Paschal Mystery, so vividly depicted in Isaiah ch. 53, is taken up forcefully by Paul in today's second reading. Submission like that of a slave characterized Christ's life on earth, and it was eminently symbolized by the washing of the feet at the last supper, a task reserved for slaves.

But once his life of obedience had run its course, the Father stepped in to reward his Son for the gallant submission of lifelong obedience. Now lifted up on high, the incarnate Son of God draws all men to himself (John 12:32), he, the center of the entire universe according to the secret plan of the Father (Eph. 1:10). Now he receives the homage of all creation, both from our planet and from every intelligent being "in the heavens or under the earth" (Phil. 2:10), although this will only be fully realized in his glorious Parousia. Moreover, the whole universe will acknowledge him for what he really is: Son of God, Lord and God, Yahweh.

"Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:11) is the credal profession of the Early Christians. Let it be ours today, tomorrow and forever. It forms an exultant conclusion to the superb hymn of the second reading. In this supreme and universal exaltation, the sufferings and death of Jesus are seen in their true perspective, and the Exaltation of the Cross is truly a feast of exultation, for Christ has turned suffering and the Cross into glory.

**Our Response:** Christ crucified is a stumbling block to many and absurdity to others, but to those who are called, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23f). Many have learned to look ahead in their sufferings and trials. They are but means to the end, and the end is glorious beyond all expectation. How fitting the words of Paul somewhat later in the same letter to the Philippians: "I do not think of myself as having reached the finish line. I give no thought to what lies behind but push on to what is ahead. My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me: life on high in Christ Jesus. All of us who are spiritually mature must have this attitude" (3-12-15).

## WHY ENVY WHEN ALL GOOD THINGS COME FROM GOD?

September 21, 1975: Twenty-fifth Sunday of the Year.

**The Human Situation:** Envy easily lurks in the human heart, and it is a disturbing factor in community. A teacher envies the success of a fellow teacher, a parish priest the popularity of his assistant, a student the talents of a classmate, a religious the manifest charism of a fellow-religions. Some wonder why God seems to favor others more than themselves, when they themselves are so much more deserving. In the "Song of Bernadette" by Franz Werfel (both the book and the movie) this is well shown in the case of the novice mistress, who could not see how that poor, uneducated girl should have such favors from the Blessed Mother instead of herself, the woman of noble birth, the woman of much prayer and penance! But the divine favor singled out Bernadette.

**The Good News:** How well God speaks as did the owner of the vineyard to the disgruntled workers: Can I do not do with my money as I want to? Are you envious because I am generous? God dispenses his favors and his privileges as he pleases. Has any one a right to them? He will also reward everyone according to his works (Mt. 16:27), but no one dictates to the Spirit of God how or to whom to distribute his gifts.

In the family of God, the attribute that builds up is the sincere appreciation of each other's gifts and joyous praise of God for his goodness and his wonderful works. "There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good" (Cor. 12:4-7). Thus we have nothing to boast about and nothing to be envious about, for whatever is good in a man stems from the Spirit of Love within him. Here is where the charismatic movement can do a world of good by teaching God's children how to praise the Lord at all times for his deeds of kindness and mercy manifested in so many of his children. Those who live by the Spirit will manifest true joy and love in face of the gifts of others, not the disturbing attitude of envy.

Moreover, in the Body of Christ, whatever good accrues to one member will be eternally enjoyed by all the others. In the fellowship of the Spirit we enjoy sharing all that we have, for sharing is the characteristic of love. In the perfect happiness of heaven, there is no envy, only love that shares all with all.

**Our Response:** We will endeavor to walk in the footsteps of the great Apostle Andrew who, although called by the Master before his brother Peter, and who even brought his brother to the Master, yet stepped humbly aside to see the Master choose his brother Peter as the head of the little band of Twelve, the spokesman for all the rest. This is the kind of example needed today by many whose main striving seems to be for the higher places.

### DEEDS, NOT MERE WORDS!

September 28, 1975: Twenty-sixth Sunday of the Year.

**The Human Situation:** A man's word must be followed out by action. No one likes the man of empty promises. We are wary of politicians who promise exceptional benefits before an election. "Seeing is believing" is an old adage. People will patronize a company that lives up to its advertisements. The teacher who promptly corrects and hands back his test-papers is esteemed by his pupils. The quiet woman who gets things done will be far more of an inspiration to the young, than a talkative one who is constantly boasting about her accomplishments. McArthur is appreciated because he kept his word: I shall return.

**The Good News:** Man sees the face but the Lord sees the heart. Lip service and external worship are not enough for him. That is what both priest and Levite gave him in the parable of the Good Samaritan, but both were found wanting when it came to finding God in the poor fellow who had fallen among robbers. The Lord made the whole man for himself, and he wants our whole-hearted response because his is a jealous love and he will not be able to transform little man into the masterpiece he desires him to be, unless man gives the whole heart to God.

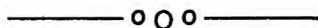
It is easy to join the crowd reciting "I confess" at the beginning of the Mass, or in the "Our Father" later on. But only God can see whether our repentance is sincere, and if we really mean to "forgive those who sin against us". But these words are a contract. And Jesus says very plainly: "If you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive you". No matter how many trimmings we add to our Sunday services, no matter how much we embellish the altars with offerings, we are not going to be pleasing to the Father unless we conform inwardly to his Son who is offering himself with us and for us on the altar.

There is a book written by C. Mooney entitled. "To Hell on Monday". It depicts well the Christian who conforms outwardly to the law, is seen regularly at Sunday Mass, offers the required con-



tribution, belongs to parish organizations and pays the dues, functioning on Sunday in a very conspicuous way. Then on Monday, he throws religion to the devil. The law of God is put into his back pocket and he forgets all about it in his marital relations, his sense of justice to the household servants, and his sense of moral decency in the places he visits. In business transactions he forgets there is a seventh commandment, and in competitive business he forgets there is an eighth. Where is the Christian in this man or woman? In the pocket. On Sundays it will proclaim its wares again like a billboard lit up by giant neon-lights. Yet God sees the heart and says to such a person the words that Amos said to Israel of old: "I hate, I spurn your feasts. I take no pleasure in them. Your offerings I will not accept. Away with your noisy songs. I will not listen to the melodies of your harps! But if you would offer me pleasing holocausts, then let justice surge like water, and goodness like an unfailing stream" (Amos 5, 23f). Justice toward our fellowmen, goodness and holiness of heart, these are the garments with which the Lord wants to see us clothed when we come to offer him the sacrifice of thanksgiving in his Son.

**Our Response:** How often we have said no! to God, like the son who at first refused to do his father's bidding. Yet, coming to one's senses, one is smitten with deep contrition to think that the all-loving Father, who has only our good at heart, has been offended and rejected even in such trivial matters. "I shall rise and go to the Father and say: Father, I have sinned" (Luke 15:18). And God, who is all mercy and compassion, who knows our weakness, fills us against with his love and peace. With the Master henceforth our aim will be: To do all things that please the Father (John 8:29). "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me" (John 4:34).



### ERRATUM

Reference: Biblical Notes for August 31, 1975, in our June issue, page 412, second paragraph.

Mistake: "Peter's remonstrance was not natural."

Correction: "Peter's remonstrance was natural."