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## EDITORIAL.

### Why Pray The Rosary Again

The Rosary is like the **Barong Tagalog**. We look at old paintings or drawings of our colonial past and we are struck by the quaintness of the shirts worn by the men: shapeless, billowy, too long. Men today wouldn't be caught dead in one of them. Yet the modern versions of those same shirts are appreciated even by celebrities. Ali and Frazier wore the **Barong Tagalog** when they paid a courtesy call on the President. Visiting heads of state are proud to display the **Barong Tagalog** given to them as a gift. Similarly, the Rosary as a substitute for a vernacular missal when the priest says Mass in Latin, or as the community prayer of school children attending Mass or filling up with rapid Hail Mary's the dull moments of a silent retreat, is a devotional practice we certainly do not want to revive. But the Rosary as a prayer whose biblical and theological richness has been brought out by research and by its restoration to its proper place with regard to the liturgy, is a prayer which modern man can find very satisfying.

Our days have seen the rise of yoga prayer, charismatic prayer, transcendental meditation, groups of young people imploring gurus to teach them how to pray. People today, young people, feel that they can find personal peace only through prayer. They also realize that any effective prayer must be methodical: one has to exert some time and effort to learn how to pray.

Sad to say, few, if any, of the modern seekers of peace through prayer, realize that the traditional Catholic methods, if taken as seriously as the modern ones, are just as effective or even more. The trouble is that few have given the same time and effort to master the traditional methods as they have spent on the new practices that people talk about.

Effort must now be made to enlighten people on the value of traditional forms of prayer like the Rosary, which has been recommended by the great masters of spiritual life as a first-rate school of contemplation as well as a prayer with popular appeal. Time and care must be spent to teach people to pray the Rosary the way it should be prayed. By this we do not merely mean that people should be skilled in the external mechanics of the prayer — what to say on the first bead, what to do at the conclusion, etc. — but that they should capture the soul that animates the progress from mystery to mystery. It must be demonstrated to Christians today that the Rosary is truly a Gospel prayer, a guide to the orderly and gradual unfolding of God's plan in Salvation History, a deepening of man's encounter with Christ, a giant step into the threshold of lofty contemplation, an excellent preparation for the liturgy or a continuing echo thereof.

The Rosary Movement now waxing strong in the Archdiocese of Manila and spreading to other parts of the Philippines, deserves our whole-hearted support. It is doing well in its first task of getting people to pray the Rosary again. We hope it will do just as well in the more difficult task of showing people how to appreciate the Rosary more than ever before.

## In This Issue

Although the Rosary “easily harmonizes with the liturgy” and “in fact, like the liturgy, it is of a community nature, draws its inspiration from Sacred Scripture and is oriented towards the mystery of Christ” (*Marialis cultus* n. 48), its bid to be included in liturgical rites was rejected by the Church. It was deemed wise to distinguish clearly the “commemorative” nature of the liturgy and the “contemplative” approach of the Rosary. To give proper balance to the spotlight this issue focuses on the Rosary, we give our readers a talk

of the Pope on the **Importance of the Liturgy**. For the Holy Father the Liturgy is the first means of attaining renewal in the Church.

A happy meeting point of the Rosary and the Church's concern for its missionary work is the mission intention of the Apostleship of Prayer for October: "That common family prayer may foster and safeguard the Christian faith in young churches." We are happy to publish L'Osservatore Romano's article on **Family Prayer**. Pastors could pick up some ideas from it for the celebration of Family Week in the Philippines on December 1-7. It has been announced that the theme of celebration is: "The Family: Bedrock of National Unity".

On the subject of Church renewal, Fr. Wilfrid Harrington offers a provocative article: "**The Unthinkable**". He says: "The New Testament situation shall give us pause. We need to ask ourselves where the limits of change really lie. We may have taken too much for granted. Above all, we surely been too prone to put under the aegis of the Spirit what were, in truth, the human developments of what must remain a human Church." He suggests, for example, that the human institution which is the parish be re-structured into many small communities necessitating very many more ministers of the Eucharist. Such a demand for ministers, he thinks can be met by ordaining married persons and even women. Unthinkable?

The National President of the Catholic Women's League (CWL) sent us a strong reaction to our editorial "Condone the Condom?" Hence we publish herein the **CWL Position Paper** on condoms, and a **Postscript on the Condom War**.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE LITURGY

*In the course of the weekly General Audience of Wednesday, 6 August, Pope Paul addressed the large group assembled in St. Peter's Square as follows:*

We are filled with one central thought: the principal aim of the Holy Year. By flocking in such numbers to be present in the heart of its celebration, here in Rome, sacred to the faith, to history, to the destiny of Christian civilization, you are now living at a time which, we hope, is among the most important, the most keenly conscious, moments of your whole mortal life. By that very fact, you are now impressing your mark upon the spiritual progress of the Pilgrim Church through the ages, giving it a more vital desire for perennial renewal.

The People of God, as the Council put it, that is, our Church of God, should come forth renewed from this Holy Year, from this event of religious, moral, collective significance. The Holy Year is not meant to finish with the circle of months that make up the total; it should generate within the Church herself an infusion of spirituality, of morality, of charity, of human and religious fervour. This should arouse consciences, strengthen good resolutions, manifest its vital genius, make unity more compact and, above all, obtain from God a new infusion of the Holy Spirit. It will thus serve to rejuvenate this centuries-old Church, to reinvigorate it, to renew it, as has been said, and finally, despite the storms arising from the complex and adverse vicissitudes of our times, to make it happy: yes, indeed, happy with that foretaste of immortal and divinised life of which hope promises and assures us: *spes autem non confundit*: hope does not disappoint us (Rom. 5.5).

### *Priority to prayer*

Now this expected renewal calls for many things which the Church could and should evaluate. What is the first thing? The first by reason of dignity, the first from the understanding which the living Church has of the divine plan for the salvation of the world, the first because the Church has indicated and recommended it for the renewal of Christian life in the world, is, as you know, the sacred Liturgy. The first Constitution issued by the Council was its pronouncement on the sacred Liturgy. This legislation endowed the Council itself with its aspect of renewal, for differing from other Councils, this one was not directly dogmatic but doctrinal and pastoral.

Thus was recognized the priority given to prayer in the general economy of human and Christian life. It presupposed and required that spiritual contact with God should be conscious and personal, as we have had occasion to declare before. But we must integrate this first act of our religion (cf. L. De Grandmaison, *La Religione personale*), in the complete and valid framework of its most authoritative expression. This, by divine institution, is social, communitarian, ecclesial, that is, priestly and liturgical. The liturgy is the official form of our religion. Through our anxiety to re-kindle the vitality and authenticity of religion in the life of the individual, but above all in the life of the People, we must, in our time, honour and promote the Liturgy in ecclesial and collective life. "The sacred Liturgy", as the Council says, "does not exhaust the entire activity of the Church" (Sac. Conc. n. 9). "Nevertheless the Liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows" (ibid. n. 10).

If so much has been said about the Liturgy both before and after the Council, now that we are strengthened by the explanation the Council itself has given about it, we hope that it will continue to be talked about, nay more, that it will be made the rule and custom of our religious life. It is enough for us here to confirm the liturgical programme that the Church has planned, so as to make firm and render fruitful the idea and therefore the practice of the Liturgy. Herein is the secret of a new vitality in ecclesiastical tradition. Here is its countenance in all its beauty. Here is the expression of its intimate and its multiform and pentecostal interpretation of every tongue, of every people. Here, especially, the affirmation of its two fundamental principles.

### *Celebrating Christ's priesthood*

Let us recall them. In the Liturgy we have the celebration of the priesthood of Christ (Cf. Const. cit. n. 7). He is present amongst us especially in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Mass, to reflect and to fulfill wherever we may be, that divine and human drama of our redemption; that greatest drama of the love which sacrifices itself and saves, the drama that we now usually speak of as "the Paschal Mystery". Liturgy springs forth from the depths of religious truth. It springs from the revelation of a divinely operative plan of goodness, of mercy, of communication, of the charity of the Father towards mankind, by the mediation

of the World made flesh like us and for our sake, in the Spirit of love who descends amongst us to make us rise up in the transformation of a new fulness of glorious and eternal life (Cf. *Ep. ad Ephesios*, 1, 3 et seq.).

We say no more. But we should all hold the firm and joyous conviction that the "*lex orandi*" has in the "*lex credendi*" its light and its mirror: the word that is heard is the word that expresses it (cf. M. Zundel, *Le poeme de la sainte liturgie*, an essay from before the Council, but one that is still topical).

We speak rather of the other fundamental principle of liturgical reform. The People should be made up of the faithful who know, who participate, who, to a certain extent, concelebrate with the priest because he, *alter Christus*, is interpreter of God with the People and of the People with God. Liturgy is a communion of souls, of prayers, of voices, of *agape*, that is of charity. Passive assistance at a celebration is not enough: there must be a participation. The People should think of a liturgical celebration as a school where they go to listen and to learn; as a sacred action promoted and directed by the priest with whom they also, a multitude of living faithful hearts, join in, answering, offering, praying and singing. Oh, if only the Council, if the Holy Year, had promoted the task of making the People participate and sing liturgically, it would have performed a religious and communitarian work of immense value. For one who sings, participates; one who participates does not grow tired but rejoices. One who rejoices in prayer preserves and even develops himself as a Christian — and one who is a Christian is saved!

Let no one think that this enthusiasm is deceptive, or is foreign and frustrating to the operative, social realism of our concrete, human existence. No indeed! It is an injection of energy and wisdom which causes the faithful to be eager, generous and hardworking citizens in the field of earthly reality, while starting them off, and leading them on, to be citizens of heaven.

Liturgy, let us remember it: believing, singing praises, aware of earthly experience, on pilgrimage towards the celebration of the eternal revelation.

With our apostolic blessing.

## **TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHER VICENTE REYES BISHOP OF CABANATUAN**

You will soon recall clearly and with great feeling that day when you accepted the episcopacy 25 years ago. This anniversary will offer all who love and venerate you an excellent opportunity to give you their best wishes. In a special way the faithful and the clergy of Cabanatuan diocese will gather round you with joy, as an opportune manifestation of that unity which should bind pastor and flock together.

We wish, however, that in the crowd of well-wishers our voice would also sound as an indication and messenger of the fraternal love with which we embrace you and of the applause we give in approval of your pastoral earnestness.

After you were an auxiliary bishop of Manila you were soon transferred to the newly established Borongan Diocese, assigned the hard task of governing and guiding it. This you have done so capably, as it is conveyed to us, that the priests and the faithful of this same territory have still a good impression of you.

Appointed in 1967 to the See of Cabanatuan, you hastened to work, aiming above all to spread the growth of Christian life and to conform the formation of youth to the demands of the faith.

It could not also be disregarded that for many years now you have taken charge of the Catholic Action of the Philippines, and as chairman, you have dedicated your work and care to the development and encouragement of christian families.

With high regard, therefore, we acknowledge your pastoral concern and your achievements, and together with you we thank God, the giver of good things, for he enabled you to gather so rich a harvest of spiritual fruits. We wish that with sound physical health you would be able to bring about in the future no small benefits for the Church.

As we write you this, we recall that apostolic journey which we made a few years back to parts of East Asia: we have the sweet memory of the religious devotion which we have personally experienced to be aglow among the Filipinos. Showing you our great affection on the anniversary of your Episcopate, we also turn our fatherly heart to all whom your pastoral care reaches outside your diocese. To you and to all those taking part in the joys of your jubilee we willingly impart our apostolic blessing, harbinger of heavenly consolation and strength.

From the Vatican, on July 30, 1975, on the 13th year of our Pontificate.

**PAULUS PP VI**

Translated from Latin by:  
Fr. Ismael Misolas



# **"MARIALIS CULTUS" AND THE ROSARY**

**By Cardinal Pietro Palazzini**

## *Devotion to Mary*

In the apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus* of 2 February 1974, Pope Paul VI recommends, in conformity "with the spiritual orientation of our time", that "in expressions of devotion to the Virgin the Christological aspect should have particular prominence... and that these expressions of devotion should reflect God's plan, which laid down 'with one single decree the origin of Mary and the Incarnation of divine Wisdom'." (Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*; *Marialis Cultus*, n. 25).

As a consequence of this premise, Paul VI indicates as fully in harmony with the special Christological aspect of Marian devotion, the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary and also the *Angelus*.

In considering the reasons brought forward by the Holy Father in support of renewal of this pious practice which, in the words of Pius XII (*Lett. ad Philippinas insulas*: AAS 38, 1946, p. 419) he refers to as "the compendium of the entire Gospel" (*Marialis Cultus*, n. 42), and while filled with joy at such an authoritative new papal approval, I could not but feel sad when I reflected on the more than superficial attitude of a number of people who, although holding responsible positions in the pastoral field, have proceeded in the past ten years—in the name of the Liturgy itself — to depreciate this excellent practice of Marian devotion. A very meaningful episode came to my mind, that of Giovanni Bovio's mother. Giovanni Bovio (1841-1903), a Master of Freemasonry and already a celebrity, on his return home one evening surprised his mother with her Rosary beads in her hands.

"What are you doing, Mother, with that plaything?" asked Bovio in persuasive tones. "Put it away". His elderly mother obeyed the invitation offered in affectionate tones by her good son who had become such a great man. Placing the beads on the table she said gently: "Very

well, Giovanni, as you wish. But what will you give your mother now?" And the Grand Master, as he used to relate to his intimates, embraced his elderly parent, put the beads back in her hands and fled, overcome by emotion (*Commento di t.t.*, collected by E. Martire, Rome, 1919, p. 105).

Since these other "masters" — who are no doubt the sons of just such "pious mothers" — were incapable of imitating Giovanni Bovio's act, the Pope performed it for them, confirming — as he says — "our assiduous and affectionate interest in the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

### *Focus on Christ*

The problem of problems for every Christian is (also through divine worship) the need to put on Christ, to know him, to enter more deeply into his teaching and to love him. The Second Vatican Council has brought out very clearly one of the principal ways leading to Christ, namely, the Liturgy, "considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ" (Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7). It is our duty, then, to attach the greatest importance to this means which "is the summit toward which all the activity of the Church is directed" (*ibid.*, n. 10).

However, there are also other paths which lead souls to Christ. One of these is the Rosary, mentioned at least implicitly in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy already quoted and in three other conciliar documents (Dogm. Const. *Lumen Gentium*, chap. VIII, no. 67; Decree on Priestly Formation, n. 8; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, n. 18).

Even before the conciliar decrees, Paul VI, in the first general audience of his pontificate (13 July 1963) had recommended the recitation of the Rosary (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, Vol. 1, 1963, pp. 463-464). After the Council, moreover, he returned to the subject in the Encyclical *Christi Matri* of 13 September 1966 (AAS 58, 1966, pp. 745-749) and especially in the Apostolic Letter *Recurrere Mensis October*, of 7 October 1969 (AAS 61, 1969, pp. 649-651), where he stressed "the presentation to the spiritual vision of the one who prays, of those so-called 'mysteries' of the Rosary, which make of this pious Marian practice a Christological meditation, since it accustoms us to study Christ from the best vantage point, that is, from the point of view of Mary herself." Now, in the Exhortation

**Marialis Cultus** (nos. 32-55), the Pope presents in masterly fashion a theological and historical synthesis of the Rosary, emphasizing in a particular way the fact that it is a means to reach Christ, and rightly so. The Rosary, in point of fact, fixes our attention on Christ, as we contemplate his life and his theology "not merely with Mary but indeed insofar as this possible to us, in the same way as Mary, who is certainly the one who thought about him more than anyone else has ever done."

The object of faith inculcated by the Rosary is the entire Creed, summarized in the Rosary trilogy, but chiefly and especially the divinity of Christ. A great convert in every sense, Cardinal Newman, has written: "The great power of the Rosary consists in the fact that it translates the Creed into prayer. Of course, the Creed is already in a certain sense a prayer and a great act of homage towards God, but the Rosary brings us to meditate again one great truth of his life and death, and brings this truth close to our hearts. Even Christians — continues Newman — although they know God, usually fear rather than love him. The strength of the Rosary lies in the particular manner in which it considers these mysteries, since all our thinking about Christ is intertwined with the thought of his Mother; in the relations between Mother and Son, the Holy Family is presented to us, the home in which God lived his infinite love."

### *Approval of Vatican II*

In the Rosary, in point of fact, Our Lady appears to us as a true "socio Christi" in the work of Redemption, the achievement of which is followed step by step in the recitation of this prayer, from the Incarnation to the Ascension, to the Assumption into heaven, when Mary herself receives the reward of joy and glory as the first fruit of divine Redemption.

This Marian theory of "socio Christi" remains theologically sound today, after the Second Vatican Council. As all are aware, the Mariological movement in our century, in giving us the best treatises of Mariology, had concentrated its study on Mary's participation in our Redemption and had introduced some very meaningful titles, such as "Mediatrice", "Co-Redemptrix", etc.

Despite some tendencies to the contrary, Vatican II ratified the substance of this traditional Mariology, also as regards Mary's soteriological participation. This can be clearly seen in the Dogmatic Constitution

**Lumen Gentium**, in chapter VIII which deals with the Most Blessed Virgin. The following is a synthesis of this chapter. Conceived without sin, Mary is rightly greeted by the Angel as "full of grace", and by consenting to the Incarnation of the Word, she becomes a conscious and voluntary participator in the work of Redemption achieved by her Son.

She gave birth to Jesus without diminishing her virginal integrity and she reared him, presenting him to the shepherds and in the Temple and seeking him when she had involuntarily lost him (no. 57). At the beginning of his public life, she brought about his first miracle and, in the end, on Calvary, she was united with her Son, assenting to his immolation for the salvation of men, sharing his sufferings and accepting to become John's mother (n. 58).

### *Theologically sound*

After Christ's Ascension into heaven, Mary is with the Apostles in prayer as they await the coming of the Holy Spirit who descended upon her and upon the others. Finally, she is assumed both body and soul into heaven, to be more thoroughly conformed to her Son in his glory (no. 59).

Going on, then, to deal with Mary's saving office, the Constitution **Lumen Gentium** reiterates that there is only one mediator of salvation, Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 1:5-6); Mary's office is subordinated to the mediation of Jesus from whom she draws all her saving influences (no. 60). But as the Mother of the Saviour, whom she brought forth, nourished, offered in the Temple and on Calvary — where she shared in his Passion and cooperated in an utterly singular way by her obedience, faith, hope and charity in the Saviour's work of restoring supernatural life to souls — she may rightly be called our Mother in the order of grace (no. 61).

The conciliar document brings out very clearly the concept of mediation which the Council reserves with forceful terms to Christ alone. But it grants to Mary a subordinate participation in this mediation in the sense of perpetual intercession with God for us and in the sense of remote cooperation (maternity, consent to the Incarnation) and immediate cooperation (sharing in the Passion on Calvary).

All this content of **Lumen Gentium** is found once more in a wonderful way in the Rosary. Hence this devotion follows the lines of a theologically sound Mariology, as it reconstructs on the practical and historical

plane the various aspects of Mary's participation in mediation, while in no way allowing this illustration of Marian mediation to detract from the unique mediation of Christ. On the contrary, Christ's mediation is shown up in a clearer light and receives a breath of maternal tenderness which attracts even the most reluctant souls and brings them to the knowledge and love of the Incarnate Word. Mary's Son and her God.

### *Meditating the "mysteries"*

Can there be a better guide to the Son than his Mother? And can there be a surer way of following the path to Bethlehem, Calvary and the risen Christ than side by side with the Mother of Jesus, as we do in the devout recitation of the Rosary?

With her, in the Rosary, we walk securely along the road of the history of salvation in its central nucleus, and follow the unfolding of very plan of salvation. This is the historical path which has been strongly recommended to us by the Second Vatican Council itself.

Side by side with the vocal prayers, the essential element of the Rosary is the devout meditation of the fifteen "mysteries", which propose the outstanding events in the life of Jesus and Mary to the loving consideration and imitation of the one who recites this prayer. As all are aware, the mysteries are grouped in a threefold series. They pass in review, as it were the three aspects of God's saving plan through Christ: the economy of the Incarnation, of Redemption and of Sanctification.

**In the economy of the Incarnation**, Jesus is presented to us as the incarnate Word, through the **Joyful Mysteries** which proceed: a) from the revelation of the Father's decree by means of the Angel's Annunciation to Mary, the new Eve (1st Joyful); b) to the first manifestation of the effects of the grace of the Incarnate Word, through Mary, in the Baptist, on the occasion of the Visitation (2nd Joyful); c) the appearance of the Word in mortal flesh in the cave of the Nativity (3rd Joyful); d) the total offering of the new and eternal Priest to the Father, in the Presentation (4th Joyful); e) the passage of the years in the hidden life of the Son of God on earth, his growth in wisdom, stature and grace (5th Joyful).

### *The Redemption*

**In the economy of the Redemption**, Christ the Redeemer is presented to us in the **Sorrowful Mysteries**, which allow us to assist at the tragic moments of his redemptive immolation (and of Mary with him) on the

Cross. a) Here is the Agony in the Garden and the betrayal on the very night when he had loved to the extreme limit by giving himself in the Eucharist and instituting the priesthood (1st Sorrowful); b) the capture, condemnation and Scourging (2nd Sorrowful); c) the Crowing with Thorns of the King of kings and Lord of lords (3rd Sorrowful); d) the painful ascent of Calvary (4th Sorrowful, e) the Crucifixion and Death, in which he is recognized as truly the Son of God by the centurion (Mk. 15:39) and which was the beginning of Christ's immense embrace of the world: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself" (Jn. 12:32) (5th Sorrowful).

In the economy of Sanctification, Christ reveals himself to us through the **Glorious Mysteries**, which apply the fruits of the Redemption to men and project our life, supernaturalized by grace, beyond the confines of time and death, towards a blessed eternity with Christ and Mary. a) The Resurrection marks Christ's victory over death and sin and is the pivot of the paschal mystery, both in the spiritual life of the individual (dying and rising again with Christ through baptism) and in the life of the ecclesial community, centred from the very beginning in the weekly liturgical celebration on which the Constitution "De Sacra Liturgia" (chap. II, nos. 47-58) insists so strongly (1st Glorious); b) the Ascension into heaven (2nd Glorious) reminds us of the things that are above (cf. Col. 3:1-7); c) the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost places us in immediate contact with the Sanctifier and, at the same time, with the reality of the Church which is — as we read in no. 2 of **Sacrosanctum Concilium** — "both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it" (3rd Glorious); d) the Assumption and Coronation (the glory of the Virgin and the Saints in God) transfer us to the "kingdom of love" in the full flowering of the divine seed implanted in us by grace, in the fullest communion of the Saints (4th and 5th Glorious).

The Mother's life is lived by reproducing the life of her divine Son. There is no mystery in the life of Jesus which does not find its reflection in the life of Mary. They are invariably united, in anxiety, humiliation and suffering; united also in glory. Jesus rises from the dead and ascends into heaven (these are the two mysteries of his triumph); Mary lives again, or does not succumb to death, and is assumed into paradise, to be greeted as the Queen of Heaven (these are the two mysteries of her glorification); apotheosis, the Coronation of Mary who enters into the glory of the Blessed.

*Mission Intention*

*for*

*OCTOBER:*

## **FAMILY PRAYER**

**The Mission Intention of the Apostleship of Prayer for October is:  
"That common family prayer may foster and safeguard the Christian  
faith in young Churches."**

One of the most remarkable pilgrims ever to come to Rome for a Holy Year was Simon Alfred Ki-Zerbo, who was received in private audience by Pope Paul on June 5. Mr. Ki-Zerbo, who this year celebrates his 100th birthday and the 75th anniversary of his baptism, was probably the first person from Upper Volta to be baptized a Catholic. Born in Upper Volta, he was baptized in Mali just before the White Fathers opened their mission in Upper Volta in 1900. He went with them there as cook, bricklayer and Catechist. He has seen the Church in Upper Volta grow from nothing to its present figure of 300,000. During his long life as a Catechist he has instructed countless people in the faith and himself baptized thousands of them.

He has lived an exemplary Christian life and, with his wife Teresa, he brought up his eight children as staunch Catholics. One of his sons, Joseph, who accompanied him to Rome, is now a Professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris, a member of the UNESCO Executive Committee, and author of a "History of Black Africa". Speaking of his father in Rome, Joseph said: "He is a Christian to the core, a man of unshakeable faith, a saint. He educated us children with the Bible in his hand, and led us in family and community prayer. He has always been our guide and example. His faith in God our Father has been translated into a docile and loving acceptance of God's will, even on difficult occasions. When one of his children died unexpectedly, he raised his hands to heaven in a gesture of prayer and acceptance."

It is Christian parents of the calibre of Simon Ki-Zerbo who form the strength of the Church in the missions — parents who educate their

children in the faith, who gather the family together in daily prayer and who radiate their example and leadership to the community around them. And it is from such families that come the religious and priestly vocations so necessary to the building up of a strong local Church.

*The Family as a School of Faith and Prayer*

In a general audience two years ago (August 22, 1973) Pope Paul looked forward to the Holy Year and said that he hoped it would "bring men to prayer". In his exhortation to prayer he laid particular stress on the family: "The family must be a great school of piety, spirituality and religious fidelity. The Church has great trust in the delicate, authoritative and irreplaceable religious teaching supplied by parents."

In the Apostolic Exhortation "Marialis Cultus" of February 2, 1974, Pope Paul recommended in particular the recitation of the family Rosary:

"We now desire, as a continuation of the thought of our predecessors, to recommend strongly the recitation of the family Rosary. The Second Vatican Council has pointed out how the family, the primary and vital cell of society, 'shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer they offer to God' (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 11). The Christian family is thus seen to be a domestic Church (Lumen Gentium, 11) if its members, each according to his proper place and task, all together promote justice, practise works of mercy, devote themselves to helping their brethren, take part in the apostolate of the wider local community and play their part in its liturgical worship (Apostolicam Actuositatem, 11). This will be all the more true if together they offer up prayers to God. If this elements of common prayer were missing, the family would lack its very character as a domestic Church. Thus there must logically follow a concrete effort to reinstate communal prayer in family life if there is to be a restoration of the theological concept of the family as the domestic Church" (No. 52).

In the Bishops' Synod on Evangelization last year, many of the Bishops stressed the important role of the family in evangelization, and some of them suggested that the family should be made the theme of a future Synod.

Vatican II spoke often of the family and of its key role in the Church and society. In the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, for instance, we read:



"The apostolate of married persons and of families is of unique importance for the Church and civil society. Christian husbands and wives are cooperators in grace and witnesses of faith on behalf of each other, their children, and all others in their household. They are the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them; by word and example they train their offspring for the Christian and apostolic life. At all times and places but particularly in areas where the first seeds of the gospel are being sown, or where the Church is still in her infancy or is involved in some serious difficulty, Christian families give priceless testimony to Christ before the world..." (No. 11).

And in the Declaration on Christian Education we read:

"Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and men that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children." (No. 3).

Local Bishops and Bishops' Conferences have likewise laid stress on the importance of family prayer, and this importance becomes in fact a vital necessity in places where the Church is impeded in its public liturgical life or is deprived of its role in the running of Christian schools.

In Communist China, where the Church has not been allowed to function openly for more than 20 years, it is only in the bosom of the Catholic family that the faith can be kept alive. At last year's Synod, Bishop Trinh Van Can of North Vietnam spoke of how Catholic families in the North had kept their faith strong through prayer and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin. In the many countries where Catholic schools have been taken over by the Government the family must assume its full role in Christian education.

### *Catholic Family Associations*

There are several Associations today that help promote Catholic family life.

The *Equipes Notre-Dame* was founded in France in 1940 by Fr. Cafarel and at present numbers 20,000 couples grouped in 3,500 teams in 36 countries. A team consists of 4 to 7 couples, of which one is elected

leader for a year. Each team usually has a priest as spiritual adviser. The Members promise: to draw up a plan for their spiritual life: to have family prayer in common at least once a day; to hold a monthly session in which they check their fidelity to their promises; and to make an annual retreat of at least two days.

The Cana Conferences were founded in New York in 1943. They focus on four general areas: the relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, God and the family, society and the family. Cana Clubs have developed, consisting of not more than six couples who meet regularly to discuss and apply principles of Christian family life of daily living.

The Christian Family Movement was founded in Chicago in 1947. It too brings together couples in small groups, meeting regularly to discuss religious and family matters and to help stimulate each other's fervour. A Christian Family Movement founded in Montevideo and Buenos Aires in 1949-50 joined it to form the International Confederation of Christian Family Movements. This invites membership from all organizations with similar aims and has held annual international meetings in different countries since 1966: in Venezuela, Mexico, Spain, France, the U.S.A., New Zealand, Ireland, Spain again, and (last year) Tanzania. It numbers some 150,000 couples in 45 countries.

Marriage Encounter was founded in 1962 in Barcelona, Spain, by Fr. Gabriel Calvo. In 1966 it spread to Latin America and the United States, and today it exists in 28 countries. It has become particularly popular in the United States, where in the past four years more than 75,000 couples have participated in its programme. The main point in the programme is a retreat in which the husband and wife encounter each other at a deep spiritual level and together face up honestly to the problems and tensions of the marriage so as to solve them in a Christian spirit.

# **THE WAY**

## **A SPIRITUALITY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE\***

by  
**Pedro Rodriguez**

### **II**

## **THE THREE STRUCTURAL LINES OF THE SPIRITUALITY OF OPUS DEI**

From here we can discover the main lines which run through *The Way*, the lines which describe the "geometric place" of lay sanctity, or the presence of christians in the world.

I think there are two main lines which run right through the book and make it a "handbook of lay sanctity". The first is the world, man's situation in the world and especially his creative dynamism (work) which are positively affirmed and are contemplated in the economy of grace (sanctification of work and sanctification of human activities). The second is, as it were, the supernatural axis of the task of sanctification, which may call the "primacy of grace", of prayer, of interior life and which the book expresses in terms of living an awareness of divine filiation. All this makes the spirituality of lay people a "baptismal spirituality".

From the convergence of these two structural lines a third arises which gives an essentially apostolic dimension to the christian vocation of the layman. It is around these three axes that all the other characteristics of the spirituality of Opus Dei hinge.

### **1. THE VALIDITY OF THE CHRISTIAN'S SITUATION IN THE WORLD FOR THE TASK OF SANCTIFICATION: A SPIRITUALITY OF WORK**

For someone coming across *The Way* in the midst of his professional activities the reading of this book, especially of the chapter entitled "Study"<sup>10</sup>, focuses his attention on the human tasks in which he is in-

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\* Continued from the September issue.

<sup>10</sup> Nos. 332-359 of *The Way* were written at a time when the pastoral work of the Founder of Opus Dei was especially intense in university circles in Madrid; this is reflected in many points of the book, taken from the author's apostolic experience.

volved. The vocation to sanctity is thought out, explained and lived in the pages of *The Way* as something which is intimately united with the human, civil and secular situation of the reader. In the book we find that temporal activity has a value of its own in the economy of the Redemption. Sanctity, then, is something belonging also to men and women "immersed" in the world. Even more, the world, work and temporal activities appear in *The Way* as the "raw material" of lay sanctity.

The things of the world are found to be apt and valid for the task of sanctification. It is through this prism of sanctity that everything else is examined. This aptitude, this validity of the things of the world for the supernatural purpose of the Redemption, presupposes in the thought of Opus Dei's Founder, an affirmation of the natural values of man and of Creation. In this sense, the message of *The Way* is an exhortation to the Christian to "take the world seriously", to be committed to his own human circumstances. Only on this condition can the earthly realities be sanctified.<sup>11</sup> There are two ideas in *The Way*, repeated in very different points, which bring one to this conclusion. These are the concepts of "professional prestige" and the idea of "persevering in your place".

### THE CONCEPT OF PROFESSIONAL PRESTIGE

Only when the Christian really tackles his professional and human tasks — cultural, artistic, political, economic, in the different trades and professions — will he be able to carry out a dialogue with other men which can be apostolically effective. This is the doctrine expressed negatively in point 371: "When you see people of doubtful professional reputation acting as leaders at public functions of a religious nature, don't you feel the urge to whisper in their ears: Please, would you mind being just a little less Catholic?". In these words we can see a tempered indignation at the spectacle of so many "official Catholics" who confuse Christianity (blatantly or subtly) with "public functions of a religious nature", belittling and despising at the same time the human vocation, which was thus considered irrelevant to the economy of grace. These Catholics, "people of doubtful professional reputation", will attain, at most, a tactical and extraneous use of their profession "propter regnum coelorum": a sort of "tactical" Catholicism.<sup>12</sup> The same doctrine is now expressed

<sup>11</sup> Vatican Council II describes the situation of the layman in the world as being apt for the supernatural task in these words: "They live in the world, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, which, as it were, constitute their very existence: there they are called by God to fulfill their own mission" (Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 31).

<sup>12</sup> I don't want to pass on without noting that in *The Way* one finds a reference to another possible tactical use of human realities, another way of abusing the nature of things, but, this time through the unscrupu-

positively in the point which speaks of professional prestige as "your bait" as a "fisher of men" (*The Way*, 372; cf. also 347). Professional prestige is, then, in *The Way*, the social recognition of the professional work of a man who takes it seriously and who devotes his efforts to it.

### THE FRENZY FOR CHANGE

"How anxious people are to get out of place. Think what would happen if each bone and each muscle of the human body wanted to occupy some position other than that proper to it. There is no other reason for the world's discontent. Persevere in your place, my son; there . . . what work you can do to establish our Lord's true Kingdom" (*The Way*, 832). "... without that frenzy for change, you can work from your proper place in life. And, like a powerful generator of spiritual electricity, you will give light and energy to very many, without losing your own vigour and light" (*The Way*, 837).

Intimately connected with the points on professional prestige, but now in a wider perspective, there is this affirmation of the validity of the human situations and of the created order (circumstances of life, profession, language, country) for the mission of the christian in the world. The author is referring to the flight from worldly problems, which is often not physical but is an attitude of mind. He sees this escapism as responsible for the limited social effectiveness of the Christian's message: "there is no other reason for the world's discontent" (*The Way*, 832). Abstentionism and a ghetto mentality are an absurdity, from the evangelical point of view.

The "frenzy for change" is a consequence of what Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer has humorously called the "**tin-can mysticism**".\* This is described in a text where he speaks of the spiritual problems of laity at the time when *Opus Dei* was born. I think its value excuses the length of the quotation:

"Frequently, they (the ordinary faithful) felt tired and hampered in their spiritual life, precisely for what made up their life as lay people;

lousness of some anti-Catholics: "God's enemies, with minds empty of ideas, will take advantage of your 'prudence' to acquire the name of learning and so reach positions that they should never attain" (*The Way*, 35). Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer here hits out at the abstentionism of Catholics towards human realities, and at the lack of professional quality — "minds empty of ideas" — of certain anti-Catholics who occupy positions they were not fitted for. The spirituality of *Opus Dei* is in direct contrast to these tactics, as can be seen from the next.

\* Translator's Note: There is a play on the words "ojala" "would that" or "I wish", and "hojalata", "tin-plate", which is impossible to render adequately in English.

and, while they saw with admiration the perfection of the religious which was put to them as an example, they came to think that they could not sanctify themselves, since acquiring sanctity required them to leave the world.

From here at least partly, came what I have sometimes called *tin-can mysticism*. During years of intense priestly activity, which brought me to go to different places and speak to so many social environments, I suffered through hearing always the same complaint: "If only! if only!"

Someone long married says: I wish I'd become a religious! And he who remained single: I wish I'd married! And the professional man: I wish I'd chosen another profession. And someone else: I wish I hadn't that wife (or woman, that husband), that mother-in-law, those children! Or I wish I hadn't contracted these obligations!

This is the ineffectual desire of those who, feeling for a moment the stimulus of sanctity, remain immobile, behind *tin-plate*: some, because of laziness or cowardice: others, because they could not find a spirituality which responded to the demands of their situation in the world.

And that "if only" was resolved either by the abandonment of their duties of state or by justifying the absence of spiritual and apostolic life. And with the spirituality which they were given, some felt as if they were acting a part, lacking naturalness: they felt displaced from the world, because of their desire of sanctification, and displaced from the religious life, because of their specific circumstances of their lay condition.

On one hand, they realised that they had to leave the world in order to be able to live that sort of spiritual life, and, on the other hand, that it was in the world where they should be, because they didn't feel a vocation to enter religious life, and because they considered themselves impeded by the obligations they had contracted".<sup>13</sup>

In the same letter, he goes on to explain how our Lord has wished to solved this problem at the root, "saying to many lay people that it is precisely in the world, in the exercise of their job or professional work—in any human task — in the fulfillment of their duties of state, where they must sanctify themselves and help sanctify others: giving them for this an ascetical doctrine, a spirit, which is completely secular, and means which are not just adapted to them, but specifically designed for their situation".<sup>14</sup>

To this framework of truly lay spirituality, we must add another aspect: that "situation in the world" which is human love (marriage and the family). This then is seen as a "perfectly apt and valid means and object of sanctification and it must be considered, in the plane of grace,

<sup>13</sup> Letters, Rome 19 March 1954. The italics are the author's.

<sup>14</sup> Idem No. 18.

as a genuine vocation, as a "charisma"<sup>15</sup> in the People of God. It was quite common for people who wished to serve God, to think (due to a spiritual deformation) that the matrimonial state implied practically the renunciation of sanctity, of having a position — vocation — in the development of the Church. One can understand the surprise of so many young people at the evangelical doctrine which the founder of Opus Dei preached and which is found in one of the first points of *The Way*: "You laugh because I tell you that you have a 'vocation' for marriage? Well you have just that: a vocation" (*The Way*, 27).<sup>16</sup>

This outlook (tin-can mysticism, "frenzy for change") often hides a manicheism belittling the world and temporal realities, which doesn't correspond to the truly biblical and Catholic idea.

"The world is good", the founder of Opus Dei has written — "It is we men, when we move away from God, who make it bad and ugly. It is a mission of ours to give it back the divine goodness of its right order, and turn it into an occasion of sanctity, causing ordinary life to be a means and object of sanctification".<sup>12</sup>

The world can only be saved to the extent that christians — like the rest of men — can responsibly take up their position, their "locus", their "place", in this world in which we live. In contrast, with the *contemptus mundi* proper to the religious vocation, the secular christian, with equal foundation in the Gospels must cultivate that spirituality of the amor

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<sup>15</sup> Speaking of marriage and celibacy — two "situations" of the christian in the world — St. Paul says "each of us his own endowment from God, one to live in this way another in that" (1 Cor. 7,7). *Endowment* or gift (*charisma* in Greek) expresses the divine initiative, the grace, the vocational character both of marriage and of celibacy, (cfr. Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 11 and note 7 of chapter II).

<sup>16</sup> The italics are the author's. Following the texts of Revelation and the solemn Magisterium of the Church, Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer has always taught that, in itself, apostolic celibacy is a superior charism to marriage (cfr. *The Way*, 28). Because of this in the Church the fullness of the priesthood, the official Magisterium and the *potestas regendi* are reserved to the celibate. Nevertheless christian husbands and wives can reach a greater degree of sanctity than those who live celibacy: "And teaching, because, it is a dogmatic truth, that virginity — or perfect chastity — is superior to marriage, we have said to married people that they too can be contemplative souls, in their state in life, precisely through the fulfilment of their family duties. We have given to marriage — a most worthy institution and *sacramentum magnum* (Eph. 5, 32), the image of the union of Christ with his Church — a vocational meaning of chosen souls; even though a soul that dedicates itself entirely to the service of God starts, in its supernatural ascent from a higher plane. But, starting from a lower plane, it is clear that, with the grace of God, they can reach a greater height than others, who perhaps begin their ascent from the peak" *Letters*. Rome 19 March 1954.

<sup>17</sup> *Letters*, Rome 15 August 1953.

*mundi*<sup>18</sup> which is also expressed in these other words of the author of *The Way*. "We must love the world because it is the ambit of our lives, because it is our place of work, because it is the battlefield — beautiful battle of love and peace — because it is the place where we have to sanctify ourselves and have to sanctify others."<sup>19</sup>

This recognition of natural values in the supernatural plane of the Redemption caused Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer to address members of Opus Dei with this daring expression: "The professional vocation, whatever it is, is for us part of our divine vocation".<sup>20</sup>

### SANCTIFYING ONESELF IN WORK

This world (acknowledged as good and valuable in the natural order since its origin is God's goodness) and man's work, (a fundamental dimension of the human vocation) are considered in each page of *The Way* as the basis, the substratum of the Christian's sanctification. Indeed, it is in the context of personal and collective sanctification that the subject of work is brought in *The Way* and in nearly all Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer's writings that I have read. Seen from this point of view, his spiritual doctrine can be summed up as follows: the vocation of the lay

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<sup>18</sup> Monastic and religious spiritualities, whose wonderful and providential development throughout history enriches the sanctity of the Church, share a theological background which stresses the eschatological sense of the christian life, the renunciation of this world — *contemptus saeculi* — liberation from earthly things, "professed" anticipation of heavenly things (cfr. Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, Chap. 6), especially No. 44). Needless to say that the *contemptus saeculi* of religious is not the scorn of the Manichean. Their renouncing of the world (by a divine vocation) is a fountain of graces for those who (also by a vocation from God) remain in their earthly tasks. In this respect the Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia* says (no. 46) "Let nobody think their consecrated way of life alienates religious from other men or makes them useless for human society. Though, in some cases they have no direct relations with their contemporaries, still in a deeper way they have their fellowmen present with them in the heart of Christ and cooperate with them spiritually so that the building up of human society may have its foundation in the Lord and have him as its goal: otherwise *those who built it may have laboured in vain*. The greatness of the religious state is shown in that "even though it does not enter into the hierarchical structure of the Church it belongs undeniably to her life and holiness" (no. 44). Nevertheless (and always within the unity of the People of God) a truly lay spirituality is, as we are seeing, different in its premises and in its expression, in its theological background, from any religious spirituality.

<sup>19</sup> Letters, Rome 19 March 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Letters, Rome 14 February 1950. The habitual reader of *The Way* will have observed that when the author refers to the human action of the christian (which he has in common with his fellow men) he singles out different aspects of this action, according to the circumstances:



christian consists in the sanctification of ordinary work. "Professional work, and all it brings with it in terms of duties of state, obligations and social relations, is not simply the environment in which the members of Opus Dei should seek sanctity; it is the means and the way they use to attain it: *exibit homo ad opus summ* (ps. 103, 23), each one to his work, knowing that he must sanctify his profession, sanctifying himself in his profession, and sanctifying with his profession"<sup>21</sup>. This instrumentality of the earthly situations with respect to the sanctity of the christian, appears in these words of the Second Vatican Council: "All of Christ's faithful, therefore, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances for their lives, will grow in holiness day by day, through these very situation . . ."<sup>22</sup>

Among the consequences of this way of looking at work are:

1. The universality of the call to perfection.

God calls men to sanctify in any lawful human profession, whatever it be: Would anyone dare assert that the carpenter's saw is less useful than the surgeon's scalpel? (*The Way*, 484). "There is not a noble human work on the earth which cannot be made divine. There is no work which we must not sanctify, which cannot be included in the consecratio mundi"<sup>23</sup>.

2. The sanctification of work demands that the "finis operantis" be supernatural.

"Add a supernatural motive to your ordinary work, and you will have sanctified it (*The Way*, 359). For ordinary christians the attitude of offering oneself as a 'spiritual sacrifice which God accepts through Jesus

work, profession, human activities, study, culture, professional work, etc. But in the author's mind they all seem to reduce simply to *work*, the quintessence of human activity. It thus comes to be considered as man's most profound characteristic in the order of Creation (and, because of this, the essence of secularity as a theological category): "Work for us is dignity of life and a duty imposed by the Creator, since man was created *ut operaretur*. Work is a means by which man shares in creation: therefore, it is not only worthy, whatever it is, but also it is an instrument for achieving human (earthly) perfection and supernatural perfection" (*Letters*, Rome 31 May 1954).

<sup>21</sup> *Letters*, Rome 31 May 1954.

<sup>22</sup> Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, no. 41.

<sup>23</sup> *Letters*, Rome 31 May 1954. This universality is the foundation of the diversity of human situations found in fact among the members of Opus Dei. "Opus Dei receives and channels the most beautiful fact that any condition and any professional work, provided it be and remain honest, can bring one to God. And our Work takes in this possibility in a well defined vocation: a *personal dedication* to God in the middle of the world, in order to turn our ordinary life and our professional and social activity into instruments of sanctification and apostolate whatever one's age and individual circumstances" (*Letters*, Rome 15 August 1953).

Christ' (I Pet. 2,5) should be set in the context of the sanctification of work. This supernatural view of work offered to God is the best field for the exercise of the royal priesthood of the laity; "while you develop your activity in the very heart of society, taking part in all the noble desires and in all the fine works of men, you should never lose sight of the deep priestly meaning of your life: you must be mediators in Christ Jesus so as to bring all things to God, and have divine grace give life to everything"<sup>24</sup>.

3. The sanctification of work also demands the fulfilment of the "*finis operis*", which implies a high human standard in the works itself.

"You ask me, and I answer: your perfection consists in living perfectly in the place, occupation and position that God, through those in authority, has assigned to you" (The Way, 926). This human perfection is one of the most important aspects of the ascetical doctrine of the chapter entitled "Little Things" (The Way, 813-830). In this chapter a small point is found which shows us the new horizon of a sanctity to be found in the concrete details of our work: "Do you really want to be a saint? Carry out the duty of each moment: do what you ought and concentrate on what you are doing" (The Way, 815). We might say that the phrase which I have underlined calls for "technical" perfection. "An essential part of this task (the sanctification of ordinary work) which God has entrusted to us, is the good execution of the work itself, a perfection which is also human, the good fulfillment of all professional and social obligations... all should work conscientiously, with a sense of responsibility, with love and perseverance, without carelessness or superficiality"<sup>25</sup>.

This doctrine shows us the sanctification of work in its human and supernatural nucleus. For it is not simply a matter of supernaturalising the "*finis operantis*" as something extrinsic to and superimposed on the objective task: one must sanctify the work itself, discovering the final "*finis operis*" through faith and carrying it out by means of hope and charity. This final objective purpose, which is supernatural (situated in the plane of Redemption) embraces and takes within itself the intermediate objective purposes (which are natural, situated in the plane of Creation), raising them to the order of grace. Because of this the sanctification of work demands the human perfection of the work itself, its objective perfection, its conscientious fulfillment<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Letters, Rome 28 March 1955. Cf. Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 34.

<sup>25</sup> Letters, Rome 31 May 1954.

<sup>26</sup> See what is said further on about work as the terminus and object of the sanctifying action.

4. **Christian fraternity is mainly expressed in the context of professional life.**

"When you have finished your work, do your brother's, helping him, for Christ's sake, so tactfully and so, naturally that no one — not even he — will realise that you are doing more than what in justice you ought. This indeed, is virtue befitting a son of God! (*The Way*, 440).

5. **Work, a human vocation, is the ordinary situation of the divine vocation.**

"What amazes you seems natural to me: that God has sought you out in the practice of your profession! That is how he sought the first, Peter and Andrew, James and John, besides their nets, and Matthew, sitting in the custom-house. And — wonder of wonders — Paul, in his eagerness to destroy the seed of the Christians" (*The Way*, 799).

In the way this point is written one can sense the surprise produced by the idea of a true vocation to sanctify in the middle of the world.

6. **The sanctified human activities becomes a way of living the Communion of Saints.**

"Live a special Communion of Saints: and, in the moment of interior struggle just as in hours of professional work, each of you will feel the joy and the strength of not being alone" (*The Way*, 545).

The Church Constitution describes this panorama of the sanctification of ordinary work: "Those who engage in human work, often of a heavy kind, should perfect themselves through it, help their fellow citizens, and promote the betterment of the whole of human society and the whole of creation; indeed, with their active charity, rejoicing in hope and bearing one another's burdens, they should imitate Christ who plied his hands with carpenter's tools and is always working with the Father for the salvation of all; and they should rise to a higher sanctity, truly apostolic, by their everyday work itself"<sup>27</sup>.

## 2. THE PRIMACY OF GRACE IN THE TASK OF SANCTIFICATION:

### BAPTISMAL SPIRITUALITY

We have seen that according to the spirituality of Opus Dei, as it appears in *The Way* and in the other doctrinal writings of its Founder, the presence of Christians in the world is understood as the sanctification of the earthly realities. I should perhaps stress the sanctification element in case it might be thought that this great panorama of presence in the world, of constructing the earthly city is the result of the action of some

<sup>27</sup> Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 41.

"heroes" leaving a new humanism by taking part, with their aggregate of human virtues in the greatest of undertakings. Nothing is further from Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer's mind.

From this standpoint one discovers the essence of the task of sanctification: it can be nothing other than the most intimate union with, and the most total self-abandonment in him who according to the Scriptures, alone is Holy. "Be you holy as I am Holy" (Lev. XI, 44).

There is a passage in the writings of the Founder of Opus Dei which gives us the existential outline of this task of sanctification — the *consecratio mundi*: "And if at the sight of our weakness, of our personal errors, a feeling of impatience should arise — 'since I am the way I am, can I consecrate the world?' — you must bear immediately a decisive yes, which will resound in your mind and in your heart: '*sufficit tibi gratia mea*' my grace is enough for you"<sup>28</sup>.

The christian who must sanctify the earth feels the weight of his weakness, the *pondus naturae lapsae*, the radical disproportion between his natural abilities — however great they may seem — and the supernatural undertaking to which he is invited. And from this reflexion, which arises spontaneously in the christian soul, is drawn the other great structural line of this spirituality which I described above as "the primacy of grace". Let us see how it is presented in *The Way* and in the other texts which I have quoted.

The first consideration, the awareness of one's own weakness, the Pauline theme of the old man, is described in *The Way* (cfr. the chapter on humility, *The Way* 589-613) in a very vivid manner: "Don't forget that you are a . . . dust-bin . . . Humble yourself: don't you know that you are the rubbish bin? (*The Way*, 592). "You are dust-fallen and dirty" (*The Way*, 599). But a Catholic conception of our existence does not allow man to take refuge in feelings of despair or of importance; or even allow them to form: "Don't be troubled if, as you consider the wonders of the supernatural world, you hear that other voice, the intimate insinuating voice of your own self — it is the body of death crying out for its lost rights. 'His' grace is sufficient for you: be faithful and you will conquer" (*The Way*, 707). "Trust always in your God. He does not lose battles" (*The Way*, 733). "Each day, my God, I am less sure of myself and more sure of you!" (*The Way*, 729).

God and divine grace. This is the rock, the source of holiness: the pages of *The Way* are continually talking to us about God and his initiative and his power and his love and his grace. The christian, with the existential tension between his weakness and his vocation to holiness, finds peace in God, and so everything appears under the prism of goodness.

<sup>28</sup> *Letters*, Rome 31 May 1954.

## AWARENESS OF DIVINE FILIATION

In *The Way*, God is, above all, the Father, "God, your Father" (*The Way*, 265) who is very close to man. The discovery of his nearness, of his intimate relationship with the everyday activity of the christian, is a fundamental part of the spirituality of *Opus Dei*. "We've got to be convinced that God is always near us. We live as though he were far away, in the heavens high above, and we forget that he is also continually by your side. He is there like a loving Father. He loves each one of us more than all the mothers in the world can love their children — helping us, inspiring us, blessing... and forgiving. How often we have misbehaved and then cleared the frowns from our parents' brows, telling them: I won't do it any more! The same day, perhaps, we fall again... And our father, with feigned harshness in his voice and serious face, reprimands us, while in his heart he is moved, realizing our weakness and thinking: poor boy, how hard he tries to behave well! We've got to be filled to be imbued with the idea that our Father, and very much our Father, is God who is both near us and in heaven" (267).

In effect, Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer's pastoral activity has always been directed towards bringing out in the Christian the most radical consequence of Baptism: awareness of divine sonship. For it is only from this starting point that one can become identified with the Church in the most profound sense.<sup>29</sup> This is what is reflected in the whole chapter of *The Way* entitled "Presence of God" (265-278).

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<sup>29</sup> According to Paul VI in his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* a more profound awareness of belonging to the Church must be characterized by a rediscovery of this baptismal spirituality: "It is necessary to restore to holy Baptism, that is, to the fact of having being incorporated by means of this sacrament into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, all of its insignificance. It is *especially important that the baptized person should have a highly conscious esteem of his revelation, or, rather, of his rebirth to the most happy reality of being an adopted son of God*, to the dignity of being a brother of Christ, to the good fortune. We mean to the grace and joy of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to the vocation to a new life, which has lost nothing human save only the unhappy fate of original sin and which, because it is human, is capable of the unhappy fate of original sin and which, because it is human, is capable of the finest manifestations and the most precious and sublime acts. To be Christians, to have received holy Baptism, must not be looked upon as something indifferent or of little importance, but it must be imprinted deeply and happily in the conscience of every baptized person. He must truly look upon it, as did the Christians of old, as an 'illumination', which by drawing down upon him the life-giving ray of divine Truth, opens heaven to him, sheds light upon earthly life and enables him to walk as a child of the light towards the vision of God, the spring of eternal happiness." (*Ecclesiam suam*, Chap. 1).

"Father said the big fellow, a good student at the University (I wonder what has become of him), 'I was thinking of what you told me — that I'm a son of God'. and I found myself walking along the street, head up, chin out, and a proud feeling inside... a son of God! With sure conscience I advised him to encourage that 'pride'" (The Way, 274).

This consideration of God as Father, with the consequent sense of divine filiation, moves souls on the way of love and confidence in God, removing any type of fear, which is only a temptation in the ascetic struggle. In the spirituality of Opus Dei this doctrine is essential. "A soul in Opus Dei is not afraid of life nor afraid of death, because the foundation of spiritual life is the sense of his divine filiation. God is my Father, and is the Author of all good and is all Goodness. And this sense of divine filiation give us the fortitude to struggle and, with the grace of God, to overcome at least our pride; it doesn't induce us to laxity, presumption or abandonment (of our task), but rather, the contrary: to a refinement of conscience and to a deep contrition, to the sorrow of love.

And the mea culpa of your personal examination of conscience each night is not an offence to God and the Church; it means more love, more confidence, more humility, more serenity. This is the way on which we want to lead all souls: the way of contemplative souls in the middle of the world"<sup>30</sup>.

The awareness of divine filiation, which brings one to treat God as Father and to live fraternity with the Son, is therefore the foundation of the spirituality proper to Opus Dei and gives it the character of a Baptismal spirituality, since it is this Sacrament which confers on us the dignity of sons of God: "We want that holiness, that sanctity which is within the reach of all: we are people of the world, men and women in the street, ordinary christians, for whom this title is enough: "agnosce, o christiane, dignitatem tuam: know, o Christian, your dignity"<sup>31</sup>.

## FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST

Jesus — the Son, first-born among many brothers (Rom. 8, 29) — is the true Way to the Father and pervades the entire spirituality of The Way: "In Christ, we have every deal: for he is King, he is Love, he is God" (The Way, 426)

To man and women dedicated to the most temporal tasks this christocentric reflexion is proposed, echoing St. Paul (*vita vestra est abscondita cum Christo in Deo*, Col. 3, 3): "Consider what is most beautiful and most noble on earth, what pleases the mind and the other faculties, and what delights the flesh and the senses. And the world, and the other worlds

<sup>30-31</sup> Letters, Rome 19 March 1954.

that shine in the night: the whole Universe. Well this, along with all the follies of the heart satisfied, is worth nothing, is nothing and less than nothing compared... with this God of mine! of yours! Infinite treasure, pearl of great price, humbled, become a slave, reduced to the form of a servant in the stable where he chose to be born, in Joseph's workshop, in his Passion and in his ignominious death... and in the madness of Love which is the Blessed Eucharist" (*The Way*, 432).

And in this contemplation of the mysteries of Christ, one's dealings with Jesus become something alive, fraternal, friendly. "Jesus is your friend. The Friend. With a human heart, like yours. With loving eyes that wept for Lazarus (*The Way*, 422). The life of grace is, as it were an offer of friendship made by Jesus Christ — *vos autem dixi amicos!* (John 15, 15) — which the christian should take up. "Don't be afraid to call our Lord by his name — JESUS — and to tell him that you love him" (*The Way*, 303).

And together with the Son is the Mother. In this life hidden with Christ in God, Mary appears. One must read and meditate the chapter of *The Way* entitled "Our Lady" (492-516) to see how piety towards the Mother of God forms as essential part of this "primacy of grace", which is the second structural line of the spirituality of *Opus Dei*. Mary is a way to Christ. "Say to her: Mother, my Mother — yours, because you are hers on many counts — may your love bind me to your Son's Cross: may I not lack the Faith, nor the courage, nor the daring, to carry out the will of our Jesus" (*The Way*, 491).

## CONTEMPLATIVES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WORLD

The life of prayer, the intimacy of grace, filial relationship with God in Christ, love for Holy Mass, is the consequence of this doctrine<sup>32</sup>. Only from this "interior" life can the christian begin the sanctification of work and of the things of the earth. "All that exterior activity is a waste of time, if you lack LOVE. It's like sewing with a needle and no thread" (*The Way*, 967). "If you don't keep in touch with Christ in prayer and in the Bread, how can you make him known to others?" (*The Way*, 105). But... "if you belong to Christ — completely to Christ! — from him you will get fire, light and warmth for all men" (*The Way*, 154). PAUL VI writes. "Interior life still remains the great source of the Church's spi-

<sup>32</sup> In the Letter of 14 February 1950 Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer describes christian existence thus: "...and turns our whole existence into prayer, sacrifice and service, in a filial relationship with the most holy Trinity: with the Father, with the Son, with the Holy Spirit, with Jesus Christ, *perfectus Deus, perfectus homo* (Athanasian Creed); with attractive and strong piety towards the most holy Virgin, our Mother; with a limitless love for the holy Church, for the Vicar of Christ and for all souls."

rituality, her own proper way of receiving the illuminations of the Spirit of Christ, the fundamental and irreplaceable manifestation of her religious and social activity, as impregnable defence as well as an inexhaustible source of energy in her difficult contacts with the world".<sup>33</sup>

Without this powerful experience of union with God, christian action in the world — "the difficult contact with the profane world" — is not the sanctification of ordinary work, it is not the *consecratio mundi*, but profanation of what is sacred, pure activism.

"Hurrying, hurrying! Working, working! Feverish activity, anxiety to be up and doing. Marvelous material structures... On the spiritual plane: broken up boxes, cheap cotton, painted cardboard, hurrying, working! And many people running here and there" (*The Way*, 837).

This primacy of interior life and grace, based on divine filiation is absolutely necessary: Action is worth nothing without prayer" (*The Way*, 81). Because of this "If you want to give yourself to God in the world, rather than being scholarly, (that is, coming before temporal action)... you must be spiritual, closely united to our Lord by Prayer: you must wear an invisible cloak that will cover each and everyone of your senses and faculties: praying, praying, praying, atoning, atoning" (*The Way*, 946). Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer understands the sanctification of ordinary work as a pouring out on people and things of the intimate life of grace: "You have got to be a 'man of God', a man of interior life, a man of prayer and sacrifice. Your apostolate must be the overflow of your life "within" (*The Way*, 961)<sup>34</sup>

### 3. SECULAR SITUATIONS SANCTIFIED BY GRACE AS A FORM OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS: APOSTOLIC SPIRITUALITY, "CONSECRATIO MUNDI"

From the projection of the "radical" christian element (the life of grace with its formal effect of divine filiation) over the "radical" human element (work, one's earthly situation), comes the sanctification of ordinary work. And the result is that work becomes essentially an apostolic witness. This way of understanding the apostolic vocation of lay people

<sup>33</sup> *Ecclesiam suam*, Chap. 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Bread and World" Host and prayer" (*The Way*, 87). I cannot here omit such an important feature of this 'primacy of grace' as the meaning of the Mass in the life of man dedicated to *consecratio mundi*. I shall just copy some words of the author of *The Way*: "We consider the Holy Mass as the *centre and root* of our interior life. Kindle yourselves in the desire of offering yourselves with Christ on the Altar for the salvation of all souls. Never get used to celebrating or assisting at the Holy Sacrifice... there Christ is always present, God and Man, Head and Body, and therefore together with our Lord, all His Church. (*Letters*, Rome 8 March 1955 n. 5).



is the third structural line of the spirituality reflected in the writings of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer.

"You stray from your apostolic way if you use the opportunity — or the excuse — offered by a work of zeal to leave the duties of your position unfulfilled. For you will lose that professional prestige which is your 'bait' as a 'fisher of men'" (*The Way*, 372).

This is one of the many passages of *The Way* in which Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer sketches his conception of lay apostolate. This was a complete about-turn on what most catholics understood apostolate to be. This was more or less synonymous with "works of zeal", charitable or religious activities carried out in the ecclesiastical sphere, aside from, if not opposed to, the secular activity of the faithful. The doctrine of the Founder of Opus Dei, on the contrary, places the christian's professional work in a very intimate relationship with his apostolic task. Sanctified work becomes the ordinary divine channel of the lay apostolic vocation. The whole range of human situations and of professional life is now identified with apostolic action: "You must inspire others with love of God and zeal for souls, so that they in turn will set on fire many more who are on a third plane, and each of these latter spread the flame to their professional companions" (*The Way*, 944).

In effect according to the spirituality of Opus Dei the apostolate of lay people is not an "ecclesiastical activity" alongside their civil activity; it is that same activity (with its multiple human relationships) carried out in a supernatural manner. "Our specific purpose imposes on us an intense, constant, profound and ordered professional work, with an adequate training, with an abundance of doctrine, with study, in this way to carry out — through this task, this dedication — the apostolate which God wants of us, in the sanctification of our profession or job in the middle of the world"<sup>35</sup>.

Sanctified human work becomes an apostolic witness: "I like your apostolic motto: 'To work without rest'" (*The Way*, 373). In the writings of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer one finds repeated, with little variation, a brief formula, which expresses the essence of his thought on the lay apostolate: "One must sanctify one's profession, sanctify oneself in one's profession, sanctify with one's profession"<sup>36</sup>. The second part refers to personal sanctification through work. But the first and third parts refer to an apostolic mission through work.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, Rome 15 August 1953 n. 38.

<sup>36</sup> *Letters*, Rome 31 May 1954. In 1950 he had written: The particular characteristic of the spirituality of Opus Dei, as I have so often said to you, consists in that each one must sanctify *his* profession, his ordinary work, sanctify himself in his profession and sanctify others *with* his profession" (*Letters*, Rome 14 February 1950).

### SANCTIFYING WORK ITSELF: APOSTOLIC ACTION IN SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND ENVIRONMENTS

"One must sanctify work". Here work appears as the object of sanctifying action<sup>37</sup>. Work should be holy: that is, temporal activities, the objective circumstances of human life and social structures should be objectively holy, they must be made holy. Not only people, but things, the material world, should be holy. In Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer's own words: "All the things of the earth, including material creatures and also the terrestrial and temporal activities of men, have to be brought to God (and now, after sin, redeemed and reconciled), each one according to its own nature, according to the immediate purpose which God has given it, but at the same time seeing its ultimate supernatural destiny in Jesus Christ: 'For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross' (Col. 1. 19-20). We have to see to it that Christ crowns all human activities<sup>38</sup>. This implies two things in the christian who accepts his own circumstances:

First. A human and supernatural perfection in the carrying out of work: *opera manuum nostrarum dirige super nos*. (Psalm 89, 17). We have already examined this point above.

Second. An evaluation, a christian criticism of the environment and social circumstances in which one finds himself, so as to realise what degree of disorder — of sin — is found in them: only thus can he sanctify them, that is, undertake any necessary reform of social institutions which must be understood as "giving back to the world the divine goodness of its right order"<sup>39</sup>.

The social doctrine of the Church will always be the criterion which inspires this valuation of structure and solutions, but the strength of these solutions will be measured in civil society by their human validity and by the professional prestige<sup>40</sup> of the men who propose them, not from an official "ecclesiastical mandate" as some would like. "God has left the world to the disputes of men" (Eccl. 3, 11) and christians, men themselves, should, in their relationships with their fellow-citizens, have no external privileges, even though, in fact, they are endowed with the invisible privilege of God's grace.

<sup>37</sup> In a phrase of Mgr. Escrivá de Balaguer quoted above (page 20, note 17) work is said to be "means and object of sanctification" *Letters* Rome 15 August 1954.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters*, Rome 19 March 1954.

<sup>39</sup> *Letters*, Rome 15 August 1953.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr the concept of professional prestige above.

"One must sanctify work". Lay people, carrying out with perfection their human task in the world — shot through with the grace of God — will contribute towards the fact that the things of the earth are 'effected and grow according to Christ and the glory of the Creator and the Redeemer'<sup>41</sup>. In practice they will try to create an atmosphere — ways of getting on together — of fraternity which by making man more human dispose him at the same for the reception of the supernatural message of salvation.<sup>42</sup> In effect, in the same measure in which the order of the world is humanly right, this order better shows its coherence with the supernatural order and facilitates the action of grace. Because of this sanctification of work is apostolic action.<sup>43</sup>

### SANCTIFYING WITH WORK: APOSTOLATE WITH INDIVIDUALS

"One must sanctify with one's work". This sanctifying action, which is direct as regards temporal things and indirect as regards people, is, in the doctrine of the Founder of Opus Dei, simultaneous to and inseparable from that other action which is projected **directly** on individual and specific persons. From the professional and civil situation which each person has in life, there arises a whole series of relationships, of social contacts, acquaintances and friendships. This natural human fact, when lived by a christian in a supernatural way, is spontaneously changed into apostolic action, by word and by example. This, I think, is the content of what Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer expresses when he say "Sanctify others with one's profession". The following point of **The Way** seems to be a gloss on this idea. "**Nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis . . .** was not our heart burning within us, while he spoke to us on the way? If you are an apostle, these words of the disciples of Emmaus should rise spontaneously to the lips of your professional companions when they meet you along the ways of their lives" (**The Way**, 917).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Dogm. Const. De Ecclesia, No. 31.

<sup>42</sup> The 'social pressure of one's environment can act for or against the christian way of life. The presence of christians in the various ambients is a necessary condition for the social dynamism of their structures to act "in Christ's favour": "There is no denying the influence of the environment you've told me. And I have to answer; Quite. That is why you have to be formed in such a way that you can carry your own environment about with you in a natural manner, and so give your own 'tone' to the society in which we live" (*The Way* 376).

<sup>43</sup> Cfr. No. 3 of the Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, which deals with this subject from the point of view of the participation of the laity in the royal office of Christ.

<sup>44</sup> This thought is found, in almost the same words, in one of the letters which we have quoted: "And going together along the road of professional and civil life, there is an occasion for a deep apostolic work, so that these people, like the disciples of Emmaus, can say afterwards. *Vonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis dum loqueretur in via, et aperiret*

"The members of Opus Dei work as citizens, endeavoring to fulfill all their duties and exercising all their rights; and each one carries out his profession — manual or intellectual — in the same manner and in the same way as his colleagues, but endeavoring to gain souls for the holy Church of God in this exercise of his personal secular occupation".<sup>45</sup>

### THE APOSTOLATE OF LAY PEOPLE: AN "ECCLESIAL" BUT NOT "ECCLESIASTICAL" ACTIVITY: CHRISTIAN DISCRETION

Although this action on things and persons is truly apostolic, it cannot be set in any "ecclesiastical" frame work, since it is always of a civil nature — work, professional life, friendship, human contact, social and family relationship. In order to understand the doctrine of Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer, one must discover the compatibility of the secular nature of the life of the laity and the profound "ecclesiality" which Baptism and the other sacraments introduce into these secular activities without making them "ecclesiastical".

"Christ is the great Prophet", says the Constitution *De Ecclesia* No. 35, "who . . . fulfills this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy who teach in his name and by his power, but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witness and provides them with the appreciation of the faith and the grace of the word". The layman (it is a different question in the case of hierarchical "mandate" or of "canonical mission")<sup>46</sup> does not speak officially in the name of Christ; he doesn't act ecclesiastically but in a civil way, secularly, even though his action may be truly ecclesial and christian<sup>47</sup> and an exercise of his participation in the prophetic office of Christ, which has been given him through his divine filiation (Baptism) and by the pouring out of the Spirit (Confirmation).

"Operari sequitur esse". From the nature of the lay apostolate follows the specific mode of putting it into action. This "operari" is described in the doctrine of the Founder of Opus Dei by one of the most important categories of this spirituality, discretion. "Discretion is not secrecy, nor mystery-making. It is simply naturalness (*The Way*, 641). Discretion is opposed to "officiality": "to be an apostle and not to call yourself an apostle, to be a missionary — with a mission — and not to

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*nobis Scripturas?* Was not our heart burning in us, while he spoke to us on the way and explained to us the Scriptures?" *Letters*, Rome 15 August 1953.

<sup>45</sup> *Letters*, Rome 19 March 1954.

<sup>46</sup> Cfr. Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 33.

<sup>47</sup> "The lay apostolate is a sharing in the specific mission of the Church" Dogm. Const. *De Ecclesia*, No. 33.

call yourself a missionary, to be a man of God while being a man of the world" (**The Way**, 848).

Discretion means authenticity (respect for the true secular condition of the layman) and, consequently, effectiveness.

"You long to shine like a star, to shed your light from high in the heavens? Better to burn like a hidden torch, setting your fire to all that you touch. That's your apostolate: that's why you are on earth" (**The Way**, 835).

The discreet apostolate of the laity is characterised by the fact that they give the Word following the channels of human and civil situations, in the same way as the human word. Because of this Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer could call their apostolic witness "apostolate of confidence and friendship" (**The Way**, 973).

Human contact, social and professional fraternity and, at the same time, the defence of the freedom and dignity of the human person, are the bases of this discreet apostolic testimony of the laity. In them Christ becomes present in all the corners of the world, but quietly, without "triumphalism", without "official catholicism" — with discretion — like the leaven in the mass. Msgr. Escrivá de Balaguer illustrates the apostolate of the lay people in the world by saying that it is like "an intravenous injection in the circulatory torrent of society". This is discretion: a real and silent presence of divine grace in the dynamism of human structures.

"It is true and I have called your discreet apostolate a 'silent and effective mission', And I won't go back on what I said" (**The Way**, 970).

Necessarily an apostolate which consists in the sanctification of work and which has these theological characteristics, is carried out freely, on one's own individual responsibility, and has very varied manifestations — as varied as the range of social activities.

"You are amazed to hear me approve of the lack of "uniformity in that apostolate in which you work. And I told you: Unity and variety. You have to be different, each having his own personal and special characteristics. But also as alike one another as the saints, who would not be saints, if each of them had not identified himself with Christ" (**The Way**, 947).

And the unity of the apostolate of the laity in the midst of this variety cannot consist, by its very nature, in an organization which would be the "official centre of the laity" but in something as discreetly (and profoundly) central as charity, the soul of the Mystical Body of Christ: "The isolated efforts of each one of you have little effect. Let the charity of Christ unite you, and you will be amazed at their effectiveness" (**The Way**, 847).

# THE UNTHINKABLE

by

Wilfrid Harrington, O.P. \*

*Might not the Church develop in ways hitherto unthought of and perhaps now regarded by most people as unthinkable?*

While no one can seriously doubt that the Church is undergoing a crisis, a testing-time, it may be that Christians have tended to take a myopic view of the situation. We do not pay sufficient heed to the fact that turmoil in the Church is an aspect of the upset caused in every sphere of life by an era of unprecedented change. It may be that here the attitude of 'substantialism,'<sup>1</sup> the feeling that the Church is immune to progress and change, had left some unprepared for change, and many shocked at the range of it. Of course, there have been others who have welcomed change: whether for the sake of change or because they had become convinced of the need for it. It is undoubtedly true that Vatican II has opened a door, a door which remains open — though some have wished, or sought, to slam it firmly shut again. Yet, the hopes roused by Vatican II, hopes cherished by many, have not been fully realized, or not realized at all; there is a good deal of dissatisfaction with things as they are. It could be that those are right who maintain that we have reached our present pass because the Church has gone in directions not envisaged by the Council, and has entered upon unsure ways. One prefers to believe that the Church has not been imaginative enough, that it has shown a failure of nerve. It has been assumed, too readily one feels, that there are precise and firm limits to any possible change, that there are areas wherein change is not unthinkable. Yet, what are these limits, when all is said and done? We must look to the apostolic Church, to the New Testament.

## THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

In doing so, we may take as our guide Karl Rahner, who has precisely defined the place and role of the apostolic Church.<sup>2</sup> He begins by asserting the basic christian belief that the history of God's self-communication which unfolds throughout the Old Testament has attained its final form

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<sup>1</sup> See W. Harrington, 'A Call for New Understanding in the Church', DOCTRINE AND LIFE, 23 (1973), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> K. Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi*, I (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), pp. 171-76.

in Jesus Christ. This historical manifestation of God's grace-giving will involves the abiding existence of the community of those who believe in Jesus Christ — the Church. The Church can only remain true to its own nature if it understands itself to be the Church of the apostolic age; it is only through the apostolic Church and its testimony to the faith that the Church attains Jesus Christ. The perpetual recourse to the first age requires the Church to be able, truly and unmistakably, to distinguish the activity of faith of the primitive Church. That need is met if written testimony of a normative kind concerning the activity and belief of the primitive Church is available — and it is available, as Scripture. Thus, reference to the activity and faith of the primitive Church has to serve as a critical standard of the Church's activity and teaching. For, the 'apostolic age', the first age of the Church, does not only mark a beginning in time; it is, rather, the foundation of the Church. The Church must grow, it must develop, over the ages; but the edifice of the Church must always stand firmly on that foundation. There is a norm, and authentic growth can be measured against that norm.<sup>3</sup>

### THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

But what do we know of the apostolic age? The New Testament picture is by no means complete, nor yet clearly-defined. We do see, though, unmistakably, the essential features of that astonishing new age. We can see not so much a Church as churches drawn together in their common allegiance to Christ. We find a manifest theological pluralism: of Paul, of John, of the author of Hebrews, of each synoptic — of each biblical writer, in short. We observe flexibility in structure and organisation. We find that the primitive Palestinian community, at its earliest stage, has as leadership, the Twelve and the Seven (Acts 1:21-26; 6:1-6). Communities outside Palestine were under the direction of the apostle who had founded them; when absent, the same apostle would guide them by letter or by fully-accredited representatives. A local organization also began to take shape. It was modelled on the Jewish synagogue, notably on the synagogue's system of elders. There is no evidence that, in the communities, one elder held pre-eminence over the others.<sup>4</sup> At this stage,

<sup>3</sup> 'If the "beginning" of the Church is envisaged not just as its first phase in time but as laying the permanent foundation for its continued existence, that beginning must be permanently present. It must remain present in the Church's historical dimension (though not only in this) in the explicit profession of faith (even when this faith is given conceptual formulation), in the norm of faith binding on all, in the possibility of a humanly verifiable recourse to this enduring normative beginning of the last days. Consequently, there exists a pure and therefore absolutely normative objective expression of the permanence of the first beginning, a *norma non normata*. This is what we call scripture' (K. Rahner, *ibid.*, p. 172).

<sup>4</sup> James's position in the Jerusalem community (Acts 15:12-21; 21:18; Gal. 1:19) was due to his unique standing as 'brother of the Lord'.

the 'hierarchy' comprised the apostles (including the Twelve) and their delegates, the elders, and the deacons as assistants to the apostles. Besides, in the Gentile Christian missionary city of Antioch, we find the community presided over by 'prophets and teachers'.

True, the term **episkopos** (whence our 'bishop') occurs in the New Testament, but as the equivalent of **presbyteros** ('elder'). Thus, for instance, Paul summoned to Miletus the 'elders' of the church of Ephesus (Acts 20:17) and assured them that the Holy Spirit had constituted them 'guardians (**episkopoi**) to feed the church of the Lord' (20:28). Similarly, in saluting the leaders of the church of Philippi, Paul names the 'overseers (**episkopoi**) and deacons' (Phil. 1:1); unless the elders are included among the 'overseers', their omission is inexplicable. In the middle of the first century, then, **presbyteros** and **episkopos** are, for all intents and purposes, synonymous.

The Pastorals reflect the same situation; and this is significant because they are later than the Pauline letters, and later than Acts also.<sup>5</sup> In 1 Tm 3:2 the author begins to outline the qualities and duties of an **episkopos** and then passes to those of a deacon — the qualities are much the same — with no mention of elders. And in Tm 1:7 (the only other passage where **episkopos** occurs) the argument runs like this — v.5: Titus will establish 'elders' in the towns of Crete; v.6: each of the appointed must be blameless; v.7: 'for an **episkopos**...' These texts show that **episkopos** and **presbyteros** do not yet stand for two clearly distinguished degrees of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. We are far from the 'monarchical episcopate' (the model of the later bishop) of Ignatius of Antioch (in the early second century) — but this does not mean that the Pastorals have therefore to be much earlier in time, for that development in Syria did not at once affect other churches.

Manifestly, there is a diversity of ministerial structures in the early churches, and the New Testament does not propose a fixed institutional model. But the New Testament is normative for the Church. It would appear, then, that theological pluralism and flexibility of structure have very right to be regarded as normal.

## THE UNTHINKABLE

The New Testament situation should give us pause. We need to ask ourselves where the limits of change really lie. We may have taken too

<sup>5</sup> Today very many New Testament scholars tend to accept as an established fact that the Pastoral letters (1, 2 Timothy, Titus) are not Pauline, but were written by a later disciple. These scholars take their stand on the nature of the errors combated and on the hierarchical organisation of the Churches, both of which point to the second century, and also on the language and style which are quite unlike those of Paul. The Pastorals are late among the New Testament writings; we may date them about the year 100 A.D.



much for granted. Above all, we have surely been too prone to put under the aegis of the Spirit what were, in truth, the human developments of what must remain a human Church. So we had, for instance unity with uniformity. We have noted elsewhere how, at one point, a particular theology prevailed; and it was accepted by many (as others knew to their cost) that there could be no other 'orthodox' theology<sup>6</sup>. The Latin liturgy was surely seen, in many quarters, as a providential sign of the unity of the Church. By a strange process of reasoning, the Latin liturgy was also presented as a striking sign of the catholicity of the Church. How, in fact, the foisting of a thoroughly European cultural form on African and Asian people could be regarded as a mark of catholicity, is not easy to fathom! The fact remains that, in the recent past, it was taken for granted that the liturgy had to be in Latin, and that there had to be one 'official' theology. And there would have been many to confidently discern, on the one and on the other, the seal of the Spirit. But, behold, it is not so! There has been a radical change. The Latin liturgy has all but disappeared, and theological pluralism is an undoubted fact. In both cases the **unthinkable** has come to pass.

And this is just what we must find courage to face: the unthinkable. Our experience of rapid change within the Church should surely awaken us to the fact that we have tended to accept the past too uncritically. Yet, though we have seen so much that was 'unchangeable' change before our eyes, still, in some areas at least we have not seen, and are not, radical enough —not only not radical enough in action but not even in our assessment.

A single example will suffice: let us take the parish structure. Is the traditional parish structure really effective, especially in large urban areas? More precisely, is it realistic to have (or to build) large churches, holding upwards of a thousand persons, and have them crowded for Sunday Masses? In what sense is such a crowd of strangers a community, and their thronging presence a eucharistic celebration? Surely, common-sense would suggest, and experience has shown, that smaller, more intimate, groupings are desirable. In such more favourable circumstances there could be community and meaningful liturgy. But, of course, we would need many more, very many more, ministers of the Eucharist. And where, in a time of declining vocations to the priesthood, are these to be found? The answer lies in the realm of the unthinkable. The New Testament does not link ministry and celibacy; there is no scriptural or theological reason that would exclude women from the eucharistic ministry. What is needed, here and elsewhere, is courage to take a stand against the past — courage to build for the present, courage to dare, for the sake of the future.

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<sup>6</sup> See W. Harrington, 'Scribalism in the Church', *DOCTRINE AND LIFE*, 23 (1973), pp. 301-303.

## THE HUMAN CHURCH

The outline of 'styles of historical consciousness' in an earlier article<sup>7</sup> would suggest that, all too easily, we have taken an unrealistic view of the Church. The humanness of the Church can be, strangely, lost to sight. Even today one suspects that 'the Church' is still readily conceived of as an entity existing somehow apart from the Christians who form it. For this reason, one is unhappy with calls to 'love the Church'. If by 'Church' is meant that nebulous entity, then the call is unrealistic. If by 'church' is meant the institution, that institution is not lovable. If by 'Church' is meant the people of God, Jesus has put it more simply and more clearly: 'Love one another'.

We must, then, realistically look at, and accept, the humanness of the Church. And when we do, we will become aware that, necessarily, at any given time, there is about it something of the wholly human. Not everything in it is necessarily touched by the Spirit. We have been too ready to take for granted that any development must have been Spirit-guided. I have instanced the strict theological uniformity of the recent past. In fact, the static state of these very things should have made us wary — for the Spirit is, by definition, dynamic. The author of Ephesians has put it clearly. The gift of Christ, the grace of the Spirit, is given that Christians may attain 'to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ... to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and built together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love' (Eph 4.13, 15f). The Spirit is a principle of growth and of development; his role is progressive and not conservative.

The spirit is present and active in the Church — in a human Church. But not everything is necessarily touched by the Spirit. We would do well to have in mind the wise counsel of the Rabbi Gamaliel, Paul's one-time master (cf Acts 5.34-39; 22:3). What is wholly human is transient, and will not last. Only what has been touched by the Spirit will remain. And we would do well to hearken, too, to the urging of Paul himself: 'Test everything: hold fast to what is good' (1 Thes 5:21).

This short article is patently not programmatic. One refrains from indulging in any prediction of the shape of the Church at any point in the future. It is wiser to accept what Karl Rahner calls the *docta ignorantia futuri*: the realistic acknowledgment of the fact that we cannot know what may happen, cannot foresee what new factors may emerge. But, for this very reason, we should be prepared to think the unthinkable.

<sup>7</sup> See *art. cit.*, DOCTRINE AND LIFE, 23 (1973), p. 120 f.

able. The Spirit blows where he wills; his action will not be measured by human standards nor frustrated by human limitations. This dynamic power of God will not be bottled up in any static institution.

Indeed, the Church has changed and, in some ways has changed remarkably, over the centuries. The Church of today is, in so many ways, very different from the Church of the New Testament. We know that continuity has been preserved; but we may well ask: what are the essentials that have ensured continuity? Structurally, institutionally, the Church has developed in one direction. It could have developed in other ways; the flexibility of structure of the early Church shows that. Hight it not still develop in these other directions, pursue other alternatives. That is the unthinkable. But to answer with a firm 'No' is to invoke a human veto on the action of the Holy Spirit. Much wiser the openness that would accept, without any restraint at all, the comforting assurance: 'Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age' (Mt 28:20). With this assurance, we do not need to be fearful of the future. With this assurance we can dare to think the unthinkable. With this assurance we can dream of a Church that may be very different from the Church of our day. We can hope for a Church in which Jesus Christ is, really and truly, more important than the Church.

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## HE IS ALWAYS WRONG! WHO? THE PRIEST OF COURSE

The Priest is always wrong! Because....

If he is preaching longer than twenty minutes, he makes the people stay away from the church;

If he preaches less than ten minutes, he did not prepare his sermon!

If his voice is strong during the sermon, he is shouting;

If his voice has the normal strength, people do not understand what he is preaching about.

If he owns a car, he is worldly;

If he does not own one, he does not go with the times.

If he goes out to visit families, he is never at home;

If he does not visit them, he does not care for his parishioners.

If he is asking for contributions, he is after money;

If he does not do it, he is too proud for that.

If he takes his time in the confessional, he is too slow;

If he makes it faster, he has no time for his penitents.

If he begins his mass on time, his watch is advanced;

If he begins a minute or two later, he keeps the people waiting.

If he renovates his church, he throws away the money;

If he does not do it, he allows everything to rot away.

If he is young, he has no experience;

If he is old, he should retire.

As long as he lives, there are always people who know better;

If he dies, there is nobody to take his place.

## DOMINICAN APOSTOLIC LABOURS IN CAGAYAN VALLEY\*

(Continued)

Pablo Fernández, O.P.

### AMONG THE MANDAYAS (APAYAOS)

The mission of the Mandayas, called Apayaos at present, is located in the mountainous region which lies West of the province of Cagayan and South of the town of Abulug. They were a fierce kind of people, little inclined to exchange the freedom of their primitive life for the salvific truths of the Gospel and for the advantages of Civilization. In 1610 Frs. Jerónimo de Morer and Diego Carlos left Abulug, in order to spread the Christian faith among the Mandayas.

With the passing of time the Dominican fathers organized and administered the towns of Fottol (1610), Santa Cecilia (1614), Capinatan (1619), Amhao (1625), and Nuestra Señora del Pilar (1633). However it was no long before many of these new Christians, less rooted in the Christian Faith than in the carefree life of the highlands, decided to return to their old homes (1625). Led by Lanab and Alababan, the restless throng invaded the convent of Fottol where lived Fr. Alonso García and Brother Onofre Palao. The efforts of the priest to calm them proved of no avail. With one stroke Alababan beheaded Brother Palao. Meanwhile, Lanab dealt Fr. García two blows on the head. The priest fell in a pool of his own blood. Terrified by their crime, the leaders hurriedly left the convent. Fr. García was brought to the house of a prominent townsman, where he died.<sup>20</sup>

This bloody crime, which as yet had no precedent in the annals of the Dominican missions in the Philippines, did not deter the missionaries from negotiating the return of a certain number of Mandayas who had joined the insurgents under the threat of death. Thus, the mission of Fottol and Capinatan were revitalized and infused with greater spirit.<sup>21</sup>

Among the missionaries who laboured most strenuously to christianize and civilize the Mandayas, Frs. Jerónimo de Zamora and Luis Oñate (1637) deserve special notice. Two factors, however, rendered futile the labours of the two missionaries. The first was the irresistible lure exerted by the free life on the Mandayas, and the second was the lack of tact-

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\* The first part of this article was published in our August issue.

<sup>20</sup> Aduarte, pp. 328, 554-555; Ocio, pp. 206-209.

<sup>21</sup> Aduarte, pp. 562, col. 2, 580, col. 1.

fulness on the part of both the civilian and military authorities, who were responsible for the uprising of 1639, which destroyed the whole mission for the second time.<sup>22</sup>

This uprising was caused by the discontent of the Mandayas who resented the exaction by the commanding officer of certain services to which they did not believe themselves obliged. In one night the rebels put the whole garrison to the sword, but this time they respected the two missionaries who were living there. When morning dawned the insurgents came to the convent and told the priests to leave the place, for they no longer wished to live as Christians and were going back to the mountain fastnesses. The Mandayans themselves prepared a boat, helped the fathers pack their things and church vestments, and escorted them with their belongings to the boat which took them to Abulug. After this, they set fire to the convent and the fortress and went back to the hills. Thus, this unfortunate mission was a second time abandoned until the year 1641 when Frs. Manuel de Barrio and Pedro de Mesa rebuilt it.<sup>23</sup>

#### LATER VICISSITUDES OF THE MANDAYA MISSION

In 1684, the Christians of Fottol were constantly harassed by the fierce Mandayas. Fr. Pedro Jiménez, who had earlier laboured fruitfully in that mission, volunteered for the dangerous task of pacifying them. In an opening gambit he invited Biguan, one of their chieftains, to penance. Biguan had formerly been the singer in the church of Capinatan, but he had given up Christianity to return to the heathen ways. Trusting the priest's word, the chieftain dispatched a commission of Mandayas to Capinatan to verify for themselves the good intentions of the civil authorities in their efforts to group the mountain tribes into towns. The commission reported favourably and Biguan himself came down to the lowlands where shortly after death overtook him, but not before he had sincerely repented his apostasy.<sup>24</sup>

Next, Fr. Jiménez visited the Mandayas in their own habitat, undeterred by the threats against his life if he dared as much as set foot in the mountains. The fearless missionary succeeded in inscribing as catechumens one thousand and a hundred heathens who had given him their word to become Christians.<sup>25</sup> In a second excursion to the high-

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 639, col. 2, 672-683; Juan de los Angeles, O.P., *Parte segunda de la Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, MS in APSR, 305, pp. 21-22; Santa Cruz, *Op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; Salazar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 122-124.

<sup>23</sup> ARNAIZ, P. GREGORIO, *Relación sobre Cagayán*, MS in APSR (i.e. Dominican Archives in the Philippines), Section "Cagayán" (Relaciones), p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Salazar, pp. 392, 557-560.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 393-394.

lands the father was able to build a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Peñafrancia.<sup>26</sup>

These successes encouraged the superiors to send to Fottol two friars who were to look after the Christians of the lowlands, leaving Fr. Jiménez free to dedicate himself exclusively to the conversion of the heathen highlanders. Later, with the help of another colleague, who was likewise dedicated to mission work among the heathen, Fr. Jiménez founded in the lowlands the town of Our Lady of Peñafrancia (1688). Unfortunately, this new town was fated to disappear for, while the priest was away in Nueva Segovia recovering from an illness, the heathen swooped down from the mountain and razed the town. A part of the inhabitants joined the attackers, the remainder settled down in Camalaniugan. This misfortune did not deter Fr. Jiménez from continuing his apostolate among the Mandayas, until he was ordered by the superiors to take charge, for the second time, of the Irraya region.<sup>27</sup>

Among the heroic labourers in this part of the Lord's vineyard during the XVIII century, special mention must be made of Frs. Francisco de la Vega, Bernabé de la Magdalena, and José Tomás Marín.

From this time on, the Mandaya mission began slowly to sink into decay. Fottol, the principal town, was repeatedly moved from one place to another. The most important of these movings occurred in 1769, when, together with Capinatan and Ngagan, it was transferred to a place called Simayong, although even then it hung on to its own name. In 1818 nothing remained of the Mandaya mission except the ruins of former buildings, especially those of a stone church which had been erected in 1686 by the great apostle of the Mandayas, Fr. Pedro Jiménez.

By the end of the XIX century, the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, made several attempts, as we shall see further on, to revive this ancient and costly mission.

#### TRAVELS BY FR. MARIN AMONG THE MOUNTAINS OF THE CENTRAL CORDILLERA

To this period belong the travels through the lofty mountain ranges of the Central Cordillera undertaken by the tireless Fr. José Tomás Marín on orders from the Fr. Provincial with the purpose of verifying the possibility of opening a road between Cagayan and Ilocos.

In 1741, Fr. Marín succeeded in reaching only the heights dominating the wide lowlands to the left of the Ibanag River. The next year, protected by an escort, he set foot in the town of Laguaao, well within the

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 395, col. 2; APSR, vol. 107, fols. 50-57.

<sup>27</sup> Salazar, pp. 396, col. 2, 397, 562, col. 2.

fastness of the mountains and as yet untouched by any Spaniard. Some of the heathen camps he visited were willing to embrace Christianity on condition that they would not be forced to abandon their homes. Other tribes were equally unwilling to depart from the mountains where their ancestors were buried. Passing through Dingras, our traveller arrived in Laoag, Ilocos. On his return to Cagayan, Fr. Marín found that some families, moved no doubt by his exhortations, had decided to come down to the lowlands to be baptized.

In a third excursion, Fr. Marín attempted to reach Vigan. He successfully crossed the mountains that are seen rising to the southwest of Itawes. With only four days' journey to achieve his purpose he was forced to turn towards Malaoeg on account of the sickness which had attacked several members of his escort.<sup>28</sup>

#### MISSIONS BETWEEN BUGUEY AND CAPE ENGAÑO.

Close to Cape Engaño, the mission of Palaug was founded by Fr. Juan Uguet in 1654, with the aim of affording peace and tranquility to many Christians who had left their towns as a consequence of the harassments inflicted by the town principals. However, the same problem cropped up in the new town and was the cause of a new disbandment. A second regrouping was followed by still another dispersal occasioned this time by the vexations caused by the corporal who was sent there every year to be watch for the galleons from Acapulco. This town was for a time worthy of note because it possessed the best library in the province.

The Palaug townspeople gathered together for a third time (1719) to settle down in Bauag. Since the spiritual administration of Bauag was entrusted to the missionary residing at Buguey, he decided to bring the former closer to the latter. This arrangement gave rise first to the Uangag mission, and later to the little town of Dao, which was also known by the name of Babuyan, due to the fact that a large number of immigrants from those islands established themselves there.<sup>29</sup>

#### GROWTH OF THE PROVINCE IN POPULATION AND MUNICIPALITIES

Slowly Cagayan began to experience and benefits of the Gospel. Christianity put a stop to vendetta killings. Improvements in the methods of agriculture and farming increased material abundance. The net result of all this was a growth of population.

Cabicungan, which had been a visit or dependency of Patta,<sup>30</sup> was the first to obtain in the rank of municipality in the second half of the

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. APSR, vol. 113, fol. 482 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ocio, p. 171.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

XVII century (1663). It was followed by Aparri, which the Dominicans officially accepted in their Provincial Chapter in 1680, although ancient documents show that the authorities had granted permission for the building of a church and convent there as early as 1604.<sup>38</sup>

The third town to come under the spiritual care of the Dominicans (1706) was Bangan. However, it remained a visit of Patta until 1755. In this year both Patta and Bangan disappeared with the foundation of a new town, first called San Juan Nepomuceno and later Pamplona, which absorbed the two older ones.<sup>39</sup>

In 1735, the Dominicans accepted the town of Amulung, founded on December 15, 1734, by Don Manuel Romero, Alcalde Mayor of the province.<sup>40</sup> Aripa, a town situated between Nassiping and Tabang, was named after a heathen tribe inhabiting the region. It owes its origin to a group of secessionists from the municipality of Orag, who, in 1738, obtained the Alcalde Mayor, Don Pedro Alegre's, permission to establish themselves there. The Acts of the Provincial Chapters make no mention of it until 1747, and cease mentioning it in 1769. This can only mean that by that year it had disappeared, or, at the very least, ceased to be of any importance.<sup>41</sup>

By instrument dated 9th August, 1755, the Superior Government decreed to merge the municipalites of Patta, Cabicungan and Bangan, into one which, as we have already mentioned, would bear the name of San Juan Nepomuceno. This decree was implemented on February 15, 1757. The site chosen for the new municipality was Abucalan, between Masi and Bangan. The Dominicans accepted it in the same year 1757, assigning to it Masi in the role of a dependency. Thus, on the spiritual level, San Juan Nepomuceno was the outcome of the merger of four missions: Patta, Cabicungan, Bangan, and Masi.<sup>42</sup>

In 1725, Fr. Juan de Santo Tomás founded the town of Mauanan in the region of Itawes, to avoid or minimize the number of deaths caused by the heathen among the inhabitants of Malaoeg who had to travel through the place.<sup>43</sup> The Dominicans gathered in their Provincial Chapter accepted it officially in 1735. It rarely had its own missionary until 1897 when Bishop José Hevia Campomanes raised it to the rank of a parish.<sup>44</sup>

From the close of the XVIII century the need was felt, not only of maintaining the town of Nassiping (which had formerly been one of the most flourishing), but also of creating a new to bridge the great dis-

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.



tances between one town and another. A town was founded in 1843 in answer to this need, and was christened Alcala, after the Governor General of the Islands at the time, Don Francisco de Paula Alcalá. It was finally accepted by the Dominicans in 1845 under the name of Fulay. At the close of the last century, Fr. Casimiro González erected a beautiful church of Tuscan style, with three naves and an iron roof.<sup>45</sup>

### VICISSITUDES OF THE PARISH OF NUEVA SEGOVIA

When Msgr. Benavides took over the diocese of Nueva Segovia as its first bishop, the secular clergy reserved for itself the spiritual administration of the capital of the province. Nevertheless, the Dominicans were on several occasions and for different reasons obliged to take charge of this parish at least temporarily.

When the episcopal see was transferred to Vigan in 1755, the ancient city of Nueva Segovia lost its ecclesiastical importance almost totally. For this reason, Bishop Miguel García decided to merge the parish of Nueva Segovia, administered by a secular priest, with barrios Tocolana, Daluddu, and Bagumbayan, which had always been under the care of Dominicans, and turn the new ecclesiastical unit over to them. The Dominican Corporation offered no difficulty to the merger of the three above-mentioned barrios into one parish with the name Lal-loc, and to the acceptance, in the Provincial Chapter of 1788, of the spiritual administration of the Cathedral upon the death of the secular priest who had charge of it. However, it became necessary to unroof the church of Tocolana to make the hard-headed barrio people desist from considering it as the principal church, and to designate the conventual church in Lal-loc for parochial purposes, because of the ruinous state of the old cathedral.<sup>46</sup>

### CREATION OF NEW TOWNS AND PARISHES IN THE 19TH CENTURY

As the population of Cagayan increased thanks to the new impulse given to agriculture and trade, the need was correspondingly felt of creating new municipalities and parishes.

The town of San Juan Nepomuceno, together with Masi, its dependency, had, since the beginning of the XIX century, led such a languid life that it did not even have a parish priest of its own. The Provincial Chapter of 1841 gave it a minister in Fr. Pedro de Montenegro, who obtained from the authorities the merger of both into a new town, which would be called Pamplona and would have for its church the one rebuilt by Fr. Cano after the earthquakes of 1721.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>46</sup> FERRANDO, *Estado de la Provincia*, etc., MS in APSR, Vol. 173, fol. 126; Cfr. APSR, Vol. 2. fols. 97-99.

<sup>55</sup> Ocio, pp. 163-165.

A decree of September, 1849, created the municipality of Enrile out of a barrio which formerly pertained to Tuguegarao. Governor Pascual Enrile gave it its name, and the Dominicans, a convent of masonry with tile and iron roofing, and a large church of a single nave.<sup>56</sup>

To the north of Enrile, on a wide plain on the left bank of the Ibanag River, lies the town of Solana, established in 1851. Soon after, the Dominicans in the Philippines received it under its care.<sup>57</sup>

Not far from the site earlier occupied by the ancient and historic Cabcungan, we find the modern town of Clavería, situated on the left bank of the river bearing the same name, on a plain favoured by the cool breezes from the sea. A royal order dated July 18, 1865, raised it to the rank of an independent municipality, which the Dominicans accepted only several years later, in 1878.<sup>58</sup>

A number of towns and parishes, which lie within the confines of the present province of Cagayan, were created during the last ten years of the XIX century. Brigadier Sánchez Mira, governor of the Cagayan Valley, gave his name to a town which did not have its own parish priest until 1895. Sánchez Mira is located on the coast, not far from the end of the Central Cordillera.

The Provincial Chapter of 1894 accepted the house of Santo Niño, which had been, together with the house at Tebang, a visit or dependency of Piat. It was given independent status, both as a municipality and as a parish in 1890.<sup>59</sup>

A royal order of September 20, 1896, implemented by the Manila authorities in January of the following year, created the municipality and parish of Peñablanca, segregating it from Tuguegarao. It is located in a place called Barrio, and owes its name to the calcareous nature of some neighboring rocks. Its first and only parish priest, Fr. Florentino Fernández, was prevented from taking possession of his post by the Philippine Revolution.<sup>60</sup>

### THE ITAWES AND APAYAO REGIONS

These two regions, situated on the eastern slopes of the Central Cordillera within the boundaries of Cagayan, owe their establishment to the Spanish government's desire to bring the benefits of civilization and progress to the Igorots of northern Luzon. The same desire motivated the creation of the Kiangnan, Kayapa and Binatanga districts in the province of Nueva Vizcaya.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

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In Itawes, a royal order dated July 20, 1890, created the Dominican mission of San Antonio de Magogao. In 1891, the Dominican superiors assigned the famous Fr. Ramón Zubieta to this mission. The good father built a modest residence beside the headquarters of the commanding officer.<sup>61</sup>

The Apayaos region extended itself over the region of the former Mandayas. It was situated in that part of the Central Cordillera facing the Christian towns in the north, east and south of Cagayan.

The historic mission of Fottol had disappeared from the pages of the Acts of Provincial Chapters in 1818. The government restored it in 1890. Soon after, the Bishop of Nueva Segovia granted the title of missionary to Fr. Julian Malumbres, who had been working in the Kiangnan mission. Fr. Malumbres constructed a convent made of wood and repaired the old church of masonry and stone erected in 1686 by the venerable Fr. Pedro Jiménez.<sup>62</sup> The expenses were provided by the Dominican Fathers.

Msgr. Jose Hevia Campomanes, the last Dominican promoted to the bishopric of Nueva Segovia, obtained a royal decree reviving the extinct mission of Nuestra Señora del Pilar which Fr. Jerónimo de Zamora had founded in the early years of the XVII century.<sup>63</sup>

### THE FOUNDING OF THE BLESSED IMELDA COLLEGE IN TUGUEGARAO

The Blessed Imelda College recognizes Fr. Dionisio Casas as its founder. It was through his efforts that the Provincial Chapter of 1890 approved its erection. Thereafter, Father Casas spared no labors to gather the necessary materials and to perfect the building in all its details. The plans were drawn by Fr. José María Brugués. It was located outside the town of Tuguegarao, to the west of the chapel of San Jacinto, and was inaugurated on April 4, 1894. The sisters from the Beaterio de Santa Catalina in Manila took charge of the college during the next four years, doing their best to insure for the girls of the Cagayan Valley an education identical to that received by girls of the same social class and status in the capital of the Islands.<sup>64</sup>

The Blessed Imelda College deserves full credit for the education of a choice group of Catholic ladies, who gave glory to their native province with the splendor of their virtues, their zeal in propagating the devotion to the Holy Rosary, and the support they gave to the parish priests in the work of implanting and developing the Catholic Action.<sup>65</sup>

(To be concluded)

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-243.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

## *CWL Position Paper*

# **PROTEST AGAINST THE SALE OF CONDOMS IN SARI-SARI STORE**

The CWL is a nationwide non-political, charitable, religious, socio-economic-civic, non-profit organization of the lay apostolate. Among its principal objectives are: a) to unite all Catholic women in a national organization for the promotion of the spiritual, moral, educational and socio-economic welfare of the country; and b) to provide a medium through which Catholic women may uphold the Faith and act unitedly in matters of public interest affecting the advancement of women and youth, the sanctity of the home and community development.

Under the National Board, which is the policy-making body of the organization are 11 Regional Councils, 56 archdiocesan and diocesan Boards, numerous vicarial sections, 1,500 parish units and a membership of over 400,000 spread out all over the country.

Lately it has been undertaking in all levels, a series of seminars to update policies and leadership skills to make it more relevant to the times and Vatican II in particular. Among said seminars was that on Family Planning held last February, 1975 to provide members with insights on the population issue. Materials from the Population Center Foundation were distributed. Doctors, theologians, sociologists, and economist, experts from Population Commission, Ecclesiastical Commission on Family Life, Institute of Human Reproduction, UST, delivered lectures. As a result of said seminar, CWL committed itself to support the government family planning policy using church accepted methods. As part of said commitment, CWL is now busy implementing on a nationwide scale the following action programs:

a) Training of motivators and facilitators by the Ecclesiastical Commission on Family Life who will move freely in the community especially in barrios and depressed areas, educating and motivating people to practice family planning using church-approved methods (Responsible Parenthood and Family Enrichment Program);

b) Establishment of pre-marital and post-marital family counselling clinics in all parishes all over the Philippine to educate, advise, counsel and follow-up all individuals concerned;

c) Establish family planning units in all medical clinics run by CWL members using church-approved methods; and

d) Put up pilot projects in each Diocese similar to the Demonstration Project in Malaybalay, Bukidnon involving a whole community of acceptors of church-approved methods of family planning.

Church-approved methods as mentioned here refer to the "Rhythm" and recent improvements which include the Grodens (using partly the pills to regulate menstruation) and Billings methods. In its totality on family life, it is known as "Responsible Parenthood".

#### BACKGROUND FACTS:

On June 22, 1975, daily papers carried the news that henceforth, condoms (a contraceptive) will be made available to the public through commercial channels like sari-sari stores, groceries and supermarkets. Full-page advertisements also appeared promoting the qualities of condoms and describing their use.

Reacting immediately thereto, the CWL Board of the Parish of the Resurrection Unit of the Archdiocese of Manila, through their President, Mrs. Gloria B. Mendoza, passed a resolution requesting the Honorable E. B. Castillejos, Director of Domestic Trade, to prohibit the sale of condoms and other family planning devices in commercial channels like sari-sari stores, groceries, supermarkets because the same "will exert strong influence on minors and unmarried individuals to easily acquire such devices, thereby causing the degradation of morality in this country, the abuse of womanhood, and the deterioration of the sacred institution of marriage."

Director Castillejos, in answer thereto, set the matter for a hearing on July 2, 1975 requesting Pop Com, Chamber of Commerce and retailers' organization to attend the same.

The matter was subsequently taken up by the National Board which is now presenting this position paper reflecting the support of the whole organization to that taken by the Parish of the Resurrection CWL Unit. Last June 30, 1975, letter was sent by the National President to His Excellency, Ferdinand E. Marcos, President of the Philippines, bringing to his attention herein matter and requesting his intercession to order the discontinuance of said sale while directing that a public hearing/reexamination be undertaken. The President immediately called the attention of the PCF, ordered the reexamination of the advertising campaign and asked for periodic reports on the on-going dialogue.

#### THE ISSUE:

Be it understood at the outset that CWL is committed to Family Planning through church approved methods.

Condoms are male contraceptive devices to which objection is interposed to its use for its not being in keeping with the moral teachings of the Church. The objection to it has been compounded with the ongoing campaign to promote their sale through sari-sari stores, groceries and supermarkets. Full page advertisements have recently been appearing in the daily papers to advertise their easy availability in said commercial channels. Hence, the protest filed by CWL.

#### REASONS FOR CWL STAND:

In the context of its objectives, CWL vigorously objects to the sale of condoms in sari-sari stores, groceries and supermarkets for the following reasons:

a. It implies the stamp of public approval on the use and the marketplace availability of condoms — an implication which is false, because Catholics are committed only to the morality of Rhythm and its variation as a family planning method;

b. It leads to social demoralization, loss of self-respect, and breakdown of moral integrity when condoms are made so easily available to everybody without regard to age, civil status and other consideration;

c. It induces promiscuity, facilitates licentious living and undisciplined habits;

d. For minors, it opens the floodgates to intolerable temptation; and for our unsophisticated girls, to exploitation and loss of self dignity;

e. Being parents, we have vested interests in our children's socialization, and in the process of shaping their conscience and personality;

f. It is an insult to Filipino womanhood considering that condoms are closely associated with illicit sex, a protection against prostitutes who have venereal disease; and

g. Sari-sari stores are microcosms of Philippine Community life — the center of community life especially in the barrios where our basic necessities are obtainable — where we run to for sugar, milk, cooking oil, pan de sal, suka, etc. Are we admitting now that we are pagans, not able to discipline animal instincts, that condoms have become one of our basic necessities? Where have our moral values gone? Is this the self-discipline that is asked of us under the New Society?

h. The conscience of the sari-sari store owner who will be forced to sell condom against his moral values will be a millstone on the persons responsible for the coercion.

## CWL PROPOSALS:

1. Withdraw advertisements which promote the use and the easy availability of condoms in sari-sari stores etc.; or modify ads so that focus is only for FAMILY PLANNING (point of agreement between CWL and PCF).
2. Withdraw condoms from sari-sari stores etc.;
3. Request for re-examination of PD allowing sale of condoms through commercial channels.
4. Join hands with PCF in promoting Family Planning; with PCF helping CWL propagate Rhythm and its derivatives through its above-mentioned four action programs.

## POSTSCRIPT TO CONDOM WAR

Reacting to the Editorial "Condone the Condom?" in our August issue, the CWL President wrote us a letter which we deem best not to publish because it is emotionally colored and calls for a personal accounting. However, to satisfy her and her organization, our readers will find the CWL Position Paper in the preceding pages.

We stand pat on our editorial "Condone the Condom?"

We would like to add the following observations.

1. The main issue in the "condom war" was the withdrawal of condoms from sari-sari stores and similar commercial channels. The CWL failed to attain this goal for the following reasons:

- a. It agreed with the Population Center Foundation (PCF) that the condoms already distributed to 200,000 retailers "can no longer be withdrawn".

How could the CWL claim to be a strong organization — boasting of 400,000 members — and yet agree to the above proposition? As long as there is a strong public objection, even condoms already distributed to retailers can be withdrawn.

- b. The CWL also agreed with the PCF that condoms still in the hands of distributors and wholesalers be withheld "pending discussions".

It would be interesting to know what eventually happened. One thing is sure: the words "pending discussion" indicate no commitment. Hence on this point the CWL cannot claim victory. As we see it, the sophistication of the PCF prevailed.

2. The CWL agreed with the PCF that "a study was to be made on how condoms already with retailers can be marketed so that they are dispensed to family planners only as PCF had targeted."

By agreeing to this point the CWL had practically said: it's all right to use the condom unless you are single or you are committing adultery, or you are a minor; if you use it for family planning, that's alright!

Stated in such terms, the CWL would most certainly object to the idea. But why did the CWL fail to see the implication of this point of its agreement with the PCF? As we said in our editorial, it lacked the ability "to match the sophistication of the government's men in maneuvering and manipulating to finally get what they want."

Because of this, in the public mind, the CWL has practically "condoned the condom" as a family planning device.

It is true that in its Position Paper the CWL condemned the condom even from family planning. But did the public read the CWL's Position Paper? Certainly not. They read only the agreement between the PCF and the CWL published in the newspapers and the letter to Director Castillejos. The PCF knew how to use the Mass Media effectively. The CWL did not.

As far as readers of newspapers are concerned, the CWL has only two reasons for opposing the wide-scale sale of condoms:

- a. Minors might more easily experiment with sex without getting into trouble.
- b. Unmarried adults or those committing adultery might find greater freedom in extramarital sex relationships.

Nowhere in the agreement with the PCF nor in the letter to Director Castillejos is it stated that the CWL objects to the use of the condom as a family planning instrument.

3. The withdrawal of ads on the condom is one of the concessions given to the CWL without surrendering the major issue which is to make condoms available and easily accessible to family planners.

Because of the CWL's objection to the condom almost all the commentators in newspapers and popular magazines were discussing the condom, mostly ridiculing the CWL and favoring PCF. So why would the PCF still bother to get advertising space? The ads has already outlived their usefulness.

4. Our Editorial was certainly not written in order to condemn, malign, discredit and belittle the CWL. In fact it was an invitation to all those involved in the apostolate of the laity to learn from mistakes.

We were not thinking of CWL as CWL but as a component part of Catholic Action in the Philippines, or better, as part of the Church in the Philippines. We find this ecclesial perspective sadly lacking in the CWL Position Paper. We also get the impression from the CWL President's letter that the CWL is mad at our editorial because it is bad, so she thinks, for the CWL. There is no indication that she would protest, just the same, if it were the Church as a whole that is put in bad light. The



fight against the condom is presented as the CWL's very own private project, not as a concern of the whole Philippine Church.

On issues that are the concern of the whole ecclesial community no single group should embark on a public fight without consulting and coordinating with other representatives of the community. A way must be found to make such consultation and coordination quick and cohesive.

When a small man takes on a giant — which the PCF is — he must know how to compensate for the odds against him. Even David, when he went out to fight Goliath, did not do so armed only with bravura. He was adept in the use of the slingshot. Our lay leaders must follow his example. If not, we better not get openly into a fight and use some other tactics.

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### NEW SAINT: JOHN MACIAS, O.P.

John Macias was a mere farm boy and a poor shepherd who became a cattle dealer before finally finding his vocation: service and love for God and neighbor in the Dominican Order. He was proclaimed saint at St. Peter's Basilica on September 28, 1975. John Macias was born in Rivera del Fresno, Badajoz, Spain in 1585. He sailed for the New World in 1619 and three years later entered the Convento de Sta. Maria Magdalena in Lima, Peru as a laybrother at the age of 37.

What he did in his childhood — frequenting the sacraments, praying hard reciting the Rosary—he intensified within the cloister. He struck friendship with another laybrother, the holy St. Martin de Porres, with whom he talked often. As he went about his chores, his eyes caught the miseries of the poor Indian Negroes who crowded the streets like living skeletons and served them. He, too, was greatly devoted to the souls in purgatory and had released more than a million souls by devoutly praying the Rosary. This fact he himself revealed after a vision of Purgatory.

John Macias lived in a socio-political atmosphere that exalts a human power yet he insisted by his example that there is an absolute need for man to live in subordination to God and to help his neighbor. He predicted his own death and died a holy death in 1645 at the age of 60. He was beatified together with his bosom friend St. Martin de Porres in 1837.

The Dominican Community and the Parish of Sto. Domingo in Quezon City highlighted the canonization of John Macias with Liturgy, Dialogues, Exhibits and Essay Contest.

# COMMUNICATION

## ON CHANGES IN THE CURSILLO

*The Editor wrote the following letter to Msgr. Ciriaco Billote, Parish of St. Vincent Ferrer, Bayambang, Pangasinan:*

Dear Msgr. Billote:

I read your article, "The cursillo: a third view" in the Philippine Daily Express, Monday, July 21, 1975. You expressed some interesting ideas in it and I wonder if you could follow them up. In particular I am interested in knowing what concrete changes (updating) and adaptations (indigenization) you can suggest. Perhaps you can also describe experiments like the Bayanihan ni Cristo and the Recollection.

Could we reprint your article in the Boletin? In addition, would you favor us with an article pointing out which of the contents of the cursillo need updating, and where elements of indigenization could be introduced?

*Msgr. Billote's answer:*

You may reprint my article in the Boletin. I wish to invite brainstorming among priests and laymen about the subject.

I am not ready yet with the article you are asking for. Actually, in my Parish we have held the Bayanihan ni Cristo — seven for men and four for women. It was introduced here in Pangasinan by someone by the name of Brother Nepumuceno, and is now promoted by Brother Mauro Meris of Urdaneta, Pangasinan. It is, in my opinion, a poor imitation of the Cursillo and needs improvement. As I said, even the Cursillo needs changes, for which serious study is necessary. This requires the collaboration of many who should be backed by the hierarchy.

Some features of the Bayanihan ni Cristo are: it is given in the local vernacular (Ilocano or Pangasinan); any good catholic can be a candidate even if he has no formal education at all; no fees are required; there are no drawings or summaries after the rollos; there is no insistence on team reunions; etc. — Its main aim is to give adult religious instruction to prepare the candidates for grass-roots leadership. The emphasis is on the Lay Apostolate not on the old concept of Catholic Action as a participation and collaboration of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate. Thirteen of the rollos of the Cursillo are given and the three meditations.

Sincerely yours,

MSGR. C. BILLOTE

# THE CURSILLO: A THIRD VIEW

by

**Msgr. Ciriaco Billote**

**THE CURSILLOS** in Christianity of the Philippines must be indigenized and updated. This might salvage the movement and solve the problems confronting and confusing it today. For, if we can talk of indigenizing and updating our so-called "westernized" theology and liturgy in accordance with the principles and guidelines of Vatican II, with more reason and urgency, we should do so for the cursillo movement. The blessings it has given and can still give the Philippine Church and society are timely and necessary, incalculable and far-reaching. They outweigh the abuses.

The movement was conceived by a Spanish bishop; was born and developed in conservative Spain—long before the reforms of Vatican II were instituted and had taken roots. Hence, some of its key doctrinal content, approaches and purposes are pre-Vatican II and pro-Castilian. However, the bulk of it — content and props — can be adopted by the Philippines with great benefits after proper changes (updating) and adaptations (indigenization) are made.

\* \* \*

**BISHOP HERVAS**, the founder of the cursillos, had in mind the official Catholic Action of his

period which was defined as "the participation and collaboration of the laity in the Hierarchical apostolate." And unlike the Philippines, Spain has centuries of deep-rooted Catholic traditions, union of Church and state, surplus of bishops and priests. So, the good bishop developed in the cursillos the selection and training of an elitist and literate leadership for the specialized apostolate of Catholic Action. This is incorporated into the principal aims and thrust of the cursillos, and this is invoked until now by the hierarchy and some key promoters of the movement in the Philippines; is used as a gauge for the approval and success of the cursillos.

But that has been de-emphasized by Vatican II in favor of the lay apostolate and grassroots leadership individually or in groups among the poor and underprivileged. By reason of baptism and confirmation a Catholic shares a common priesthood with Christ — Prophet, Priest and King. Therefore, any baptized and confirmed Catholic is supposed to be a teacher and leader — prophet and king. Vatican II democratized the Church and dismantled the hang-ups and old practices of Popes and Kings, clergy and nobility,

and later, the bourgeoisie, teaming up against democratic movements.

\* \* \*

**THIS IS** the core of the conflict and confusion in the cursillo movement of the Philippines. Some bishops and promoters insist on the main aim of the cursillos according to Bishop Hervas, namely, for an elite leadership training of a select few. They want few authorized cursillo houses. They are allergic to big sinners and fall-outs, as if the former are not the ones Christ came to save, and the latter a normal happening even among the apostles and in the priesthood itself.

The signs of the times, however, show that in the Philippines we lack priests; that our adult population and parents are ignorant of their faith and Christian duties, but are hungry and eager to receive religious instruction and undergo training in Christian living and apostolic leadership in a Christian community. The cursillo movement has come to our country as a providential blessing and

as an answer to our crying religious needs. Cursillo houses have mushroomed everywhere in the Philippines and men have flocked to them in droves in spite of exorbitant fees. So far, despite abuses, there have been no good substitutes for the cursillos to instruct our people, except stale pulpit sermons, weak catechetical instructions for children, moribund Catholic organizations and anemic Catholic mass media.

\* \* \*

**WE MAY** retain the Cursillos as conceived by Bishop Hervas for the officers of our Catholic organizations. Call it the super-cursillo or D' original cursillos in Christianity. But let us indigenize and update it so that it is offered to the people of God in general and has as its main aim adult religious instruction and grassroots leadership training. There have been experiments, like the Bayanihan ni Cristo and the Recollection, in this direction but there has been no coordination and serious study on the part of the hierarchy.

# HERE AND THERE

## DIVORCE CONTROVERSY

A statement by Justice Secretary Vicente Abad Santos on August 29 unleashed a controversy on divorce when several newspaper commentators supported his views and the Archbishop of Manila, Jaime L. Sin, and Msgr. Oscar Cruz of the Manila Ecclesiastical Court handling marriage nullity cases, took up the cudgels in defense of the indissolubility of marriage.

In a letter addressed to the presidential assistant, Office of the President, Abad Santos said he would "be glad to draft a decree allowing absolute divorce as soon as the proposal is cleared in principle" by President Marcos. The Justice Secretary also said: "The rejection of the concept of absolute divorce in the civil code was apparently influenced by the thinking of Catholic followers and I believe it was a mistake in the first place, to allow the moral values of one religious group to be imposed on the entire population." At any rate, Abad Santos said, the principle of indissolubility of marriage deserves a second look now, "in the light of the present policy of the Roman Catholic Church on dissolution of marriages."

Archbishop Sin issued a pastoral letter September 13 expressing his views on the question of divorce. Dissenting against a divorce legislation in the country, the Archbishop asserted that "the indissolubility of marriage is

rooted in the natural order, in the natural law." Unlike animals, the human baby needs the love and care of its parents for a long period of time, he said. This he added, points to the need for a stable, permanent marriage to provide an atmosphere where the child could grow in emotional stability.

Legalized divorce will jeopardize the stability of the Filipino family and erode the fabric of society. What will result is a propagation of divorce mentality among couples — the same mentality which "has become the curse of the Western World", Archbishop Sin argued.

In resolving marriage problems, the Church has set up tribunals in every diocese, he explained. If a marriage is found invalid from the beginning for lack of consent, impotence and other reasons, then the tribunal declares it null and void which means that there had been no marriage at all. If for some reason, it is found dangerous or impossible for a couple to continue living together, a decree of canonical separation is issued.

The Archbishop suggested that instead of legalizing divorce the State should update its laws on nullity, annulment and legal separation.

Earlier, the metropolitan tribunal issued a three-page statement penned by Msgr. Oscar Cruz,

pointing out above all that the main difficulty of the State in resolving marriage cases arises from the rigidity of its legal provisions for nullity, annulment and legal separation.

It suggested that the State amend pertinent marriage laws in accordance with natural law and in the light of solid findings of behavioral sciences just as the Church has updated its matrimonial jurisprudence.

Divorce, the tribunal stated, being a downright severance of a valid matrimonial bond, would cause unnecessary controversies and strain church and State relationship.

It added that a foreign import such as divorce would run against the nation's search for self-iden-

tity and cultural values which is one of the avowed endeavors of the present administration.

The Church's stand, it was made clear, is not premised on purely religious or strictly ecclesiastical reasoning but on natural law which is in the competence also of the State. The State, therefore, can readily look into the Church's marriage laws and progressive jurisprudence with least apprehension.

Such proposed amendment and progressive marriage jurisprudence, the tribunal said, "once realized can well stand as the legal pride of the Philippines in the resolution of marriage cases, in lieu of a foreign system alien to the Asian-Filipino cultural and social values."

## SEMINAR ON RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (OHD-FABC) sponsored the Second Asian Seminar on Religion and Development. The seminar was conducted by the International Federation of Institute for Socio-Religious Research (FERES) from August 13 to September 20 at Mirador Hill, Baguio City.

The aim of the seminar was to "give tools of reflection to persons engaged in social action and persons who have certain religious commitment on the actual role of religion in the transformation of society."

Lecturers from Europe and Asia facilitated the discussions on 3 basic themes: The Social Function of Religion, Socio-political Analysis of Asia and Theological Reflections. The workshops focused on development as a structural

problem, the plight of workers, farmers and squatters, popular religiosity and the relationship between theology and social science.

Asian societies were analyzed to be "dual" in character, i.e., they foster the development of a very small percentage of a dominant elite and the underdevelopment of the great majority of the peoples.

The participants critical the phenomenon of development in Asia as belonging "to the contemporary structure of world capitalism, which is imperialist in character. Most of the Asian countries, in spite of political independence are still subtly controlled by their former colonizers in a relationship of neo-colonialism."

In committing herself to development, the Church must, therefore, answer the question—development for whom?

The millions of urban poor, peasants and workers in Asia society. The broad base of Asian society. Their social condition is unjust and is largely shaped by the multi-national economic policies of the Asian governments.

It was recommended that the Church in Asia should immerse herself deeply into their midst so that she can identify with their aspirations and listen to the voice of Christ among them. Their demand for equality, respect for human rights and participation in all aspects of life in society is the voice of Christ, sent to preach the good news of salvation to the poor.

It was brought out that it is the oppressed people who will do theology, while professionals help them in their reflections.

Among the resource persons were Canon Francois Houtart of the University of Louvain, Prof. Joachim Matthes of the University of Bielfeld, West Germany, Fr. Horacio de la Costa, scholar and historian, Fr. John Carroll of Gregorian University, Fr. Catalino Arevalo of Loyola House and Atty. Michael Mastura, former delegate to the Constitutional Convention.

Fifty percent of the participants came from the Philippines. There were around 85 representatives from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand.

Mrs. Arlene Torres D'Mello of the OHD was the seminar coordinator, while Sr. Mary Lucilla Perpiñan, SPC, of NASSA acted as the Secretariat coordinator.

## SECOND TERM FOR FR. LEGASPI

Fr. Leonardo Z. Legaspi, OP, the first Filipino rector of the University of Santo Tomas, has been reappointed in recognition of his outstanding achievements for school and country.

Fr. Efren Rivera, OP, UST vice-rector, announced Father Legaspi's appointment after receiving a formal communication from Fr. Vincent de Couesnongle, OP, UST grand chancellor and master-general of the Dominican Order in Rome, reappointing Father Legaspi for another four-year term.

Father Legaspi's installation will take place at the UST Chapel on Oct. 20 during a faculty mass at 9 a.m.

A native of Meycauayan, Bulacan, Father Legaspi, 39, was installed 88th rector in simple but solemn rites at the UST chapel on Oct. 9, 1971.

Since 1971, Father Legaspi's has given the 364-year-old university an atmosphere conducive to learning with his innovative academic, planning and managerial systems approach to higher education. He has also continued the creative implementation of the academic reforms started by his predecessor, Fr. Jesus Diaz, OP.

An ardent practitioner of the multi-disciplinary method in solving problems in education, Fr. Legaspi heads the biggest Catholic university in the world in terms of student population.

Aside from his work as university rector, he is president of the Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines, and Philippine representative in the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAHL). Only last August,

he was elected vice president of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) at the IFU convention in New Delhi.

Born on November 25, 1935, to Enrique Relente Leaspi, former mayor of Meycauayan and vice-

governor of Bulacan, and Luisa Moraga Zamora, the young Legaspi studied philosophy at St. Albert's priory, in Hongkong. He was ordained a priest of the Order of Preachers (OP) on Dec. 17, 1960, in Manila.

### COURSE FOR MATRIMONIAL TRIBUNAL

The Holy See of Rome has granted the Philippine Hierarchy the privilege of setting up Matrimonial Tribunals of the First Instance in every diocese even when the said Tribunal would consist only of a Judge, a Defender of the Marriage Bond, and a Notary who could be a lay man or woman. To have properly trained personnel in such tribunals the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines commissioned the Faculty of Ca-

non Law of the University of Santo Tomas to organize a Renewal Course for Matrimonial Tribunal Personnel. The Course was held September 8 to 26.

More than 70 priests from all over the Philippines attended the Renewal Course. Lessons were given by Fr. Florencio Testera, O.P., Fr. Excelso Garcia, O.P., Fr. John Ameye, C.I.C.M., Msgr. Oscar Cruz, Fr. Esteban Bingham, and Bishop Alberto Piamonte.

### GRAND ROSARY RALLY IN ILOILO

As a contribution to the worldwide movement to revive devotion to Mary, in particular as the Lady of the Holy Rosary, the Archbishop of Jaro, Most Rev. Artemio G. Casas, D.D., spearheaded a Grand Rosary Rally on October 12. The University of San Agustin in Jaro, Iloilo, was the site of the Rally.

The Grand Rally was preceded by Convocations in the different parishes and schools of the Arch-

diocese, and by a Novena of Masses at the Dominican Fathers' Novitiate.

Personalities who raced the occasion were Cardinal Julio Rosales, Archbishop of Cebu, Hon. Conrado Norada, Governor of the Province of Iloilo, Hon. Francisco Garganera, Mayor of Iloilo City. A Social Program was prepared by the Barangay sang Birhen.

### SVD 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) celebrated its centennial September 8, 1975. The celebration was climaxed by a solemn renewal pronouncement during a celebrated Mass participated in by some 260 SVD bishops and priests.

Earlier, 15 SVD deacons were ordained to the priesthood at the Divine Word Seminary in Tagaytay City. Eight of the new priests will go to the foreign missions bringing to 33 the total number of Filipino SVD priests working abroad.



# HOMILETICS

by

**Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.**

## I. BIBLICAL NOTES FOR HOMILIES

### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(December 7, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 40: 1-5.9-11

**Second Reading:** Second Peter 3: 8-14

**Gospel Reading:** Mark 1: 1-8

**A. First Reading:** Taken from the "book of consolation" of "deutero" or Second-Isaiah (a prophet of great depth living among the exiles, but whose name is unknown), these verses present the Lord as a tender Lover telling his people that their exile and punishment are about to end, for liberation is at hand. It will resemble the exodus of Israel out of Egyptian slavery, with the divine presence (the glory of the Lord) manifest to all. It is necessary to prepare the "way of the Lord" who is Israel's King. Jerusalem has every reason for exultant joy, for her God is coming to live in her midst, and he will gently care for his people as a shepherd cares for his sheep.

**B. Gospel Reading:** The Evangelist combines a passage from Second Isaiah (40,3), which is found in today's first reading, with another from Malachi (3,1), mentioning only the major prophet, since the theme of both passages is preparation for the way of the Lord. It is the role of John the Baptist to prepare that way, and he did so by proclaiming the need of sincere repentance for sin, so that the heart could welcome Israel's Messiah. The Baptist himself is a man whose very appearance and habits invited to penance and compunction (v.6). His self abasement made his message all the more genuine since it was evident that he was not out for personal glory (v.7). His message of a mysterious "baptism with the Holy Spirit" instilled hope and expectancy into his hearers (v.8).

**C. Second Reading:** At the writing of this letter, many decades had elapsed since the Lord's Ascension and the delayed Second Coming (Parousia) brought up a problem that needed explanation. The author finds it in God's loving forbearance giving added opportunity for mankind to repent from its sins. There is need to distinguish his message from the apocalyptic figurative language in which it is couched. Such style of writing was often used at that time to describe momentous events, but the images were not to be understood in their literal sense. The message itself is clear: The Lord will certainly come, and will bring about the final transformation, but his Coming will be sudden and unexpected. All the more need to be prepared by putting off sinful ways and donning the garments of holiness.

## FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

(December 8, 1975)

**First Reading:** Genesis 3: 9-15.20

**Second Reading:** Ephesians 1: 3-6.11-12

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 1: 26-38

**A. First Reading:** Sinful man is not humble enough to admit his mistake, but tries to shove the blame on others, even on God himself (v.12). Yet God does not let man's bungling nor his pride ruin his plans. Man is called upon to struggle against the powers of evil (symbolized by the serpent), and it is God's intention that man, his masterpiece, win out in that struggle. Thus man is envisioned as striking a death blow at the serpent's head while it seeks to undo him. How this would come about was clarified by the development of revelation: All victory over Satan is the work of Christ Jesus who took flesh of Mary "to destroy the devil's works" (1 Jn. 3:8). He chose a mother singularly blessed by God (Lk. 1:21), who in turn is the New Eve, Mother of all who live the life of Christ (Jn. 19:27). In a singular sense she is the Woman of Genesis, closely identified with the role of Christ, her offspring, in overcoming Satan. In her, Satan has no part.

**B. Gospel Reading:** In the annunciation scene, Luke, in a masterly manner, presents the theological facts of the Incarnation of God's Son and his Virgin birth from Mary, as well as Mary's voluntary cooperation in the work of our redemption, in a meditative narrative that clothes these facts in Old Testament prophecies and meaningful symbols. He chose the unusual greeting "Rejoice!" (instead of the usual "Shalom-peace!") to depict Mary as Daughter Sion in person, the corporate personality of Zephaniah 3: 14-17, announcing the coming Saviour. In place of her name, he uses the past participle of a verb denoting abundance (charitoo), and thus she is "the highly favored one". Emphasis is on her messianic

calling, for she is chosen as God's instrument to give the world its Savior. Those whom he chooses, God fits out with all his gifts and graces for their task, so that her fullness of grace is a consequence of her calling. Mary will not accomplish her task by herself. The Spirit of God will accomplish his masterpiece in her: the Christ-event with all its far-reaching consequences. As once the Spirit hovered over the waters to bring about the wonder of creation and the beauty of the universe (Gen. 1:2), and as once the shining cloud in the desert symbolized the powerful presence of Yahweh in Israel's midst (Ex. 40:34f), so here Luke describes the overshadowing of the Spirit on Mary, so that Yahweh becomes present in Mary in the fullest sense. He is one of our race, he is Mary's Son. The divine motherhood is the source and principle of all Mary's privileges and graces.

**C. Second Reading:** Paul's outburst of thanksgiving in a magnificent hymn to the Blessed Trinity (1, 3-14) begins with the work of the Father who has totally blessed us in Christ, the well-beloved: a) by a divine election to be sinless and full of love, b) by adopting us to be his sons, c) by the outpouring of his favor, deserving of all praise. Mary was the first to hope in him (v. 12) together with those of her Jewish blood that followed him in faith. Her's was an election to sinlessness in a privileged manner.

### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(December 14, 1975)

**First Reading:** Isaiah 61:2a.10-11

**Second Reading:** First Thessalonians 5: 16-24

**Gospel Reading:** John 1:6-8.19-28

**A. First Reading:** One of Deutero-Isaiah's brilliant poems in which the New Testament writers see the Messiah announcing his work of salvation which is one of liberation from whatever holds man captive. Jesus himself quotes the passage as being fulfilled in himself (Lk.4:18f). He is Savior, Physician, Healer, Deliverer. Anointing with the Spirit in this passage denotes a special election for his mission (cf. Acts 10:38). This captivating image of the Spirit hovering over the Messiah to empower him for his task is already given in Isaiah 11:1-5 and is taken up by all four evangelists: Mk. 1:10; Mt. 3: 16; Lk. 3:32, John 1:32-33. Verses 10-11 introduce Jerusalem, the new People of God joyful celebrating its union of love with the Lord, her spouse. This image of bride and bridegroom is frequent in the prophets (Is. 54:5-8; Jer. 2:2) to express the union of Yahweh and his people, and in the New Testament writers of the union of Christ and those that form one with him (Jn. 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2)

**B. Gospel Reading:** John the Baptist is introduced as a witness to Christ the Light, the first among many in the fourth Gospel, where the word witness is used 33 times. Light is a key word in the fourth gospel and John's role is to be the lamp that brings that Light to many. He disclaims being the Messiah in person and neither is he Elijah in person (who was thought to be the Messiah's forerunner) although Jesus identifies their roles (Mt. 11:14). He also disclaims to be the awaited "prophet" whom some identified with the Messiah himself (cf. Jn 6:14). He is simply the herald preparing the "way" (another key word for Christ in Jn. 14:6), and persists in his self-abasement, characterizing himself as the slave of the Coming One.

**C. Second Reading:** Paul usually ends his letters with pointed commendations. Note the emphasis at the very outset on constant joy. Joy, prayer, thanksgiving: That is the true spirit of one who claims to be a Christian, not gloom, suspicion, fear of overstepping a commandment. He wants the working of the Spirit to flourish in the community and he does not oppose the more external charisms, but wants them tested, for he knows the danger of illusions in this regard. In this connection he mentions the God of peace (v.23), for whatever makes for disturbance cannot come from the God of peace. It would be contrary to all rules of interpretation to find an ontological make-up of man in Paul's triple wording (spirit, soul, body) when he is writing in a popular strain, and in the rhetoric of prayer. Each of these three words designates for the Semite the whole man but from a different angle.

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

(December 21, 1975)

**First Reading:** Second Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a-16

**Second Reading:** Romans 16:25-27

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 1: 26-38.

**A. First Reading:** Nathan's prophecy to David is the basis for Israel's expectations that the Messiah King would come from the royal line of David, and thus be called "Son of David". Some terms of the prophecy are ambivalent. David proposes to "build a house" (Temple) to the Lord, whereas the Lord promises to "build David's house" (dynasty). David's offspring (seed, descendant) is both individual and collective. It refers first to Solomon who built the Temple (this reflects David's understanding of the prophecy in 1 Kg. 2:4) but it also refers to the collective dynasty, the succession of Kings who occupied the Davidic throne (this is the tenor of v.16). Yet, the prophecy reaches its zenith of fulfillment in the individual Messiah-King for whom David's throne was ultimately intended (Lk. 1:32)

and in whom the Father-Son relation is unique (Hb. 1:5). This is how the Apostles understood it (Acts 2:30) as well as their contemporaries (Mk. 11:10)

**B. Gospel Reading:** See the notes for the Gospel on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. On this Sunday one could stress the fulfilment of the prophecy of Nathan, given in Lk. 1:32.

**C. Second Reading:** A single (complicated) Pauline sentence in the original Greek, this elaborate doxology (word of praise) is directed to the Father through Christ. It is a fitting choice immediately before Christmas, for it conjures up God's eternal plan (the mystery hidden for ages) to save all men, regardless of their origin, by the fact of God's own Son becoming man himself and incorporating all men into himself (cf. Eph. 1:9-10). He it is whom Paul preaches in his proclamation of the Good News, and whom the prophets made known: Christ, the sole means of salvation for all, on condition that man submit his will to accepting him (the obedience of faith).

## THE BIRTH OF THE SAVIOR

(December 25, 1975)

### Midnight Mass

**First Reading:** Isaiah 9: 1-3.56.

**Second Reading:** Titus 2: 11-14

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 2: 1-14

**A. First Reading:** Victory, peace and unbounded joy, announced to God's People, are bound up with the birth of a marvellous child to whom the Kingdom belongs (v.3). His titles are not found in connection with any other davidic king. They depict the ideal King of Israel, for whom the entire davidic line was destined, and for whom the People longed at the accession of every new king. The prophecy belongs to "the book of Emmanuel" (chapters 7-12) and continues the chain of prophecies concerning the Emmanuel of 7:12; 8:8 and 11: 1-3. Wonder-Counsellor (a double noun in Hebrew) may reflect Solomon's wisdom but in fact it marks the wisdom and counsel ascribed to Yahweh himself in 28:29. God-Hero (two nouns again in the Hebrew) is never given to any other king, though it reflects the valor of David. The ideal David's kingdom will be marked with everlasting peace and the King will reflect goodness that never defaults. No historical king of Judah realized adequately in himself this image, and Christian tradition unanimously refers the image to the Savior, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and counsel, the acme of valor, the quintessence of goodness and the very embodiment of peace.

**B. Gospel Reading:** An infancy narrative (see Bol. Ecl. Oct. 1974, 672-6) in which the author (Luke) is chiefly intent on the theological aspects of the persons involved. Thus the exact date of the census ought not be a problem since Luke is using the census-technique mainly to focus on the davidic origin of Jesus through Joseph. David's birthplace was Bethlehem (1 Sm. 16:1). From Nazareth to Bethlehem would be a journey of some 135 km. There is no hint that it was made at the last moment. Mary was prepared and had brought along the "swaddling cloths": long strips to wrap around the child so that it grow straight. "First-born" is standard technical term for the very first birth (prescinding from any further births) giving him the privileges and rights of priority. However, since Luke was Paul's companion, he may have in mind Rom. 8:29 which was written years before Luke's gospel: Jesus is the firstborn among many brethren. A manger is a feeding trough in the side of the rocks for cattle, marking the place as a cavern; caverns were often used by Shepherds as shelters from rain and cold. "No place for them in the inn" need not be taken in a derogatory sense, but can simply denote a quiet place away from the concourse of those registering. Yet Luke does seem to give it a symbolic nuance by expressly mentioning it.

Such an utterly simple and humble birth was the "sign" given to the shepherds (v. 12) that the Messiah-King would be at home among the poor and the lowly (Is. 61:1). Great joy is the tenor of the heavenly message, one of good news, glad tidings: the long-awaited Savior is among men, Israel's salvation is at hand. He is the Anointed One (Messiah in Hebrew, Christos in Greek), he is the Lord (here Luke uses *kyrios*, which was the usual word for Yahweh in the Greek bibles of the time.) Writing many decades after the event, he may well be giving a deeper Christian understanding of the person of Jesus. "Good will" is God's good will toward men, hence designates the men on whom God's favor rests. The Person of Jesus even now as a Babe gives the greatest glory to the Father on high, and is the Father's olive-branch of peace to all mankind. For in him and through him God will be reconciling the world to himself (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 19).

**C. Second Reading:** God's great favor (grace) or loving-kindness it is which manifested itself in a final climax in the Incarnation of his Son, through whom all men can be saved. But on this condition: that they follow his "training course", avoid what is evil and live upright lives. To his sacrificial and redeeming love they owe everything, and have become his very own, eager to live his Christ-life again. Their motivating hope is the Final Glorious Coming of Christ in all its splendor, to be shared by all who belong to him. In v. 13 "God" and "Savior" are governed by one sole article in Greek, which makes it preferable to refer both to Christ.

## FEAST OF JESUS, MARY, JOSEPH, THE HOLY FAMILY

### (December 28, 1975)

**First Reading:** Sirach 3: 2-6, 12-14 (Vulgate 3: 3-7, 14-17a)

**Second Reading:** Colossians 3: 12-21

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 2: 22-40 (shorter reading: 2: 22, 39-40)

**A. First Reading:** The Lord himself it is who gives the place of honor and authority to parents. Thus at the very outset the author pinpoints the reason for the fourth commandment of Exodus 20:12 and expatiates on the many benefits accruing therefrom: 1) atonement for sin 2) he will be well provided for by the Lord 3) he will have offspring of his own to gladden him 4) his prayers will be heard 5) he will have a long life 6) he will shine with the virtue of obedience. Particularly touching is the last exhortation to take care of parents when they become old and feeble-minded, and perhaps not easy to handle: Be kind. Be considerate. Do not grieve them. Do not despise or revile them. Admirable advice also for our own day!

**B. Gospel Reading:** Emphasis is first of all placed in this scene on 1) Mary and Joseph faithfully carrying out the Law of God in which they see his Will revealed. 2) the incarnational aspect of the act in which Mother and Son identify themselves with the rest of their fellowmen (though neither was obliged by this Law), sharing their needs and requirements 3) the poverty of the Holy Family offering two doves instead of a lamb and a dove (Lev. 12:8).

Consistently throughout his Gospel, Luke stresses the activity of the Holy Spirit (mentioned here three times), interpreted in line with his deeper understanding of the events at the time of his writing. Simeon's canticle takes on a universal outlook. The Child is both Israel "glory" (which John portrays in Jn. 1:14) and the "Light" for all the nations (cf. Is. 9: 1). God has fulfilled his promises. Yet not all will accept him, for not all will admit their need of a Savior, to their own destruction. Those who accept him will experience new life ("rising" being used exclusively by Luke for the resurrection from the dead, cf. ch. 20). Sharing in his redemptive work of love, Mary's grief will be acute because of man's rejection of her Son.

Most important for today's reading is the last section, depicting the Holy Family at Nazareth, a quiet little town in the hills of Galilee, with Jesus developing in every respect, but especially in that divine wisdom which Israel cherished so much. On him rested the Spirit and the Father's benign favor.

**C. Second Reading:** A particularly beautiful passage of St. Paul describing the believing community at one in Christ and the Spirit, blossoming forth in all the virtues that marked the Christ-life on earth and demanded by Jesus of all his followers in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7). It is especially fitting as a model for the Christian family.

## II. HOMILIES

**December 7, 1975: Second Sunday of Advent**

### PREPARE

**The Human Situation:** We prepare for any special event: a jubilee, a birthday, the coming of a state visitor, an important convention. How well organized was the preparation for the Holy Father's Coming in 1970! Everyone knows too what preparations are made months ahead of time for a town or barrio fiesta! Without preparation, nothing would come off well: the state visitor would not be properly received, the fiesta would lack organization, the long-awaited celebration would be very disappointing. Advent is the time for a very special preparation. Christ's birth of Mary is the greatest human event of history, and his rebirth in our hearts is of paramount importance for our well-being and happiness. Its efficacy will be in proportion to our preparation.

**The Good News:** John the Baptist prepared the hearts of God's People for the Coming of her Messiah-King, by demanding a **thoroughly inner preparation**. He did not ask his audience to erect spacious towers, to build great structures, to decorate streets and homes with tinsel. He asked for a preparation far more difficult and challenging: one reaching into the very heart of man. He demanded sincere compunction for sin, an open confession of one's wrongdoing, and a firm resolution for a change of heart (metanoia). This spiritual preparation is what our heavenly Father wants of his people in the period of Advent-waiting: humble recognition of sins and failings, together with an **open heart** for the powerful workings of his Spirit, so that Christ's rebirth in our hearts can be fully realized. Such a renewal of spirit is also the best preparedness for Christ's Second Coming which will be totally unexpected by all. For if we are at peace with God we will await with **joyful hope** the Coming of our Savior Jesus Christ, (as we proclaim in the Eucharistic celebration after the Our Father). To those who love the Lord, the Second Coming will not be an event of dread but a joy and fulfillment.



**Our Response:** Advent is the time for reflection on where we are going in life, what are life's purpose and our real aims, what is our spiritual outlook. Advent is the time for a thorough examination of conscience of our past deeds and motivations, coupled with a sincere reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Although we will be expected to take part in external and material preparations, the hierarchy of values demands that we give far more time and thought to the inner preparation of the heart. He who is coming has no need of our material gifts. But he does desire our heart, for he knows that only then is man at peace. A sure sign of renewal of spirit is sharing our material gifts with Christ's poor.

**December 8, 1975:**

## I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

**The Human Situation:** What is it about little children that is so attractive? They win over even the hardest hearts and the roughest of personalities. A child's eyes are so pure, the lips so winsome, the ways so gentle, the gestures so appealing. Is it not that they are so close to God, so sinless? They unfold for us God's simplicity, his goodness, his love. It is always touching to see the love and care which firemen will bestow on a rescued child, or soldiers shielding little ones in their arms while seeking shelter from the battle, or any such situation. The heart of man is deeply moved by the tenderness and loving helplessness of the child. For in the unspoiled child, God manifests himself unhindered.

**The Good News:** When our Lady appeared to little fourteen-year old Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, the child was dazzled by her beauty which she could not fully describe, try as she would. All she could say was that the Lady's whole being breathed love and simplicity, and what struck her most was the Lady's utter goodness. This is what it means to be without sin: to share the very goodness of God, to radiate his love and kindness to everyone. Sin is disruption of community, man's separation from God his loving Father, and man's separation from his fellowmen. But Mary was always wide open to God and his loving plans, wide open to do the will of the Father, to receive the influence of the Spirit, to give the Son full reign in her entire being.

Mary's sinlessness does not separate her or remove her far away from the rest of men. She is wide open to all our needs and the needs of all God's children. Her very sinlessness enables her to exude his goodness to each and every creature, to pour out the love of his fatherhood on all his children. For she is their Mother! When Mary disclosed to Bernadette: "I am the Immaculate Conception", the child was not

overawed. She did not experience fear or a desire to run away and hide. On the contrary, Bernadette was irresistibly drawn to return again and again to be near "the Lady" and to gaze upon her, to experience her motherly tenderness. This is why the Lourdes-event has made such an impact on the Christian world. Men feel irresistible drawn toward Mary who manifests by her very being what it means to be close to God, to be full of love and goodness, without any of those disturbing elements which mark the presence of sin.

Go to Lourdes. You will see hundreds of people of all ages and classes, kneeling at the grotto every day, the spot where Mary appeared to Bernadette. They are deep in prayer. They experience an awareness of God's presence, and that being close to Mary means closeness to God also. They may not be healed in body at the baths of Lourdes but they go away with an inner healing of spirit which enables them to see life in its proper perspective, and with renewed strength to lead the Christ-life of holiness and love. For the Immaculate Mother has obtained for them deeply valuable graces: to love God and to love their fellow-men which is the overflowing of goodness and the continuation of community. With Mary more and more in their lives, sin must recede and God will reign eventually supreme as he does in the Immaculata.

**Our Response:** To be open to God's plan of love for all mankind: How that takes us away from selfish aims, selfish desires, in one word: from self! Sin centers around self. Sinlessness centers on God and his love for all men. The more we enter into his plan of all men in the one Christ, in the one Spirit of love, so much the more are we stripping off the old man, or rather, letting God strip off the old man in us, for God alone can accomplish that. It is God's work. Mary had this radical channeling of all her thoughts and desires from the very outset. The true children of Mary try to enter into her spirit daily more and more. To become more like Mary who was sinless, selfless, open fully to God, open to his love, and to his love for all mankind, all the brothers and sisters of Christ: that is the sinlessness of Mary that the Christian strives to attain.

**December 14, 1975: Third Sunday of Advent**

### **WITNESS TO THE LIGHT**

**The Human Situation:** There are people who are afraid to be a witness. If they witness, by chance a murder or even a bad accident, they disappear quickly for fear of the consequences should they courageously bear witness against the guilty party. A true witness must be courageous, but he must also be honest, well-balanced and reliable. On his word at

times depend serious decisions. He is not out to make money by his testimony. He is out to promote the truth, and to be of assistance to his fellowmen.

**The Good News:** John the Baptist was a man of singular caliber. The crowds could not help being attracted by this gaunt ascetical figure, so utterly detached from material comforts in his dress and food habits (Mt. 3:4), so fearless in denouncing the real culprits as "a brood of vipers" (Mt. 3:7), so gentle and understanding toward the common man be he soldier, official, or ordinary laborer (Lk. 3: 10-14).

He was not a self-appointed prophet as so many today, but was sent by God. He does not put himself forward as a Leader to whom all must conform their way of living. He is simply a witness to Someone greater than he, a witness to the Divine Light, already shining in their midst, but unknown and unacknowledged. "Witness" in Greek is the English word "martyr", for the latter is a supreme witness even unto death for the cause in question. John's whole ambition aimed solely at preparing men's hearts to receive the Light, each in his own capacity. He leads his own disciples to the Light (v. 36), and finally, at the mere whim of an adulterous woman, lays down his life for the Master (Mt. 14: 10).

A weaker character would have fallen for the crowd's adulation when he began to be considered the Messiah, or at least Elijah. This he stoutly rejects. Any thought of self-aggrandizement is farthest from his mind. He persists in total self-abasement, describing himself as a slave, even accounting himself as an unworthy one (v. 27). This is the man for whom the Early Church reserves the highest praise, and the liturgy a place of exceptional honor. For "those who humble themselves shall be exalted".

The Church needs men and women today who will be witnesses to Christ the Light in all its stark reality: who are not afraid to stand up for the truth of the Gospel (not watering it down to suit the tastes of contemporaries); undaunted in upholding the law of God in the many and varied moral issues of the day (which is not always the case in the so-called "theology of compassion"); who know how, like John, to demand much of themselves but are gentle and understanding of others' weaknesses; and whose one goal is not self, nor self-advancement, but solely Christ the Lord, in whose light they suffuse that clear light of a witness sent by God.

**Our Response:** There is no need to look for extraordinary opportunities to bear witness to Christ the Light. This is best done in the little situations of the day, at home or at work, in school or at play: the honest word, the correct answer; a courageous no! when pakikisama demands are contrary to the ideals of Christ, a fearless example when leadership is needed; a teacher's faith professed, a parent's beliefs manifested: these and many other ways prove the true witnesses to the one who is the Light Divine.

December 21, 1975: Fourth Sunday of Advent

**WAITING WITH THE DAWN FOR THE DAY**

**The Human Situation:** Who longs more for the new day than the sleepless sufferer for whom the dark night was one long waiting? Who is gladder for the sunrise than the man in battle bivouacked in a cold, damp shack without warmth or comfort? Man has learned to use lamps and bulbs and neon lights, yet he too if glad when day has dawned, and sunlight brightens everything in sight. All nature waits for the light of day: cattle to receive their food, birds to begin their chirping, flowers to turn their faces again toward the sun, and drooping spirits are once more revived by the warmth that light brings.

**The Good News:** Mary is the Dawn of Christ the Day. All the longings of Mother Zion are summed up and embodied in the person of her whom St. Luke has the angel address with the words: "Rejoice! O highly Favored One!", for he has in mind the words of Zephaniah: "Shout for joy, O Daughter Zion! Sing joyfully, O Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, O Daughter Jerusalem! The King of Israel, the Lord is in your midst (literally: womb), a mighty Savior!" (Zeph. 3:14-18). In Luke's eyes, Mary is Mother Zion in person. Now in Advent silence she waits for the new Day which will dispel the darkness of night and spread its Light over the whole world, enlightening every man (Jn. 1:9).

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you". This is the climax of the Annunciation message. An entirely new world now opens up. An entirely new work of God is now to be accomplished. The Holy Spirit will bring about his Masterpiece on earth: the Christ-Event is about to take place. Did not the Spirit of God hover over the waters in Genesis (1:2) to bring about the wonder of creation and the ornamentation of the universe? Here the Spirit brings about a new and wonderful creation, the apex and climax of the entire universe: Christ Jesus. In the desert, Israel witnessed the bright cloud that came down and rested on the Tabernacle, God's dwelling place, symbolizing the mighty presence of Yahweh in Israel's midst (Ex. 40: 34f). Here, St. Luke uses the identical word (*episkiazein*) to describe the Coming of the Spirit on Mary in power, in order to bring about the wonder of Emmanuel: God-with-us. Truly, God is here present in the fullest sense, for he has entered into our very race, and taken our flesh and blood from Mary, that same Flesh and Blood which one day would be our Sacrifice and our Food. This is the great work of the Spirit, the new creation, the initiation of the eschaton. Mary's is God's living Tabernacle, God's living dwelling place, and Emmanuel, God-with-us, is not merely in invisible presence as of old, but in the reality of man, flesh and blood, Mary's Son the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation.

Mary not only sums up in herself the longings of all Israel but those of all men longing for liberation from suffering and death, longing for a Savior to overcome all evil powers and brighten this world with his Light. Yes, more! Mary sums up in herself the groanings in childbirth (Rom. 8:22) of the entire universe, waiting for the final transformation which the Day of Christ will bring. Well may the Virgin-Mother have kept repeating: Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

**Our Response:** Still waters run deep. Silent waiting in this Advent period can be most fruitful, for in silence and prayer we are more open to the Spirit, since his voice can more easily be detected. Under the impulse of that voice of the Spirit, Mary went forth to accomplish a labor of love for Elizabeth in need. Our preparation can also be spent in a labor of love for those in need, that they too be ready for the rebirth.

**December 25, 1975: Midnight Mass**

### A SON IS GIVEN TO US

**The Human Situation:** When the first male child is born to a royal family, there is great rejoicing. All the bells far and wide are ringing, people celebrate from the highest to the lowest, the entire atmosphere is charged with festivity. Also in simpler circumstances, what joy is afforded the young father awaiting the news of the birth of his first child when the nurse exclaims: "It's a boy!" Even in the hovels of the poorest, a male child causes much gladness by his birth. Here is the one who will carry on the family name. Here is the heir!

**The Good News:** It is no wonder that Christmas fills everyone with joy. A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us, the heir to the Kingdom, the Prince of Peace. To him the whole world looks to liberate it from its fears, its worries, its anxieties. The Child will deliver men from the heavy burden weighing them down. The Babe in Mary's arms will give new hope to mankind. "There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name in the whole world given to men by which we are to be saved" (Acts. 4:12). He is the Savior of the world.

At this midnight hour, Mary gave to the world the Light it needed to see the Way: the Way that leads to true human fulfillment and to come close again to God. For Jesus is the Way. Mary gave the world at this holy hour the Bread of Life to live life fully, for it is this Babe who "came that all might have life, and have it to the full" (Jn. 10: 10). No one need fear to approach this Child, for even the humble, simple shepherds approached him with joy and expectation.

We are daily hearing of wars and rumors of wars. But this Child is the Father's olive-branch of Peace to a weary world. In Christ alone can nations find a solid foundation for brotherly love and peace. In Christ alone can enemies drop their hostilities, rivals their destructive plans, neighbors their coldness, families their lack of warmth and love. In Christ all men and each individual man and woman can be renewed in new hope and new ideals, new interest for fellowmen, new love for one another. This is the real meaning of the Birthday of the Lord. He must be reborn in each one anew. His Spirit of goodness and love must be allowed to shine in our lives, his mercy and forgiveness must have an outlet in our own dealings with others.

**Our Response:** He asks only for our hearts. With Mary and Joseph we make this offering anew. We will open wide our hearts so as to let this Divine Child accomplish his great work of transformation in us. Then as Members of Christ, renewed in his Spirit, we will be his witnesses to all with whom we come in contact. Our Christmas does not end today. It is a rebirth in us that can have effects that last forever.

**December 28, 1975: Feast of the Holy Family**

### **LIVING TOGETHER WITH THE DIVINE YOUTH**

**The Human Situation:** Material goods are needed by all to live decently and properly, but an abundance of them does not necessarily make for happiness. Many a family has meager commodities but is very happy at that. Happiness is not the fruit of possessing money. Real joy comes from within: that mutual love which all the members of the family bear toward one another; the peace that fills the atmosphere of the little dwelling; the joy radiant on the children's faces; the justified pride in the eyes of father and mother. A happy family: staying together, working together, praying together.

**The Good News:** God gave mankind the Holy Family as the blueprint for all families. The Spirit hovered over their community of love and made them happy and full of inner joy. Their life-style and material needs were of the greatest simplicity, as were most of the people in that little town of Nazareth, huddled against the hillside in Lower Galilee. They were without all our present-day news media, modern means of transportation, machines, appliances and gadgets, yet they were extremely happy. For God dwelt fully in their midst.

To Joseph fell the responsibility of caring for the Mother and the Child, God's greatest treasures on earth. Industriousness, hard work, and conscientiousness in observance of God's Law marked him as the

faithful and prudent householder (Mt. 24-45). He was thoughtful, not hasty (Mt. 2:22), upright and considerate (Mt. 1: 19), given to much prayer and totally obedient to God's will (Mt. 2:14,21). In carrying out the heavenly messages Mary fell in completely with his plans, saw the will of God in his determination to be enrolled in Bethlehem (Lk. 2:4f), and shared his deep concern at the loss of the Child (Lk. 2:48). Her one and only thought was to be God's willing handmaiden in order to carry out the divine will (Lk. 1:38).

No words of Jesus are recorded before the twelfth year of his life. What is recorded speaks well enough: "The child grew in size and strength, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (Lk. 2:40). At Mary's knee he learned his prayers, at her side he learned of the great heroes of Israel, and of the saving history of his people. From her he learned those many appealing traits that show up again and again in the Gospels, his compassionate heart, his love for children, his quiet manners that drew men irresistible to him. From Joseph he learned hard work at a carpenter's bench. He was not a pampered youth, and privations came natural to him, for they were poor (Lk. 2: 24). In this life of utter simplicity, the Divine Youth prepared for his future ministry, spent hours at prayer for the work that lay ahead, and learned more and more to incarnate himself into mankind for whom he came as Savior. As Carpenter, he was building a most important project: the blueprints for the kingdom. His life of prayer and labor was all for his fellowmen.

**Our Response:** True values are clearly depicted in the lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. They know the proper hierarchy of values, and act accordingly. It was fortunate that Pope Benedict XV gave this feast to the universal Church and wanted each family to have a portrait of the Holy Family in their home, so that they could reflect on the values in their lives, learn from them what true happiness consists in, and follow them to the eternal community of love in the mansions of the Father.

## SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Puatu, Mar, V. (trans.), *Limang Sandali Araw-araw*, by Lovasik, Rev. Lawrence, G., S.V.D., (Pasay City: St Paul Publications, 1974).

*Catechism in Stories* was written by Father Lawrence G. Lovasik, S.V.D. Through the inspiration of the Sacred Heart Apostolate, this book was translated into Pilipino by Mar V. Puatu. Having been broadcasted by the Radio Veritas, it was printed by St. Paul's Publications.

Originally intended to help catechists convey their message more effectively to their pupils, this book can also be of great help to Sunday preachers, retreat masters and, in general, to those who can spare a few minutes a day for meditation and reflection. Having been translated and printed in Pilipino, pastors of souls will do well in suggesting to their flock, though unknowledgeable in English, the reading of this small book. I am sure our people will love these short stories. The brief notes after each story will help them in their understanding of our faith.

Though there are some inexactitudes in the translation like the interchangeable use of *pagka-alam* and *pagkilala sa Diyos* (pp. 19 and 24) and errors in the printing of the book as the blank pages for pp. 50, 51, 54, 55, 58 and 59 which can be corrected in future editions, this work will certainly prove interesting to both neophytes and veterans in spiritual life.

In our age of demythologization, when the appeal of stories has dwindled down to a very low ebb, this book will surely be a welcomed change.

— Fr. Wilfredo C. Paguio

Tresmontant, Claude: *Los Problemas del Ateismo*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1974 — 456 págs. — Rústica 560 pesetas; tela 650 pesetas.

If we should ask the atheist about the nature or definition of atheism and about his reasons for embracing it, he is hard put to answer, and his replies would be either childish, illogical or whimsical or irately sentimental. He might even merely say in anger: "Don't you know that Vatican II upholds liberty of religion, as also our fundamental law or constitution?" He may cap his protestations with invectives and other arguments *ad hominem* or *ad crumenam*.

The present book delves into, and cogently refutes, all kinds of atheism from the beginnings to Marx, Nietzsche, Sartre, Monod, etc. The author demonstrates that modern atheism has causes of a political, psychological, social and even economic nature. Even exaggerations in Christian patterns of piety or devotional exercises provokes an atheistic reaction in some narrow minds.

Professors of religion, pastors of souls and the informed Catholic will find this book interesting and valuable.