

BOLETIN ECLESIASTICO de FILIPINAS

DECLARATION ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING SEXUAL ETHICS

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SEXUALITY

Mons. Salvatore Garofalo

HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN VALUES OF SEXUALITY

Mons. Philippe Delhaye

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIVES

Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

Herman J. Graf, S.V.D.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	177	A WORLDWIDE PLAGUE
	180	IN THIS ISSUE
DOCUMENTATION		
• Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith	181	DECLARATION ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING SEXUAL ETHICS
• Philippine Hierarchy	197	LETTER TO THE POPE
• Paul VI	199	ARCHDIOCESE OF JARO
	200	DIOCESE OF KALIBO
FEATURES		
• Mons. S. Garofalo	201	CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SEXUALITY
• Mons. Ph. Delhaye	205	HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN VALUES OF SEXUALITY
BIBLE STUDY		
• Bernard LeFrois, SVD	216	THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIVES
LITURGY		
• Herman J. Graf, SVD	224	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN
• Herman J. Graf, SVD	240	FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN
COMMUNICATION		
• Fr. Juan Gaborni	249	ON THE PROPOSAL TO LEGALIZE DIVORCE
HOMILETICS		
• Bernard LeFrois, SVD	250	I. BIBLICAL NOTES FROM MAY 2 TO JULY 25, 1976
	267	II. HOMILIES FROM MAY 2 TO JULY 25, 1976
BOOKS	286	SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

EDITORIAL

A Worldwide Plague

Scoffers had a field day when the Vatican, early this year, issued its Declaration on Sexual Ethics. All sorts of insults and ridicule were hurled at the Pope for repeating the Church's age-old stand against the abuse of sex. These scoffers just can't seem to see the distinction between use and abuse.

But people who are concerned with the good of society — with the good of man, have slowly, whether they like it or not, taken the side of the Church. Discussing "The Porno Plague," TIME Magazine says, "America is deep into its Age of Porn. The old narrow Puritanism is passing, and few mourn it. But the feeling of relief is mixed with growing unease and doubt: How will the current avalanche of porn change America? Many who oppose censorship now wonder if the mounting taste for porn is a symptom of decay, of corrosive boredom, of withdrawal from social concern for obsessive personal pleasures. Even those who argue that it is not harmful to the user, and

that people ought to be free to do what they please in private, have begun to fear that the porn plague is in fact invading the privacy of those who want no part of it."

Another striking portion of the TIME write-up says, "Pornography, so often not really erotic but merely dehumanizing, can be a symptom of social disorder. Sex had often been used as a political weapon for rebellion (and is therefore suspect in totalitarian societies). Open sexuality can be seen as a sign of freedom, yet it can also run riot to the point where it becomes both destructive and compulsive and thus ultimately unfree."

"What is unique about the modern West and particularly the U.S. is that porn cuts against the grain of so many traditional beliefs, and the explosion is taking place in a highly literate society with the technological means and marketing talent to disseminate it. It is that collision of culture and commerce that creates concern."

Assaulted by Western, and specially American pornography, the oriental peoples of China, Japan, and Southeast Asia including the Philippines have suffered the loss of their traditional "delicadeza" and "hiya", and even more. They have started to undergo a brutalization of their psyche that is slowly transforming them into sexual monsters. It has been noted that "Japanese tourists have become the most notable worldwide customers for all things pornographic." If the same cannot yet be said of Filipinos it is not because the same causes are not at work among them, but simply because they have not attained the same level of prosperity as the Japanese to afford themselves of unlimited indulgence.

Faced by such a world situation, what can the Church do? Can it just wait for the tide to ebb and then pick up the pieces of decency? It has been commissioned by Christ to preach the salvation of men. It has to call what is good, good and what is bad, bad. No matter what scoffers may say.

In This Issue

Much, too much, has been said about sex. But little has been said rightly. In this issue of our Boletin we give our readers a collection of what has been said rightly about sex, by sources whose orthodoxy we cannot doubt.

Our Bible Study focuses on "*The Paschal Mystery of Christ in our Daily Lives*". If there is any salvific mystery which should be translated into practical living, it is the Paschal Mystery. We must make our mark in life more and more as a people who have been transformed by the Paschal Mystery.

Masses for Children is indeed a wonderful idea. But how shall one go about it? Father Graf gives some suggestions.

Our readers will be happy to note that our *Homiletics Section* provides sermon aids for the months of May, June and July. We hope we can, in this way, catch up with the delays we have been forced to make.

DECLARATION ON CERTAIN QUESTIONS CONCERNING SEXUAL ETHICS

by the

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Importance of sexuality; grave consequences of its abuse; and of erroneous doctrine about it (n. 1).

The Church cannot remain indifferent to confusion of minds and relaxation of morals; **NEED** for clear doctrine (n. 2).

Basis of the Church's teaching on moral matters: divine law, both natural and revealed, establishing the essential order of human nature (n. 3).

General error condemned: that one can find neither in human nature nor in the revealed law any **ABSOLUTE** and **IMMUTABLE** norm to serve for **PARTICULAR ACTIONS** other than the one which expresses itself in the general law of charity and respect for human dignity (n. 4).

The traditional principles and norms taught by the Church on sexual ethics have not changed these are founded on the **FINALITY** of the sexual act (or of sexuality); this finality of the **PRINCIPAL CRITERION** of sexual morality (n. 5).

PURPOSE of the Declaration: to **repeat** the Church's doctrine on certain particular points, in view of the urgent need to oppose serious errors and widespread aberrant modes of behaviour (n. 6).

ABUSES CONDEMNED

PRE-MARITAL SEXUAL UNION (n. 7).

HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONS (n. 8).

MASTURBATION (n. 9).

BASIC ERROR POINTED OUT (n. 10).

It is wrong to say that mortal sin is committed only by making a wrong **fundamental option** or by that selfishness which completely and deliberately closes itself of the love of neighbour; "it is wrong to say that **PARTICULAR ACTS ARE NOT ENOUGH TO CONSTITUTE MORTAL SIN.**" — **MORTAL SIN IS INCLUDED IN EVERY DELIBERATE TRANSGRESSION, IN SERIOUS MATTER, OF EACH OF THE MORAL LAWS.**

It is wrong to "hold the view that in the sexual field mortal sins are not committed.

PRAISE OF THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY (n. 11)**HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATIONS AGAINST CHASTITY (n. 12)****THE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS TO ACCEPT AND TEACH THE TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE (n. 13).****TEXT**

1. According to contemporary scientific research, the human person is so profoundly affected by sexuality that it must be considered as one of the factors which give to each individual's life the principal traits that distinguish it. In fact it is from sex that the human person receives the characteristics which, on the biological, psychological and spiritual levels, make that person a man or a woman, and thereby largely condition his or her progress towards maturity and insertion into society. Hence sexual matters, as is obvious to everyone, today constitute a theme frequently and openly dealt with in books, reviews, magazines and other means of social communication.

In the present period, the corruption of morals has increased, and one of the most serious indications of this corruption is the unbridled exaltation of sex. Moreover, through the means of social communication and through public entertainment this corruption has reached the point of invading the field of education and of infecting the general mentality.

In this context certain educators, teachers and moralists have been able to contribute to a better understanding and integration into life of the values proper to each of the sexes; on the other hand there are those who have put forward concepts and modes of behaviour which are contrary to the true moral exigencies of the human person. Some members of the latter group have even gone so far as to favour a licentious hedonism.

As a result, in the course of a few years, teachings, moral criteria and modes of living hitherto faithfully preserved have been very much unsettled, even among Christians. There are many people today who, being confronted with so many widespread opinions opposed to the teaching which they received from the Church, have come to wonder what they must still hold as true.

2. The Church cannot remain indifferent to this confusion of minds and relaxation of morals. It is a question, in fact, of a matter which is of the utmost importance both for the personal lives of Christians and for the social life of our time.¹

The Bishops are daily led to note the growing difficulties experienced by the faithful in obtaining knowledge of wholesome moral teaching, especially in sexual matters, and of the growing difficulties experienced by pastors in expounding this teaching effectively. The Bishops know that by their pastoral charge they are called upon to meet the needs of their faithful in this very serious matter, and important documents dealing with it have already been published by some of them or by Episcopal Conferences. Nevertheless, since the erroneous opinions and resulting deviations are continuing to spread everywhere, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, by virtue of its function in the universal Church² and by a mandate of the Supreme Pontiff, has judged it necessary to publish the present Declaration.

3. The people of our time are more and more convinced that the human person's dignity and vocation demand that they should discover, by the light of their own intelligence, the values innate in their nature, that they should ceaselessly develop these values and realize them in their lives, in order to achieve an ever greater development.

In moral matters man cannot make value judgments according to his personal whim: "In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to obedience... For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged."³

Moreover, through his revelation God has made known to us Christians his plan of salvation, and he has held up to us Christ, the Saviour and Sanctifier, in his teaching and example, as the supreme and immutable Law of life: "I am the light of the world;

¹ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 47: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1067.

² Cf. Apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae Universae*, 29 (15 August 1967): AAS 59 (1967), p. 897.

³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 16: AAC 58 (1966), p. 1037.

anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark, he will have the light of life."⁴

Therefore there can be no true promotion of man's dignity unless the essential order of his nature is respected. Of course, in the history of civilization many of the concrete conditions and needs of human life have changed and will continue to change. But all evolution of morals and every type of life must be kept within the limits imposed by the immutable principles based upon every human person's constitutive elements and essential relations — elements and relations which transcend historical contingency.

These fundamental principles, which can be grasped by reason, are contained in "the divine law — eternal, objective and universal — whereby the human community, by a plan conceived in wisdom and love. Man has been made by God to participate in this law, with result that, under the gentle disposition of divine Providence, he can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth."⁵ This divine law is accessible to our minds.

4. Hence, those many people are in error who today assert that one can find neither in human nature nor in the revealed law any absolute and immutable norm to serve for particular actions other than the one which expresses itself in the general law of charity and respect for human dignity. As a proof of their assertion they put forward the view that so-called norms of the natural law or precepts of Sacred Scripture are to be regarded only as given expressions of a form of particular culture at a certain moment of history.

But in fact, divine Revelation and, in its own proper order, philosophical wisdom, emphasize the authentic exigencies of human nature. They thereby necessarily manifest the existence of immutable laws inscribed in the constitutive elements of human nature and which are revealed to be identical in all beings endowed with reason.

Furthermore, Christ instituted his Church as "the pillar and bulwark of truth."⁶ With the Holy Spirit's assistance, she ceaselessly preserves and transmits without error the truths of the moral order, and she authentically interprets not only the revealed positive law but "also . . . those principles of the moral order which have their origin in human nature itself"⁷ and which concern man's full

⁴ Jn. 8:12.

⁵ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, 3: AAS 58 (1966), p. 931.

⁶ 1 Tim. 3:15.

⁷ *Dignitatis Humanae*, 14: AAS 58 (1966), p. 940; cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Casti Connubii*, 31 December 1930: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 579-580; Pius XII, Allocution of 2 November 1954: AAS 46 (1954), pp. 671-672; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Master et Magistra*, 15 May 1961: ASS 53 (1961), p. 457; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae*, 4, 25 July 1968: AAS 60 (1968), p. 483.

DECLARATION ON SEXUAL ETHICS 185

development and sanctification. Now in fact the Church throughout her history has always considered a certain number of precepts of the natural law as having an absolute and immutable value, and in their transgression she has seen a contradiction of the teaching and spirit of the Gospel.

5. Since sexual ethics concern certain fundamental values of human and Christian life, this general teaching equally applies to sexual ethics. In this domain there exist principles and norms which the Church has always unhesitatingly transmitted as part of her teaching, however much the opinions and morals of the world may have been opposed to them. These principles and norms in no way owe their origin to a certain type of culture, but rather to knowledge of the divine law and of human nature. They therefore cannot be considered as having become out of date or doubtful under the pretext that a new cultural situation has arisen.

It is these principles which inspired the exhortations and directives given by the Second Vatican Council for an education and an organization of social life taking account of the equal dignity of man and woman while respecting their difference.⁸

Speaking of "the sexual nature of man and the human faculty of procreation", the Council noted that they "wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life."⁹ It then took particular care to expound the principles and criteria which concern human sexuality in marriage, and which are based upon the finality of the specific function of sexuality.

In this regard the Council declares that the moral goodness of the acts proper to conjugal life, acts which are ordered according to true evaluation of motives. It must be determined by objective standards. These, based on the nature of the human person and his acts, preserve the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love."¹⁰

These final words briefly sum up of the Council's teaching — more fully expounded in an earlier part of the same Constitution¹¹ — on the finality of the sexual act and the principal criterion of its morality: it is respect for its finality that ensures the moral goodness of this act.

This same principle, which the Church holds from divine Revelation and from her authentic interpretation of the natural

⁸ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1, 8: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 729-730; 734-736. *Gaudium et Spes*, 29, 60, 67: AAS 58 (1966), pp. 1048-1049, 1080-1081, 1088-1089.

⁹ *Gaudium et Spes* 51: AAS (1966), pp. 1072.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; cf. also 49: *loc. cit.*, pp. 1069-1070.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49, 50: *loc. cit.*, pp. 1069-1072.

law, is also the basis of her traditional doctrine, which states that the use of the sexual function has its true meaning and moral rectitude only in true marriage.¹²

6. It is not the purpose of the present Declaration to deal with all the abuses of the sexual faculty, nor with all the elements involved in the practice of chastity. Its objection is rather to repeat the Church's doctrine on certain particular points, in view of the urgent need to oppose serious errors and widespread aberrant modes of behaviour.

7. Today there are many who vindicate the right to sexual union before marriage, at least cases where a firm intention to marry and an affection which is already in some way conjugal in the psychology of the subjects require this completion, which they judge to be con-natural. This is especially the case when the celebration of the marriage is impeded by circumstances or when this intimate relationship seems necessary in order for love to be preserved.

This opinion is contrary to Christian doctrine, which states that every genital act must be within the framework of marriage. However firm the intention of those who practices such premature sexual relations may be, the fact remains that these relations cannot ensure, in sincerity and fidelity, the interpersonal relationship between a man and a woman, nor especially can they protect this relationship from whims and caprices. Now it is a stable union that Jesus willed, and he restored its original requirement, beginning with the sexual difference. "Have you not read that the creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man must leave father and mother, and cling to his wife, and the two become one body? They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide".¹³ Saint Paul will be even more explicit when he shows that if unmarried people or widows cannot live chastely they have no other alternative than the stable union of marriage: "... it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion".¹⁴ Through marriage, in fact, the love of married people is taken up into that love which Christ irrevocably has for the Church,¹⁵ while dissolute sexual union¹⁶ defiles the temple of the Holy Spirit which the Christian

¹² The present Declaration does not go into further detail regarding the norms of sexual life within marriage; these norms have been clearly taught in the Encyclical Letters *Casti Connubii* and *Humanae Vitae*.

¹³ Cf. Mt. 19:4-6.

¹⁴ 1 Cor. 7:9.

¹⁵ Cf. Eph. 5:25-32.

¹⁶ Sexual intercourse outside marriage is formally condemned: 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 7:2; 10:8; Eph. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4; and with explicit reasons Cor. 6:12-20.

has become. Sexual union therefore is only legitimate if a definitive community of life has been established between the man and the woman.

This is what the Church has always understood and taught,¹⁷ and she finds a profound agreement with her doctrine in men's reflection and in the lessons of history.

Experience teaches us that love must find its safeguard in the stability of marriage, if sexual intercourse is truly to respond to the requirements of its own finality and to those of human dignity. These requirements call for a conjugal contract sanctioned and guaranteed by society — a contract which establishes a state of life of capital importance both for the exclusive union of the man and the woman and for the good of their family and of the human community. Most often, in fact, pre-marital relations exclude the possibility of children. What is represented to be conjugal love is not able, as it absolutely should be, to develop into paternal and maternal love. Or, if it does happen to do so, this will be to the detriment of the children, who will be deprived of the stable environment in which they ought to develop in order to find in it the way and the means of their insertion into society as a whole.

The consent given by people who wish to be united in marriage therefore be manifested externally and in manner which makes it valid in the eyes of society. As far as the faithful are concerned, their consent to the setting up of a community of conjugal life must be expressed according to the laws of the Church. It is a consent which makes their marriage a Sacrament of Christ.

8. At the present time there are those who, basing themselves on observations in the psychological order, have begun to judge indulgently, and even to excuse completely, homosexual relations between certain people. This they do in opposition to the constant teaching of the Magisterium and to the moral sense of the Christian people.

A distinction is drawn, and it seems with some reason, between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example, or from other similar causes, and is transitory or at least incurable; and homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable.

¹⁷ Cf. Innocent IV, Letter *Sub catholica professione*, 6 March 1254, DS 835; Pius II, *Propos. damn. in Ep. Cum sicut accepimus*, 14 November 1459, DS 1367; Decrees of the Holy Office, 24 September 1665, DS 2045; 2 March 1679, DS 2148. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Casti Connubii*, 31 December 1930: AAS 22 (1930), pp. 558-559.

In regard to this second category of subjects, some people conclude that their tendency is so natural that it justifies in their case homosexual relations within a sincere communion of life and love analogous to marriage, in so far as such homosexuals feel incapable of enduring a solitary life.

In the pastoral field, these homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties and their inability to fit into society. Their culpability will be judged with prudence. But no pastoral method can be employed which would give moral justification to these acts on the grounds that they would be consonant with the condition of such people. For according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality. In Sacred Scripture they are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God.¹⁸ This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of.

9. The traditional Catholic doctrine that masturbation constitutes a grave moral disorder is often called into doubt or expressly denied today. It is said that psychology and sociology show that it is a normal phenomenon of sexual development, especially among the young. It is stated that there is real and serious fault only in the measure that the subject deliberately indulges in solitary pleasure closed in on self ("ipsation"), because in this case the act would indeed be radically opposed to the loving communion between persons of different sex which some hold is what is principally sought in the use of the sexual faculty.

This opinion is contradictory to the teaching and pastoral practice of the Catholic Church. Whatever the force of certain arguments of a biological and philosophical nature, which have sometimes been used by theologians, in fact both the Magisterium of the Church — in the course of a constant tradition — and the moral

¹⁸ Rom. 1:24-27: "That is why God left them to their filthy enjoyments and the practices with which they dishonour their own bodies, since they have given up divine truth for a lie and have worshipped and served creatures instead of the creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen! That is why God has abandoned them to degrading passions: why their women have turned from natural intercourse to unnatural practices and why their menfolk have given up natural intercourse to be consumed with passion for each other, men doing shameless things with men and getting an appropriate reward for their perversion". See also what Saint Paul says of *masculorum concubitores* in 1 Cor. 6:10; 1 Tim. 1:10.

sense of the faithful have declared without hesitation that masturbation is an intrinsically and seriously disordered act.¹⁹ The main reason is that, whatever the motive for acting in this way, the deliberate use of the sexual faculty outside normal conjugal relations essentials contradicts the finality of the faculty. For it lacks the sexual relationship called for by the moral order, namely the relationship which realizes "the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love".²⁰ All deliberate exercise of sexuality must be reserved to this regular relationship. Even if it cannot be proved that Scripture condemns this sin by name, the tradition of the Church has rightly understood it to be condemned in the New Testament when the latter speaks of "impurity", "unchasteness" and other vices contrary to chastity and continence.

Sociological surveys are able to show the frequency of this disorder according to the places, populations or circumstances studied. In this way facts are discovered, but facts do not constitute a criterion for judging the moral value of human acts.²¹ The frequency of the phenomenon in question is certainly to be linked with man's innate weakness following original sin; but it is also to be linked with the loss of a sense of God, with the corruption of morals engendered by the commercialization of vice, with the unrestrained licentiousness of so many public entertainments and publications, as well as with the neglect of modesty, which is the guardian of chastity.

On the subject of masturbation modern psychology provides much valid and useful information for formulating a more equitable judgment on moral responsibility and for orienting pastoral action. Psychology helps one to see how the immaturity of adolescence (which can sometimes persist after that age), psychological imbalance or habit can influence behaviour, diminishing the deliberate character of the act and bringing about a situation whereby subjectively there may not always be serious fault. But in general,

¹⁹ Cf. eo IX, Letter *Ad splendidum nitentis*, in the year 1054: DS 687-688, Decree of the Holy Office, 2 March 1679: DS 2149; Pius XII, *Allo-cutio*, 8 October 1953: AAS 45 (1953), pp. 677-678; 19 May 1956: AAS 48 (1956), pp. 472-473.

²⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, 51: AAS 58 (1966), p. 1072.

²¹ "...if sociological surveys are useful for better discovering the thought patterns of the people of a particular place, the anxieties and needs of those to whom we proclaim the word of God, and also the opposition made to it by modern through the widespread notion that outside science there exists no legitimate form of knowledge, still the conclusions drawn from such surveys could not of themselves constitute a determining criterion of truth", Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Quinque iam anni*, 8, December 1970, AAS 63 (1971), p. 102.

the absence of serious responsibility must not be presumed; this would be to misunderstand people's moral capacity.

In the pastoral ministry, in order to form an adequate judgment in concrete cases, the habitual behaviour of people will be considered in its totality, not only with regard to the individual's practice of charity and of justice but also with regard to the individual's care in observing the particular precepts of chastity. In particular, one will have to examine whether the individual is using the necessary means, both natural and supernatural, which Christian asceticism from its long experience recommends for overcoming the passions and progressing in virtue.

10. The observance of the moral law in the field of sexuality and the practice of chastity have been considerably endangered, especially among less fervent Christians, by the current tendency to minimize as far as possible, when not denying outright, the reality of grave sin, at least in people's actual lives.

There are those who go as far as to affirm that mortal sin, which causes separation from God, only exists in the formal refusal directly opposed to God's call, or in that selfishness which completely and deliberately closes itself to the love of neighbour. They say that it is only then that there comes into play the fundamental option, that is to say the decision which totally commits the person and which is necessary if mortal sin is to exist; by this option the person, from the depths of the personality, takes up or ratifies a fundamental attitude towards God or people. On the contrary, so-called "peripheral" actions (which, it is said, usually do not involve decisive choice), do not go so far as to change the fundamental option, the less so since they often come, as is observed, from habit. Thus such actions can weaken the fundamental option, but not to such a degree as to change it completely. Now according to these authors, a change of the fundamental option towards God less easily comes about in the field of sexual activity, where a person generally does not transgress the moral order in a fully deliberate and responsible manner but rather under the influence of passion, weakness, immaturity, sometimes even through the illusion of thus showing love for someone else. To these causes there is often added the pressure of the social environment.

In reality, it is precisely the fundamental option which in the last resort defines a person's moral disposition. But it can be completely changed by particular acts, especially when as often happens, these have been prepared for by previous more superficial acts. Whatever the case, it is wrong to say that particular acts are enough to constitute mortal sin.

According to the Church's teaching, mortal sin, which is opposed to God, does not consist only in formal and direct resistance to the commandment of charity. It is equally to be found in this opposition to authentic love which is included in every deliberate transgression, in serious matter, of each of the moral laws.

Christ himself has indicated the double commandment of love as the basis of the moral life. But on this commandment depends "the whole Law, and the Prophets also".²² It therefore includes the other particular precepts. In fact, to the young man who asked, "...what good deed must I do to possess eternal life?" Jesus replied: "...if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments... You must not kill. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not bring false witness. Honour your father and mother, and: you must love your neighbour as yourself".²³

A person therefore sins mortally not only when his action comes from direct contempt for love of God and neighbour, but also when he consciously and freely, for whatever reason, chooses something which is seriously disordered. For in this choice, as has been said above, there is already included contempt for the divine commandment: the person turns himself away from God and loses charity. Now according to Christian tradition and the Church's teaching, and as right reason also recognizes, the moral order of sexuality involves such high values of human life that every direct violation of this order is objectively serious.²⁴

It is true that in sins of the sexual order, in view of their kind and their causes, it more easily happens that free consent is not fully given; this is a fact which calls for caution in all judgment as to the subject's responsibility. In this matter it is particularly opportune to recall the following words of Scripture: "Man looks at appearances but God looks at the heart".²⁵ However, although prudence is recommended in judging the subjective seriousness of a particular sinful act, it in no way follows that one can hold the view that in the sexual field mortal sins are not committed.

Pastors of souls therefore exercise patience and goodness; but they are not allowed to render God's commandments null, nor to reduce unreasonably people's responsibility. "To diminish in no way the saving teaching of Christ constitutes an eminent form of

²² Mt. 22:38, 40.

²³ Mt. 19:16-19.

²⁴ Cf. note 17 and 19 above: Decree of the Holy Office, 18 March 1666, DS 2060; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae*, 13, 14: AAS 60 (1968), pp. 489-496.

²⁵ 1 Sam. 16:7.

charity for souls. But this must ever be accompanied by patience and goodness, such as the Lord himself gave example of in dealing with people. Having come not to condemn but to save, he was indeed intransigent with evil, but merciful towards individuals".²⁶

11. As has been said above, the purpose of this Declaration is to draw the attention of the faithful in present-day circumstances to certain errors and modes of behaviour which they must guard against. The virtue of chastity, however, is in no way confined solely to avoiding the faults already listed. It is aimed at attaining higher and more positive goals. It is a virtue which concerns the whole personality, as regards both interior and outward behaviour.

Individuals should be endowed with this virtue according to their state in life: for some it will mean virginity or celibacy consecrated to God, which is an eminent way of giving oneself more easily to God alone with an undivided heart.²⁷ For others it will take the form determined by the moral law, according to whether they are married or single. But whatever the state of life, chastity is not simply an external state; it must make a person's heart pure in accordance with Christ's words: "You have learned how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart".²⁸

Chastity is included in that continence which Saint Paul numbers among the gifts of the Holy Spirit, while he condemns sensuality as a vice particularly unworthy of the Christian and one which precludes entry into the kingdom of heaven.²⁹ "What God wants is for all to be holy. He wants you to keep away from fornication, and each one of you to know how to use the body that belongs to him in a way that is holy and honourable, not giving way to selfish lust like the pagans who do not know God. He wants nobody at all ever to sin by taking advantages of a brother in these matters... We have been called by God to be holy, not to be immoral. In other words, anyone who objects is not objecting to a human authority, but to God, who gives you his Holy Spirit".³⁰ "Among you there must not be even a mention of fornication or

²⁶ Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Humanae Vitae*, 29: AAS 69 ((1968), p. 501.

²⁷ Cf. 1 Cor. 7:7, 34; Council of Trent, Session XXIV, can. DS 1810; Second Vatican Council, Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 42, 43, 44: AAS 57 (1965), pp. 47-51; Synod of Bishops, *De Sacerdotio Ministeriali*, part II, 4, b: AAS 63 (1971), pp. 915-916.

²⁸ Mt. 5:28.

²⁹ Cf. Gal. 5:19-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

³⁰ 1 Thess 4:3-8; cf. Col. 3:5-7; 1 Tim. 1:10.

DECLARATION ON SEXUAL ETHICS 193

impurity in any of its forms, or promiscuity: this would hardly become the saints! For you can be quite certain that nobody who actually indulges in fornication or impurity or promiscuity — which is worshipping a false god — can inherit anything of the kingdom of God. Do not let anyone deceive you with empty arguments: it is for this loose living that God's anger comes down on those who rebel against him. Make sure that you are not included with them. You were darkness once, but now you are light in the Lord; be like children of light, for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth".³¹

In addition, the Apostle points out the specifically Christian motive for practising chastity when he condemns the sin of fornication not only in the measure that this action is injurious to one's neighbour or to the social order but because the fornicator offends against Christ who has redeemed him with his blood and of whom he is a member, and against the Holy Spirit of whom he is the temple. "You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ... All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God".³²

The more the faithful appreciate the value of chastity and its necessary role in their lives as men and women, the better they will understand, by a kind of spiritual instinct, its moral requirements and counsels. In the same way they will know better how to accept and carry out, in a spirit of docility to the Church's teaching, what an upright conscience dictates in concrete cases.

12. The Apostle Saint Paul describes in vivid terms the painful interior conflict of the person enslaved to sin: the conflict between "the law of his mind" and the "law of sin which dwells in his members" and which holds him captive.³³ But man can achieve liberation from his "body doomed to death" through the grace of Jesus Christ.³⁴ This grace is enjoyed by those who have been justified by it and whom "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set free from the law of sin and death".³⁵ It is for this reason that the Apostle adjures them: "That is why you must not

³¹ Eph. 5:3-8; cf. 4:18-19.

³² 1 Cor. 6:15, 18-20.

³³ Cf. Rom. 7:23.

³⁴ Cf. Rom. 7:24-25.

³⁵ Cf. Rom. 8:2.

let sin reign in your mortal bodies or command your obedience to bodily passions".³⁶

This liberation, which fits one to serve God in newness of life, does not however suppress the concupiscence deriving from original sin, nor the promptings to evil in this world, which is "in the power of the evil one".³⁷ This is why the Apostle exhorts the faithful to overcome temptations by the power of God³⁸ and to "stand against the wiles of the devil"³⁹ by faith, watchful, prayer⁴⁰ and an austerity of life that brings the body into subjection to the Spirit.⁴¹

Living the Christian life by following in the footsteps of Christ requires that everyone should "deny himself and take up his cross daily",⁴² sustained by the hope of reward, for "if we have died with him, we shall also reign with him".⁴³

In accordance with these pressing exhortations, the faithful of the present time, and indeed today more than ever, must use the means which have always been recommended by the Church for living a chaste life. These means are: discipline of the senses and the mind, watchfulness and prudence in avoiding occasions of sin, the observance of modesty, moderation in recreation, wholesome pursuits, assiduous prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. Young people especially should earnestly foster devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God, and take as examples the lives of the Saints and other faithful people, especially young ones, who excelled in the practice of chastity.

It is important in particular that everyone should have a high esteem for the virtue of chastity, its beauty and its power of attraction. This virtue increases the human person's dignity and enables him to love truly, disinterestedly, unselfishly and with respect for others.

13. It is up to the Bishops to instruct the faithful in the moral teaching concerning sexual morality, however great may be the difficulties in carrying out this work in the face of ideas and practices generally prevailing today. This traditional doctrine must be studied more deeply. It must be handed on in a way capable of

³⁶ Rom. 6:12.

³⁷ 1 Jn. 5:19.

³⁸ Cf. 1 Cor. 10:13.

³⁹ Eph. 6:11.

⁴⁰ Cf. Eph. 6:16, 18.

⁴¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 9:27.

⁴² Lk. 9:23.

⁴³ 2 Tim. 2:11-12.

DECLARATION ON SEXUAL ETHICS 195

properly enlightening the consciences of those confronted with new situations and it must be enriched with a discernment of all the elements that can truthfully and usefully be brought forward about the meaning and value of human sexuality. But the principles and norms of moral living reaffirmed in this Declaration must be faithfully held and taught. It will especially be necessary to bring the faithful to understand that the Church holds these principles not as old and inviolable superstitions, nor out of some Manichaean prejudice, as is often alleged, but rather because she knows with certainty that they are in complete harmony with the spirit of Christ, and therefore also with human dignity.

It is likewise the Bishops' mission to see that a sound doctrine enlightened by faith and directed by the Magisterium of the Church is taught in Faculties of Theology and in Seminaries. Bishops must also ensure that confessors enlighten people's consciences and that catechetical instruction is given in perfect fidelity to Catholic doctrine.

It rests with the Bishops, the priests and their collaborators to alert the faithful against the erroneous opinions often expressed in books, reviews and public meetings.

Parents, in the first place, and also teachers of the young must endeavour to lead their children and their pupils, by way of a complete education, to the psychological, emotional and moral maturity befitting their age. They will therefore prudently give them information suited to their age; and they will assiduously form their will in accordance with Christian morals, not only by advice but above all by the example of their own lives, relying on God's help, which they will obtain in prayer. They will likewise protect the young from the many dangers of which they are quite unaware.

Artists, writers and all those who use the means of social communication should exercise their profession in accordance with their Christian faith and with a clear awareness of the enormous influence which they can have. They should remember that "the primacy of the objective moral order must be regarded as absolute by all",⁴⁴ and that it is wrong for them to give priority above it to any so-called purpose, or to material advantage or to success. Whether it be a question of artistic or literary works, public entertainment or providing information, each individual in his or her

⁴⁴ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Decree *Inter Mirifica*, 6: AAS 56 (1964), p. 147.

own domain must show tact, discretion, moderation and a true sense of values. In this way, far from adding to the growing permissiveness of behaviour, each individual will contribute towards controlling it and even towards making the moral climate of society more wholesome.

All lay people, for their part, by virtue of their rights and duties in the work of the apostolate, should endeavour to act in the same way.

Finally, it is necessary to remind everyone of the words of the Second Vatican Council: "This Holy Synod likewise affirms that children and young people have a right to be encouraged to weigh moral values with an upright conscience, and to embrace them by personal choice, to know and love God more adequately. Hence, it earnestly entreats all who exercise government over people or preside over the work of education to see that youth is never deprived of this sacred right".⁴⁵

At the Audience granted on 7 November 1975 to the undersigned Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Sovereign Pontiff by divine providence Pope Paul VI approved this Declaration "On certain questions concerning sexual ethics", confirmed it and ordered its publication.

Given in Rome, at the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, on 29 December 1975.

FRANJO CARD. SEPER
Prefect

✠ fr. JÉRÔME HAMER, O.P.
Titular Archbishop of Lorum
Secretary

⁴⁵ *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1: AAS 58 (1966), p. 730.

LETTER TO THE POPE

January 27, 1976

His Holiness
Pope Paul VI
Vatican City

Your Holiness:

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines wishes to express to Your Holiness that it welcomes with joy the **Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics** issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

It comes at an opportune time when an atmosphere of moral permissiveness, especially in sexual matters, has apparently become world-wide. Fortunately, although this atmosphere has reached Philippine shores, it is not yet so widespread in our country.

The Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines pledges to preach the principles contained in the Declaration both collectively and individually "welcome or unwelcome" (2 Timothy, 4:1b).

Invoking on Your Holiness the continued special guidance of the Holy Spirit and begging for your Apostolic Blessing, I remain

Devotedly yours,

(Sgd.) ✠ JULIO R. CARDINAL ROSALES
Archbishop of Cebu
President, Catholic Bishops'
Conference of the Philippines

FROM THE VATICAN

March 2, 1976

Dear Cardinal Rosales,

The Holy Father is indeed grateful for the loyal and devoted message which you sent to him on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. An Italian translation was published in *L'Osservatore Romano* of 13 February 1976.

His Holiness has directed me to convey to you and to your brother Bishops in the Conference his sincere appreciation of this prayerful demonstration of solidarity, destined to ensure a joyful acceptance of the Church's perennial teaching on the dignity of the human person in the important field of sexual ethics.

As a sign of his fraternal affection in the Lord, the Holy Father willingly imparts to all the Bishops in the Philippines his Apostolic Blessing.

With personal good wishes, I remain

Sincerely your in Christ,

(Sgd.) ✠ J. CARD. VILLOT

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Nimum patens provinciae ecclesiasticae Jarensis territorium censuit Conferentia Episcoporum Insularum Philippinarum commode dividi posse, ut alia ibi locorum provincia constitueretur. Quod cum, ut fieret, omnimode favente venerabili Fratre Artemio Casas, Archiepiscopo Jarensi atque eiusdem nominis provinciae Metropolitano, eadem Conferentia ab Apostolica Sede petisset, Nos, audita sententia Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigliani, Archiepiscopi titulo Mallianensis et in Insulis Philippinis Nuntii Apostolici, atque Venerabilis Fratris Nostri S.R.E. Cardinalis Praefecti Sacrae Congregationis pro Episcopis, sequentia decernimus. Episcopalem Sedem Capicensem a provincia ecclesiastica Jarensi separamus et a metropolitano iure eiusdem Ecclesiae Archiepiscopi absolvimus, eamque ad dignitatem metropolitanae Sedis evehimus, congruis factis iuribus et privilegiis. Eiusdem praeterea Sedis Archiepiscopum et Metropolitam nominamus Venerabilem Fratrem Antonium Frondosa, ad praesens Episcopum Capicensem, cui scilicet debita iura damus obligationesque imponimus, Archiepiscoporum ac Metropolitaram propria. Modo conditam provinciam archidioecesis ipsa Capicensis tamquam Sedes Metropolitana constituet atque dioeceses Romblo-nensis, a provincia Jarensi separata, et Kalibensis, hoc ipso die condita, tamquam suffraganeae. Haec quae statuimus ad effectum adducat Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigliani, quem diximus, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos. Qui autem negotium perfecerit, congrua documenta de more exaret ad Sacramque Congregationem pro Episcopis mittat, de more signata sigilloque impressa. Has vero Litteras Apostolicas sive nunc sive in posterum ratas esse volumus contrariis quibusvis non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud S. Petrum, die decimo septimo mensis Januarii, anno Domini millesimo non-gentesimo septuagesimo sexto, Pontificatus Nostri tertio decimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT.
Secretarius Status

SEBASTIANUS CARD. BAGGIO
S.C. pro Episcopis Praefectus

EUGENIUS SEVI, Proton. Apost.
GODEFRIDUS MARIANI, Proton. Apost.

PAULUS EPISCOPUS SERVUS SERVORUM DEI AD PERPETUAM REI MEMORIAM

Animarum utilitas, ad quam praecipue studium Nostrum et operam pro munere conferimus, id a Nobis hodie poscit, ut Episcoporum Conferentiae Insularum Philippinarum votis benique accedamus, petentium ut, diviso territorio dioecesis Capicensis, nova ibi condatur ecclesiastica circumscriptio. Qua super re audita sententia sive Venerabilis Fratris Antonii Frondosa, Episcopi Capicensis, sive Venerabilis Fratris Brunonis Torpigllani, Archiepiscopi titulo Mallianensis et in Insulis Philippinis Nuntii Apostolici, sive denique Venerabilium Fratrum Nostrorum S.R.E. Cardinalium Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis praepositorum, sequentia decernimus et iubemus. A dioecesi Capicensi territorium separamus civilis provinciae vulgo Aklan appellatae eoque dioecesim **NALIBENSEM** ex urbe Kalibo appellandam condimus, iisdemque circumscribendam finibus quibus praedicta provincia Aklan limitatur. Constitutae dioecesis sedes in urbe Kalibo erit, magisterii vero Episcopi cathedra in sacra aede Sancti Joannis Baptistae, eadem in urbe exstante, quae dehinc cathedrale templum habebitur; cum privilegiis congruis. Episcopum autem praeterquam quad iustis iuribus ditamus, obligationibus etiam adstringimus, cum ipsius munere conexis. Mensam episcopalem constituent Curiae emolumenta, fidelium sponte oblatae pecuniae atque bonorum pars, quae dioecesi obvenient ex praescripto canonis 1500 C.I.C. Dioecesis Kalibensis suffraganea erit Metropolitanae Sedi Capicensi; eius autem Episcopus, archidioecesis eiusdem Metropolitae. Ad Canonicorum collegium quod attinet statuimus ut, quoadusque constituatur, Consultores dioecesani, Canonicorum loco, ad normam iuris deligantur. De condendo Seminario alumnorumque institutione iubemus ut praescripta serventur iuris communis, prae oculis habitis normis decreti Concilii Vaticani II "Optatim totius" et peculiaribus normis Sacrae Congregationis pro Institutione Catholica. Kalibensi praeterea dioecesi sacerdotes illi destinentur, qui in ea officium vel beneficium habeant; ceteri sacerdotes, clerici Seminariiique tirones ei, in qua legitime degant. Omnia documenta ad constitutam dioecesim spectantia, ad eiusdem Curiam a Curia Capicensi transferantur et in tabularios serventur. Haec denique, quae praescripsimus, ad effectum adducate Venerabilis Frater Bruno Torpigllani, quem diximus, vel ab eo delegatus sacerdos, confectique negotii documenta Sacrae Congregationi pro Episcopis mittat, de more signata sigilloque impressa. Has vero Litteras Apostolicas sive nunc sive in posterum ratas esse volumus, contrariis quibusvis non obstantibus. Datum Romae, apud Sanctum Petrum, die decimo septimo mensis Januarii, anno Domini millesimo non-gentesimo septuagesimo sexto, Pontificatus Notri tertio decimo.

JOANNES CARD. VILLOT
Secretarius Status

SEBASTIANUS CARD. BAGGIO
S.C. pro Episcopis Praefectus

EUGENIUS SEVI, Proton. Apost.
GODEFRIDUS MARINI, Proton. Apost.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SEXUALITY

by

Mons. Salvatore Garofalo

Secretary of the Pontifical Commission for the Neo Vulgate

Any discussion of morality, and of sexual morality in particular, based on the teaching and the mystery of Christ, must take into consideration all the dimensions of the Gospel revelation, seeking the essential and deep meanings of what is new in it. It seems strange, to put it mildly, that while people react with indignation to any form or sign of legalism in the field of religion and morality, they then claim the right to draw from the absence of precise guidelines in certain cases the conclusion that the Gospel was at least indifferent to such aspects of sexuality.

It is well known that Jesus asserted vigorously the primary value of interior religious and moral purity, against those who in his time, kept to the concept and practice of an exclusively ritual purity, attentive to the exterior and material aspects of things. When, in the sermon on the Mount, Christ proclaims the new, higher "justice" (Mt. 5, 20) — that is, the new and perfect way of being faithful to God's will made possible and required by the "new doctrine" imparted "with authority" (Mk. 1, 27 — he demands purity of heart, coming, that is, from the centre of the human personality, such that, beyond being a rule of exterior behaviour, it is a permanent education of thoughts and the will. In fact, sins and sexual aberrations — evil thoughts, adultery, fornication, licentiousness — also have their origin in the heart (Mt. 15, 19-20; Mk. 7, 21-23). It is here that one can trace the commitment of the human personality. To point out the importance of this teaching and the peremptory nature of its demands, Christ calls the attention of the crowds — "Hear, and understand" (Mt. 15, 10) — since it is a question of conceiving and practising faithfulness to God's will in a new way.

Some people, wrongly and with inexplicable superficiality, have seen in certain merciful gestures of Christ particular indulgence in regard to the sins of the flesh. In actual fact, Christ does not underestimate, far less justify, the behaviour of the adulteress presented to him by the stern Pharisees: she has sinned and is admonished not to repeat her offence (Jn. 8, 11). If Jesus affirms

that prostitutes will precede those who were then considered the official "saints" in the Kingdom of God, it depends on the fact that they have believed in John the Baptist's invitation to repentance and have been converted, unlike the Pharisees. And we will just mention briefly the banal and partial interpretation of the words Jesus addressed to the anonymous sinner: "Her sins, many as they are, shall be forgiven her, because she has loved much" (Lk. 7, 47): the text and the context make it necessary to see in that love nothing but the testimony of affectionate devotion that the woman had given to the Master, in contrast with the presumptuous coldness of the Pharisee; that testimony is the consequence and sign of the forgiveness obtained.

* * *

Jesus was speaking to the Jewish world, to which the Law of Moses had given strict and clear orders as regards sexual morality, but when his Word of truth and grace went beyond the borders of Palestine, the heralds of the Gospel came into contact with the pagan Hellenistic-Roman environment, which considered fornication, prostitution and other sexual satisfactions, morally indifferent. The apostles did not find themselves at a loss, however, but knew that they could appeal to the teaching of the Master also in this new situation. This is what Paul does explicitly, when he writes to the Thessalonians, in what is his first letter and, at the same time, the first Christian document that can be dated with some certainty (between the years 50-51). Introducing some precepts which concern sexual morality, the apostle (1 Thess. 4. 2-8) appeals to the "precepts I have given to you by the Lord Jesus"; even if, fundamentally, it is a question of natural precepts, they must be observed in a spirit of obedience to the will of God, who has "called" believers to holiness, not to uncleanness (v. 7). This vocation is the act by which God calls man to live in a way consistent with the Gospel. It demands from man a corresponding response, which involves complete commitment in all the consequence and implications of his vocation. Therefore he is forbidden to engage in licentiousness, *pornéia*, which generally indicated all sexual activity outside of lawful marriage, and in the "passion of lust". Such acts were deplored also by some pagan philosophers. Musonius Rufus, for example, the teacher of Epictetus, considered extra-matrimonial sexual relations "wicked" and "ignoble". Furthermore, Paul affirms that rejection of the norms he had given involves rejection not of a human teaching, but of God in person, who, calling us to holiness, gave us his Spirit, who makes this holiness possible and stable "in us". Any form of licentiousness must be considered, therefore, as contrary to true Christian reality and life. In fact

sexual immorality, and particularly unnatural relations, is judged by Paul, in a famous and sombre text of the letter to the Romans, (1, 24-27), a punishment for guilty ignorance of the true God on the part of the pagan world.

* * *

In the first letter to the Corinthians (6, 12-20), whose city was proud of being consecrated to Venus Pandemia (the goodness of sensual love) and whose disorderly morals were even emblematic, Paul stigmatizes sexual liberty, resorting, for the first time in the history of morality, not to rational, ascetic or utilitarian arguments, which had been proposed also by certain pagan philosophers, but to motives typically and necessarily bound up with the new doctrine of Christianity. Among the faithful of the community of Corinth, a very lively and even turbulent one, there were some who, sharing the current outlook, claimed that sins of licentiousness were lawful in that they responded to a natural need, like eating. Paul sets up against them the principle: "The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The body of the Christian belongs as a member to the body of Christ (v. 15), and therefore cannot be exposed to cruel profanation, but must be committed to glorifying God (v. 20). Christ has saved it from the power of sin and has destined it, in the ultimate fulfilment of the history of salvation, to glorious resurrection. After having "put on" the Lord Jesus, it is no longer possible to follow the flesh in its lusts (Rom. 13, 14), giving free vent to them, if one has understood "the time", in which the works of darkness advance through "debauchery and licentiousness" (ibid. vv. 11-14).

If a Christian, too, must see in dissoluteness a degradation of the human person, he must be aware above all that Christ has taken possession of him completely. By virtue of this deep union also his body is projected, as it were, into a sphere of very high values. Now, in a certain sense, what is important is not so much the problem of what is lawful and what is unlawful, as the problem of what is logical and what is absurd from the point of view of faith. The material needs of the body are bound up with the present world which passes and will end with it. So also will sexual life, even though it involves the whole personality of man. In marriage sexual activity is disciplined (1 Cor. 7, 7-5). With the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit has established his dwelling in the baptized person and sanctifies him with his personal action, so that the Christian "does not live according to the flesh" but "by the Spirit", who makes him worthy of belonging completely to Christ and prepares his body for blessed immortality (Rom. 8, 6-11). The body

is a shrine of the Spirit of the Father and of Christ (1 Cor. 16, 19), a holy temple (Eph. 2, 21) and as such inviolable, which can house only a sanctified life, a liturgy of praise in glory of God (1 Cor. 6, 20; 1 Pt. 2, 5), until it is transfigured by Christ who will conform it to his glorious body (Phil. 3, 21).

* * *

The Christian's choices exclude all compromise because there is incompatibility between **pornéia** — which has as its synonym **akatharsía**, impurity — and the Kingdom of God. Paul is well aware that, unless one leaves the world altogether, it is impossible to avoid all contact with what is immoral (1 Cor. 5, 9-10), but this does not mean connivance because fornicators, adulterers and sodomites will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6, 9-10; Gal. 5, 19-21; Eph. 5, 5): like those who commit the most dreadful crimes — implety, profanation, parricide, matricide, murder — they are in radical and violent contrast with the Gospel (1 Tim. 1, 9-10; cf. Apoc. 9, 21) and cannot avoid the severe judgment of God (Heb. 13, 4), who will decree their "second death" (Apoc. 21, 8).

Everyone recognizes without difficulty that the most original and distinctive precept of the Gospel is the commandment of love. But it is exaggeration to affirm that Christian sexual morality, with its imperatives of purity and holiness of life, equally reveals the newness and the efficacy of the Gospel, to such an extent that laxity and permissiveness in this field must be considered a regression to the pagan outlook, under the influence of a world which "cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (Jn. 14, 17).

HUMAN AND CHRISTIAN VALUES OF SEXUALITY

by

Mons. Philippe Delhaye

Secretary of the International Theological Commission

Diagnosis of a crisis

The world today is in the throes of a deep economic crisis. Economists are studying its reasons and seeking solutions. But psychologists, sociologists and historians think more and more that this economic crisis is only an aspect of a moral crisis (Declar. 1 and 2) which is far deeper because it touches the very reasons for living. The exasperation of the spirit of profit making, the preference given to pleasure, closed within itself, over value, absolute permissiveness replacing the idea of duty or justice: these are so many moral facts which have a repercussion on the whole of civilization and even on the production, distribution and consumption of goods. (P. Chaunu, *Le refus de la vie*, Paris, 1975).

It is true that our moral crisis is to be seen in the context of a historical series of a certain number of similar social upheavals. Periodically mankind goes through difficult times due to the fact that the essential values, without which men cannot live, no longer seem suitable in their concrete expressions while new ones have not yet been formulated. Of course, not everyone will agree with this description. Some people will prefer to say: one scale of values has perished, another must be born (Declar. 4). But is this not to confuse the essential with the historical, the changeable? When the French Revolution ended, the people of Paris sang: "It was not worthwhile changing government" because, after the initial period of lightheartedness, it had been necessary to come back to an authority, work, decency. It is the same for morality: when changes transform certain ways of life, it is always necessary to return to the plan of God the Creator, expressed in the nature of the human person, and of God the Redeemer, calling man to go beyond himself in order to commune with his supreme value (*Dignitatis Humanae*, n. 3, Decl. 3 at the end).

Morality and anthropology in history

In fact, where is the proximate source of our knowledge of values if it not consideration of man and his vocation (natural and supernatural) which makes it possible to establish a "respon-

sible project of life", as ethics can be defined? This can be shown in the first place by recalling some historical facts.

The Greeks had lived for a long time according to the rules characteristic of each of their cities: Athens, Sparta. That is why there was for them such a close connection between morality and politics. But then the Macedonian empire deprives the cities of their autonomy and puts the Greek world in contact with quite different civilizations: those of Persia, Egypt and even India. Recourse to local customs is no longer enough. Morality must find a new prop. It is then that Stoicism launches the slogan: "It is necessary to live according to man's nature". One is a man before being a citizen. The movement of thought of Zeno and Cleanthes, which Diogenes Laertes (*Life and Opinions of Philosophers*, Book VII) is the first to synthesise, is continued by Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius and brings the ancient world a kind of prefiguration of the Christian sense of universality and brotherhood (cf. M. Spanneut, *Permanence du Stoicisme*, Gembloux, 1973).

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are another period of crisis. Occamism ruins early scholasticism with its excesses of logicism. The papacy, whose power had been one of the elements of order in creativity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is challenged by the great schisms and by conciliarism. The great geographical discoveries put the Catholic European face to face with new civilizations and they lead to new forms of trade and of the financing of production. The Protestant crisis rends Christendom itself. Where are solutions sought? In "Humanism". Not only does it reemphasize study of the Ancients, who had been so impressed by human dignity but, in theology as in pastoral work, in new orders such as the Jesuit one, it gives the first place to man saved by grace. When a fine figure of Christian humanism, at once austere and welcoming, is that of Francis de Sales! The Salamanca School with Da Vitoria stresses natural law while Grotius sees in it an element common to all men above differences of religion, race and political obedience.

The eighteenth century marks the decay of the "classical world", of institutions too heavily burdened with privileges reserved for some. What do the *Aufklärung* and the *Encyclopedia* advocate but the dignity of man, often exaggerating it in defiance of God, the source of human values? Kant, whose ethics will impose itself for a century, puts forward, among others, his expression of "categorical imperative": "Always act in such a way as to treat mankind, in your own person and in others, as an end and never as a mere means" (cf. Thonnard, *Précis d'histoire de la philosophie*, p. 57).

Philosophical and theological perspectives

As can be seen, one of the constants of the history of morality is this connection between the scale of values and anthropology. How could it be otherwise? What are values if not the expression of a certain number of fundamental tendencies which find in man, — but also in God — in society, the answer that satisfies them? There is, it is true, a danger in speaking of values as if it were just a question of wishes with which everyone does what he wants. But normally the area of ethics is continued in the category of duties and rights, according to the dialectics sketched by John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*. In experimental or human sciences, if philosophy are values, it is because man is naturally marked by the need for knowledge, in order to know and to regulate society and the world. It is a duty for him for he has received from God the mandate to use this talent. It is also a right, which society must satisfy as far as possible (**Universal Declaration on Rights**, n. 26). And if "the other" has the right to seek intellectual values, I have the duty to help him to do so to the extent fixed by charity and justice. The same reasoning could be applied to all the values, of which Louis Lavelle (*Les valeurs*, Paris, 2 vol. 1951) has presented the classic enumeration in the fields of economy, affectivity, knowledge, aesthetics, morality, spirituality. I will be content here to show that, from whatever side you take the dialectics of moral reflection, you arrive at man: duty comes from right, right from value, the value of man such as God made him. And if you set out from God, you are confronted with the obligation of promoting man in his rights and in his duties on the plane of the different values.

It is in no way different with regard to the Christian values that Jesus and the Apostles preached, as is seen in the New Testament. "When a man becomes a new creature in Christ..." (2 Cor. 5, 17; Gal. 6, 15). It is according to this "new creature" that the Christian must act, according to the directive of Colossians 3, 10: "you must be clothed in the new self, that is being refitted all the time for closer knowledge, so that the image of the God who created it is its pattern" (cf. also Eph. 4, 24). Man divinized by the grace of Christ has new dimensions since he lives in knowledge of God through faith, in Trinitarian agapé through the virtue of charity, in hope of the full accomplishment of the salvation which is already in him (Rm. 8, 24). But these values of grace do not destroy natural ones, they deepen them and give them a new meaning. For this reason so many Christian moral precepts are similar to the ones formulated by the philosophers. If Christ and the Apos-

tles adopted them, it was to mark the connection between nature (Creation) and grace (Redemption) as well as to help many men, not familiar with philosophy, to know them more easily and more surely (St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles*, book 1, chap. 4).

The whole first part of *Gaudium et Spes* has precisely the purpose of showing that man is not alienated, he does not lose either his dignity or his freedom, by living his new dignity in Christ (nn. 22, 32, 38-39, 45). Let us just quote this passage, which concerns human rights, in which values take on concrete shape, as we said above: "The Church proclaims the rights of man . . . Yet these movements must be penetrated by the spirit of the gospel and protected against any kind of false autonomy. For we are tempted to think that our personal rights are fully ensured only when we are exempt from every requirement of divine law. But this is the way leading to the annihilation of human dignity, not its preservation (n. 41).

To avoid ambiguities

At all times, the language of technicians has been different from the one that everyone uses in ordinary life. It is sufficient to compare a medical diagnosis with the patient's description of his ills! The difference has become more marked, perhaps, nowadays owing to the popularization and greater diffusion of information and cultures. In any case, to understand the document clearly, it is important to have in mind translations of the technical vocabulary into current language.

For centuries, let us say simplifying matters: from stoicism to the seventeenth century, nature was considered as the projection of wisdom and of God's will, "Supreme nature", "Natura naturante". But from the moment when science and technique dominated nature, the latter lost, for many men, its significance as a guide. The ecological movement has begun to show the danger of excesses in this field but it will certainly not be this movement that will restore the sacral sense of nature. That is why the ecclesiastical Magisterium often joins the terms "nature" and "person", as for example in *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 51) which speaks of "the nature of the human person and his acts". Likewise, in order that the recourse to natural law in the field of sexuality should not appear to pay attention only to the physiological aspects of the person, the same Constitution (n. 51), re-echoed by the recent Declaration (n. 5) recalls that "the sexual characteristics of man and the human faculty of reproduction wonderfully exceed the dispositions of lower forms of life."

For a good many of our contemporaries, the appeal to nature brings with it the fear that the whole contribution of culture and human history will be forgotten. They tend at once to swing to the opposite error, which suppresses all stability in man's structure or in the "plan" willed by God (Declar. n. 4). This is to forget that nature and culture are closely mingled, since culture is the development, under God's eyes, of the nature that man has received. The word culture, *Gaudium et Spes* says (n. 53), indicates all those factors by which man refines and unfolds his manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means his effort to bring the world itself under his control by his knowledge and labour, (to render) social life more human . . . , it expresses, communicates, and conserves in his works great spiritual experiences and desires . . . ". It is not a question, therefore, of denying the reality of human changes: *Gaudium et Spes* (nn. 53, 4-10) has done so for our times with a perspicacity that has been praised by everyone, even non-Christians. But it is necessary to be able to distinguish the changeable from the unchangeable, the accidental from the essential: "The Church maintains that beneath all changes there are many realities which do not change and which have their ultimate foundation in Christ, who is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever" (G.S. n. 10). The category of history does not frighten the Church; the divine plan is unfolded in a human history and in the history of salvation (G.S. n. 10, n. 45). How many texts could be quoted! I will be content with the following (G.S. n. 41), which shows clearly the relationship between the idea of history and that of the divine order implied in the Christian concept of nature: "... though the same God is Saviour and Creator, Lord of human history as well as of salvation history, in the divine arrangement itself the rightful autonomy of the creature, and particularly of man, is not withdrawn. Rather it is re-established in its own dignity and strengthened in it".

That is the reason why the intervention of the Magisterium of the Church in morality is not an intrusion or an attempt at domination (Declar. n. 4). The Tradition of the Church, which is certainly expressed in the whole of Christian life but also in a privileged and decisive way in the Magisterium (LG 25), must help men to understand the divine message of Revelation and its impact on life, to grasp the requirements of the dignity of the person at a given time, in short, to use more classical terms, to understand the meaning of the evangelical law and of natural law.

. Dignity of person

It is true that another difficulty is met with here, for the opinion is sometimes expressed today that all moral duties are summed up in the terms "charity" or "dignity of the person" (Declar. n. 4). The dangers run by this reaction against a morality which, by an excess in the opposite direction, enumerated many particular duties without stressing the fundamental options, the importance of which is pointed out by the Declaration (n. 10), are only too obvious. The morality of the Fathers and the Scholastics did not know these deviations for it presented charity as well as the set of virtues and precepts which it inspired. But in the modern age, Luther bases the whole of morality on faith; the Council of Trent has to recall the other precepts derived from the morality of faith (DS 1569-1570-1571), pointing out in particular that Christ not only redeems but also legislates. Molinos and quietism reduce everything to charity alone so that, like today, some people think that it is sufficient to speak of charity to justify them doing what they like. They forget that the end does not justify the means and that all actions cannot be referred to God out of love. As early as the time of the Apostles, St. Paul had warned the faithful against such deviations. Writing to the **Romans** (13, 8-10), he reminds them, at the same time, of the ten commandments and of the primacy of charity. It is not possible to love one's neighbour and kill him or take his wife.

The term "dignity of man", so often used by the Council, can equally be ambiguous because some people will think that they are the ultimate judges of their dignity and their development and will conclude that they are above any law. Now, as is shown in the first chapter of *Gaudium et Spes*, specially dedicated to "the dignity of the human person" (n. 12 ff), man's dignity directs him towards an objective truth and prepares him for faith (n. 15), his conscience is developed by listening to God's call echoing within it (n. 16, Declaration n. 3): "Man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man...". The carnal aspect of the human condition is also a value and an element of his dignity if the person is able to use it according to God's will: "The very dignity of man postulates that man glorify God in his body (1 Cor. 6, 13-20) and forbid it to serve the evil inclinations of his heart" (n. 14).

Use of term "chastity"

This leads us to point out a last ambiguity to be avoided in connection with the term "chastity", which appears several times in the text of the Declaration (n. 11-12). Some modern authors

use it above all in connection with the vow of chastity taken by religious and by priests of the Latin rite. In this case "it would be a question of a complete abstention from conjugal things", as was pointed out in *Initiation théologique* (tome III, p. 1043, Paris, 1961). It is quite clear that the Latin text of the declaration refers to the far wider use of the term, as used in pagan philosophy and the scholastics, to designate, on the contrary, the virtue which leads to correct use of genitality, and its direction in a rational and Christian way. Virginal chastity is one thing, conjugal chastity another. Cicero (*De inventione*, lib. 2, cap. 53-54, n. 160-164) and Macrobius (*Commentarium in somnium Scipionis*, lib. 1 n. 8, 7), for example, present chastity as one of the essential elements of the virtue of temperance, which controls human desires. Their teaching, spread in the Roman schools, passed into the medieval world as a classical element. St. Thomas, for example, refers to Macrobius himself (*Summa Theologiae*, II, IIae, q. 151, art. 2) in the same way as to St. Augustine. In our own times, *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 51) again declared that married love and responsible parenthood cannot be achieved "unless the virtue of conjugal chastity is sincerely practised". Let us now take a closer look at what this conjugal chastity is.

Nobility and misery of human sexuality

If there is a lesson that emerges from human history, it is precisely the ambiguity of sexuality. At the very moment when Freud was advocating a development and recognition of sexuality — and it is known with what exaggeration — he affirmed that this principle of *eros* must be balanced by the "principle of realism". The word "*thanatos*" which he gives it, strangely recalls the Christian term "*mortification*". He affirms that civilization and culture can be born and develop only to the extent to which men control their sexual desires and bring their aspirations to bear on higher objects.

Pagan antiquity had already perceived the ambiguity of sexuality which is, at the same time, a good and a source of evils. St. Paul noted with horror, in texts partly recalled in nn. 11 and 12 of the Declaration (see also Rm. 1, 18-32), the depravation of pagan sexual morals. Even if the moral failure of antiquity is flagrant (because of the lack of that grace which was brought precisely by Christ), certain philosophers or men of letters contributed a theoretical testimony on this matter to which John of Salisbury, a great scholar of the twelfth century, referred as follows (*Policraticus*, lib. 8, cap. 11, ed Webb. p.296, P.L. t. 199, col. 748 D): "Concinit in hunc modum totus recte philosophantium chorus, ut, si qui Christianae religionis abhorrent rigorem, discant et ab ethnicis castitatem". (The whole

array of true philosophers agree with this view, so that those persons who reject the severe rules of the Christian religion, can learn even from pagans the value of chastity). Let us just recall Ovid's disillusioned statements and Seneca's appeals for moral effort. The former writes in *Fasti* (V. 273-274): *Cum luvenilibus annis/Luxuriant animi corporaque ipsa vident* (in the years of youth, spirits are exuberant and bodies vigorous) and in "*Amores*" (III, 4, 17-18): *Nitimur in vetitum semper cupimusque negata Sic interdictis imminet ager aquis* (We always strain towards what is forbidden and long for what is denied us, like a field that stretches towards forbidden waters).

Seneca appeals for an effort, made as early as possible, to drive home the requirements of reason (*Ad Lucilium*, 50, n. 5) and particularly to learn to control sexuality by a chastity "which on the one hand is abstention from others' bodies and on the other hand is care for our own body" (*illa cui alieni corporis abstinencia est, et hac, cui sui cura*) (*Ad Lucilium* 49, 12).

The Christian Revelation, however, brought new light and above all victorious forces in this field too: *veritas et gratia per Jesum Christum factae sunt* (Jn. 1, 17). The Christian Revelation stresses, in fact, the ambivalence of sexuality, teaching that, though it is good in itself, it is weakened when wrong use is made of it.

Activities good in themselves

A first biblical idea to be stressed, in fact, is that human sexual and genital reality and activity are good in themselves. *Genesis* even sees in the differentiation and union of the sexes one of the aspects of the image of God in human beings, since they find their genetic power in it (1, 28) and their complementarity in intersubjectivity (2, 13): "So God created man in his own image; male and female he created them" (1, 27). "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (1, 31). Among the three finest things "in the eyes of God and men", Sirach (25, 1) mentions "a woman and a man in perfect agreement". There can be no question, therefore, of passing a negative judgment on the whole union, psychological and physical, of man and woman. Throughout her history, the Church has come across sects that condemned marriage: the Manicheans and the Cathari, for example. She disapproved of them, as the *First Letter to Timothy* (4, 3-4) had already done in the case of certain Gnostics and Pythagoreans. The sexual pleasure of marriage is seemingly, provided it is lived in a way worthy of the human condition, as *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 49) and Pius XII have recently represented it. If virginity and celibacy

were always held in high esteem by Christ (Mt. 19, 10-12) and by the Apostles (1 Cor. 7, 33-35), it was not out of contempt for marriage but as a precious gift (Mt. 19, 12; 1 Cor. 7, 25), which makes it possible to dedicate oneself more completely to service of the kingdom of God and the apostolate (Mt. 19, 12; 1 Cor. 7, 35) (Declaration n. 11, beginning).

And yet Christianity is too realistic not to recognize the disorder in which sexuality is very often exercised and the danger of the passions. The Christian faith sees in this disorder of sexual desire a consequence of disobedience to God in fundamental guilt (that is, original sin), personal sins, lack of self-mastery, and in particular contempt of the virtue of chastity. The Declaration (n. 12) recalls in particular the pathetic terms in which St. Paul describes the tragedy of the human condition, torn between exasperated lust and the sense of his human and Christian ideal, in this field as in others. Man knows the nobility of brotherhood and justice but his greed gets the upper hand and he finds himself tempted to be boorish, proud, greedy and tempted even to steal and murder. He loves and desires truth but he finds it hard to resist the temptation of disguising it with lies, to his own advantage. The spouse loves his partner with all his being, he would like the other to find complete happiness in him. He is certainly sincere when he says so and faithfulness for the latter is in the logic of love itself (GS 48). And yet there are temptations which will lead to adultery, fornication, homo-sexuality, impurity (Declaration n. 11). These faults appear in the Pauline lists in the same way as the ones we mentioned above and which are essentially a rupture in us of love for God and for others, the works of sin as opposed to the fruits of the Spirit. Let us recall at least the enumeration in *Galatians* 5, 19-22: "adultery, impurity, incontinence, luxury, idolatry, witchcraft, feuds, quarrels, jealousies outbursts of anger, rivalries, dissensions, factions, spite, murder, drunkenness, and debauchery".

Victory through grace and effort

It is the characteristic of Christian Revelation never to speak of sin without adding at once the consideration of grace which saves and which makes our effort possible. "Who will set me free from these works of death?", St. Paul asks after speaking of the inconsistency and disorder of desires. Christ, he answers, giving thanks to him (Rom. 7 ff). The Lord, raising man to the dignity of sharing God's life, will make possible the conditions of human dignity both on the physical plane and on the spiritual level.

The first New Testament writing is a letter to the Thessalonians, written in the first months of the year 51, in which St. Paul sets forth to his converts "the art of living as Christians". He does not ask them to renounce their professional or family responsibilities but to live them in the light of faith, hope and charity (1 Th. 3, 13) for the purpose of achieving the perfection that God proposes to them (1 Th. 4, 3). In the field of social life, the Apostle asks his converts to avoid quarrels and promote friendship, to attend to their occupations with constancy and go on with their trades (1 Th. 4, 9-12). He also thinks of the Christian conditions of sexual life in terms that the Declaration recalls in n. 11 (1 Th. 4, 3-8). All the Christian dimensions of sexuality are already summed up there. With regard to God, it is a question for man and for the Christian to conform to a clearly expressed will of holiness (1 Th. 4, 3). With regard to himself, each one will think of carrying out his sexual life in a worthy manner, controlling "his own body, as something holy and held in honour" and renouncing disorderly lusts (1 Th. 4, 4). With regard to others. "None of you is to be exorbitant, and take advantage of his brother, in his business dealings" (1 Th. 4, 6). The later teaching of the Apostle, as well as the teaching that the Magisterium of the Church has repeated tirelessly in the course of the centuries and has recalled once again in this Declaration, is condensed there.

Less a man

To misuse sexuality and genitality is to despise the divine plan which has given man, in them, a force of life as well as of satisfaction and deepening of the interpersonal self-giving of the spouses, implying exclusiveness, permanence, and faithfulness and therefore excluding adultery, fornication and homosexuality. These sins do not only wound "God's honour", they lessen man's honour. They destroy in him his dignity as a temple of God, degrading and dehumanizing him at the same time (1 Cor. 6, 15, 18-20; Declaration n. 11). They break the mutual self-giving of man and woman and bring the danger of changing the latter into a "machine for giving pleasure".

Finally, the Declaration of 29 December (n. 12) recalls a fourth idea of the Christian theology of sexuality: the necessity of struggle. The Christian is put before the grace of God, who wishes to "restore,

perfect and elevate" married love (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 49) and who inserts it in the love-sacrament of Christ and the Church (GS 48). It is still necessary, however, for the man and woman to struggle so that God's grace is not in vain in them (1 Cor. 15, 10). That is a side of Christian life which we have perhaps forgotten in the last few years. Human weakness, the force of passions, the necessity of carrying the Cross every day (Lk. 9, 23; Declaration n. 12) have perhaps grown indistinct in the reaction against the last after-effects of Jansenism. Watchfulness, esteem for self-control, the example of "radiant Christian families", mortification must be held in high honour once more.

The Christian challenge is an austere one! This is not because of any pessimism or negativism, but because it has a very high vision of the human person facing God!

Once more, Paul VI calls Christendom to courage and to greatness.

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY OF CHRIST IN OUR DAILY LIVES*

by

Bernard J. LeFrois, S.V.D.

We have heard the paschal mystery mentioned so often in the past years, that it fails to make much of an impact on us, and even the name of Christ becomes a commonplace lacking the dynamic dimension it ought to have. Allow me, therefore, at the outset of this introductory address, to quote a longer passage from the "Pensées" of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, which shows how in one sweep of his great mind, Teilhard regarded the vast cosmogenesis of the universe and the long ages of man's development as essential preparation for the coming of the One and Only Savior, Christ the Lord, who accomplished his Paschal Mystery for our sakes:

"The prodigious expanses of time which preceded the first Christmas were not empty of Christ: they were imbued with the influx of his power. It was the ferment of his conception that stirred up the cosmic masses and directed the initial developments of the biosphere. It was the travail preceeding his birth that accelerated the development of instinct, and the birth of thought upon the earth. Let us have done with the stupidity which makes a stumbling-block of the endless eras of expectancy imposed on us by the Messiah; the fearful, anonymous labors of primitive man, the beauty fashioned through its age-long history by ancient Egypt, the anxious expectancy of Israel, the patient distilling of the attar of oriental mysticism, the endless refining of wisdom by the Greeks: all these were needed before the Flower could blossom on the rod of Jesse and of all humanity. All these preparatory processes were cosmically and biologically necessary that Christ might set foot upon our human stage. And all this labor was set in motion by the active, creative awakening of his soul inasmuch as that human soul had been chosen to breathe life into the universe. When Christ first appeared before men in the arms of Mary he had already stirred up the world" (Hymn of the Universe, Fontana Books, pp. 70-71). Is this not the very thrust of St. Paul writing to the Colossians:

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"In him everything in heaven and on earth was created . . . All were created **through** him and **for** him. He is before all else that is. In him everything continues in being" (1, 16-17).

The paschal mystery is often described as the death-resurrection-ascension of Christ's life culminating in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The "Instruction for Implementing the Liturgy" (no. 6) completes the picture by including the obedient life of the Incarnate Son of God. In fact, Christ's Paschal Mystery embraces a threefold phase, like the threefold phase of God's People of old, from which it takes its name, namely, slavery, deliverance, new life (K.O'Shea, *The Christ-Life*, 1973, p. 35).

Pascha is the Aramic for the Hebrew *pésach*, Pha-se or Pass-over in English. It derives from the verb meaning to pass over, and is closely connected with another verb meaning to pass through. The Hebrew Passover feast commemorated Yahweh's passing over the Hebrews while passing through Egypt destroying the first-born. But Passover soon took on the added meaning of the passage of the Hebrews **from** Egyptian bondage, **through** the liberating waters of the Sea, **unto** new life of freedom in the Promised Land in Covenant with Yahweh. The lamb sacrificed on that occasion and annually thereafter in commemoration was the passover or paschal lamb.

Christ, according to St. Paul, is our true Passover or Paschal Lamb who has been sacrificed (1 Cor. 5,7). His paschal mystery embraces the threefold phase which Israel of old foreshadowed, for he is the New Israel. The Son of God did not come in the glory of the Godhead to which he had a perfect right, but he gloried in emptying himself, taking the form of a slave, that of the Servant of Yahweh, to release his brothers from the bondage of Satan and the slavery of sin, in which they found themselves helplessly entrenched, and thus pass over with them through the saving waters of his sufferings and death to new life in the mansions of the Father in eternal Covenant in his Blood.

Thus the first phase of Christ's paschal mystery is one of complete openness as Servant of Yahweh to the will of the Father who sent him, together with a life of utter service of his fellowmen of whom he was the Savior, in order to bring them with him to the Father. "He came not to be served but to serve" (Mt. 20,28). And his life of service culminated in the washing of the feet at the Last Supper, a menial task reserved only for slaves. That act uniquely characterized and dynamically symbolized his entire life of service of man whom he loved, the first phase of his paschal mystery.

The second phase is that of the immolation of the Lamb in his passing from this life to the Father by the total gift of himself in death for the deliverance of all mankind. This act of filial obedience and self-immolation he crystallized in the Eucharistic sacrificial Meal, wherein he said: "This is my Body, which is (totally) for you. This is the Blood of the New Covenant. Do this in memory of me". With that he left us a lasting and real memorial of his undying love, whereby he gave himself up to death to destroy death in us.

The third phase of the mystery is his glorious resurrection to new life and an entirely transformed existence, obtained by his sufferings and death (Phil. 2, 9-11), whereby he is exalted at the right hand of the Father, and given all power in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28, 16), to conquer the world of men for God (1 Cor. 15, 28) and fill the universe in all its parts (Eph. 1, 23). In reward for his complete submission and self-immolation he was given by the Father the Holy Spirit to pour out on the believing community (Acts 2, 33), the Spirit who is at work in every heart to unite all in the building up of the one Body of the Living Christ (1 Cor. 12, 7-12).

In short, then, the Paschal Mystery of Christ is the gift of himself in his total ministry of service, in the complete immolation of himself in sacrificial death, and in his glorious resurrection by which he imparts the divine Christ-life through the Gift that is his Spirit. Viewed in this totality, the Paschal Mystery pervades Vatican II as keynote, and moreover, it is the basis of all Christian life.

What part, then, does the Paschal Mystery play in our lives? The decree on the Liturgy expressly states: "In baptism men are **plunged** into the Paschal Mystery of Christ" (SC 7; Abbot 140). But if we are plunged into the Paschal Mystery of Christ, we are immersed into the threefold phase of it: the Servant phase, the crucified phase and the Risen-Christ phase, so that our lives necessarily become living witnesses of the Paschal Mystery "in which we live and move and have our being."

After Jesus had washed the feet of the disciples, he said to them: "If I washed your feet, I who am Teacher and Lord, then you must wash each other's feet. What I did was to give you an example: as I have done, so you must do" (Jn. 13, 14-15). No true disciple can ignore this command to give whole-hearted service to one's fellowmen in love, symbolized by the washing of the feet. It is the Servant- phase of the Paschal Mystery entering into the daily lives of those who have put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3, 27), regardless of age or station in life, position or profession. The gift of self, which is the quintessence of the Paschal Mystery, applies to

any occasion and any situation: to parents caring lovingly for their family, to teachers devoted to their profession, to priests or religious in the various services of their calling, and to every member of Christ.

Married persons can get so rapt up in business pursuits or in the demands of a career-life as to forget that the mutual giving between husband and wife and between parents and children is their peculiar expression of living the Paschal Mystery. The gift of self does not only come into play in the marital embrace but in the thousand and one ways which present themselves day after day. Ministering to Christ in each other and in their children is one of their chief witnesses to the world about them that are re-living the Paschal Mystery in their daily lives. This is briefly stated by the Pastoral Constitution of Vatican II on the Church in the Modern World (no. 52): 'By the joys and sacrifices of their vocation and through their faithful love, married people become witnesses of the mystery of that love which the Lord revealed to the world by his dying and his rising up to life again' (Abbott, p. 258). In this regard, Fr. Charles Curran's words are relevant: "In and through their marriage, Christian couples must live the gift of the Paschal Mystery. Love holds the primacy in their lives. In giving marriage instructions I spend the entire first talk on the Sermon on the Mount, with its emphasis on love of others and dying to self." (The Catholic Case, p. 27).

Educators have a continued opportunity to live the gift of the Paschal Mystery in its Servant phase. Though it is proper and necessary to obtain a decent wage for one's services, the hireling-mentality of working merely for salary can easily betray itself. Living the gift of the Paschal Mystery demands that educators **spend themselves** for their charges, sparing no effort to give them the best they have with genuine interest and love for each individual person. Theology teachers have the serious responsibility to show both by their teaching and by their example that they really have put on Christ's mind and ideals, courageously steering through the many neo-pagan and sheer humanistic trends of our times. Young people need above all Christ today. To quote Vatican II: "Bound by charity to one another and to their students, and **penetrated** by an apostolic spirit, let them **give witness to Christ**, the unique Teacher, by their lives as by their teachings" (On Education, no 8: Abbott p. 647).

Priests and religious by their very calling are expected to bear witness to the gift of Christ's love for those the Father has entrusted to their care, by the willing and total gift of themselves in time, talent, labor, means and above all genuine love. Unless this gift of self is made daily in the spirit of Christ's service to one's fellow-

men and in constant openness to the will of the Father, it is so easy to get engrossed in one's own little world resulting in selfish and even ambitious aims, or a despotic disposition that is farthest from the ministry of service symbolized by the washing of the feet.

Let us turn our attention now to the crucified and death-phase of Christ's paschal mystery. Suffering and sin with its ugly consequences enter in some manner into everyone's life. Without constant orientation, even the faithful disciple of Christ may at times be nigh over-whelmed by set-backs, opposition, unexpected problems, personal difficulties be they physical, moral, or spiritual. There is a daily battle to fight and life is indeed a challenge. Not without reason did St. Paul urge us "to put on the armor of God" (Eph. 6, 11). But what stability and serenity in all the storms of life is engendered by being convinced with Paul that "I have been crucified with Christ, and the life I now live is not my own. Christ is living in me" (Gal. 2, 19-20)! One is buoyed up by the vivid realization that Christ is sharing with him the suffering and crucified phase of the Paschal Mystery.

Yet, no life but has its rough days, its dark clouds, its doubts and gropings, its failings and sins. There is no one who does not experience from time to time the depth of human weakness, so as to cry out with the sinking Peter: "Lord, save me" (Mt. 14, 30). Indeed, it is wholesome for the human heart to experience its needs of a Savior. St. Paul placed this sinfulness of man in the perspective of the Paschal Mystery: "How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? . . . This we know: our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might be slaves of sin no longer" (Rom. 6, 2-6). To the Galatians he writes: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires" (5, 24).

If we are open to the Spirit in living willingly this crucified phase of the Paschal Mystery, our lives will undoubtedly benefit our fellowmen, even though our immediate tasks prevent us from coming to their aid in a more direct manner. This is the Apostle Paul's conviction: "Continually we carry about in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that in our bodies the life of Jesus may also be revealed . . . Death is at work in us, but life in you" (2 Cor. 4, 10:12). Still more emphatically he writes to the Colossians: "Even

PASCHAL MYSTERY OF CHRIST 221

now I find my joy in the suffering I endure for you. In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his Body, the Church (1, 24)." Again to the Corinthians: "As we have shared much in the suffering of Christ, so through Christ do we share abundantly in his consolation. If we are inflicted, it is for your encouragement and salvation" (2 Cor. 1, 5-6). To live faithfully the crucified phase of the Paschal Mystery takes deep faith and persevering courage, but it carries with it a transforming influence both on oneself as well as on those for whom we live and work.

The keynote of the Paschal Mystery's third phase is victory, new life, possession of Christ's Spirit. Already now the believing community shares Christ's resurrection to new life. What will the final blossoming of this be in the glorious Parousia? We have received the Spirit of Christ in which we cry out "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4,6), yet all creation groans and we with it, awaiting the final stage of redemption (Rom. 8, 22-23).

Meanwhile, the challenge of living the Christ-life is the daily living for God in a spiritual renewal of our entire being: "You must consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus", St. Paul tells us. "Offer yourselves to God as men who have come back from the dead to life, and your 'bodies' to God as instruments for holiness" (Rom. 6, 11:13). To do this faithfully, let us be open to the Spirit, given us in baptism. To the Galatians Paul writes: "If you live in accord with the Spirit, you will not yield to the cravings of the flesh . . . The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness and chastity" (Gal. 5, 18:22).

In the magnificent Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Vatican II spoke clearly: "Pressing upon the Christian, to be sure, are the need and the duty to battle against evil through manifold tribulations and even to suffer death. But, linked with the paschal mystery, and patterned on the dying Christ, he will hasten forward to resurrection in the strength that comes from hope" (no. 22, Abbott, p. 221; Cf. also no. 28, p. 236).

If our daily lives are bearing witness to the Christ-life within us, what, we may ask, is its dominant note? Fr. William Campbell in "A Life to be Lived" has this meaningful passage: "Being Christian means to witness to Jesus Christ as perfectly and exactly

as possible. The dominant note in the life of Jesus was worship of the Father, and the zenith and culmination of this life-long worship was the paschal act of Death-Resurrection, by which man's salvation was achieved. It is this worshipful characteristic that must be actively preserved and prolonged by succeeding generations of faithful Christian witnesses. Therefore, the summit and source of all the Church's activity, which witnessess Christ as Christ witnessed the Father, is worship: Eucharist (capitalized) as formal worship, and eucharist (not capitalized) as the informal worship of all those loving deeds and sincere acts by which each of us fulfills his vocation in life" (p. 173).

The Eucharist, in the mind of Vatican II, stands out as the supreme act of the believing community: "At the Last Supper, on the night when he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until he should come again, and so entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection. A sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us" (Liturgy no. 47, Abbott p. 154).

What a felicitous choice of words that we call the Eucharist today **the celebration of the Paschal Mystery!** Here is the daily review of Christ's life of loving service, the gift-memorial of his sacrificial death as well as his glorious resurrection and ascension. Here there is daily a new outpouring of the Spirit, for, this offering of infinite value the Father can never refuse, and in acknowledgement of its acceptance, he pours out anew on the believing community the abundance of the Spirit according to the needs of each. If the Mass were only presented to our people and to our youth today in this dynamic dimension, and its in-depth value for their lives made clear to them, much of the casual and indifferent attitude toward this great mystery-drama would be eliminated. Here is where educators can make a genuine contribution toward the fuller appreciation of the Paschal Mystery and its eucharistic celebration. Even the readings in the Mass must be understood in the light of the Paschal Mystery as Fr. David Stanley, S.J., points out: "If the Evangelists looked back to recall the words and deeds of the 'Christ in the flesh' (2 Cor. 5, 16) as indeed they did in writing the Gospels,

they did so simply to interpret these words and deeds in the light of Easter, or to employ them to deepen their reader's faith in the Paschal Mystery" (A Modern Scriptural Approach to the Spiritual Exercises, p. 89).

In the new liturgy there is an ever recurring reference to the Paschal Mystery in our lives, especially in the new orations. Brought to the fore is also the Parousia or the glorious triumph of the Whole Christ in eschatological fulfilment. It would seem that the maturation of Planet-Earth and the unification of all mankind in love are preparatory steps for this ultimate manifestation of Christ's Paschal Mystery. Whether man's projected journeys to the realm of the planets and stars in this space age are an indication of God's further design to have the members of Christ's Body also evangelize possible civilizations in the universe before the bright dawning of the Parousia, we can as yet only surmise. But when the Parousia in its totality becomes a reality then Christ's glorious power shall have manifested itself in full: in the total resurrection of the entire Body and the complete transformation of the universe, for we await new heavens and a new earth (Apoc. 21, 1) in the unending embrace of the Most Blessed Trinity.

LITURGY

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

By

H. J. Graf, S.V.D.

I. Introduction

Liturgical adaptation to the needs of various group had been one of the themes of the Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II (art. 38). A first attempt — unfortunately a rather timid one — to implement this principle of diversification was the Instruction on Masses for special gatherings (May 15, 1969).

Modern pastoral theology, aided by insights of the liturgical movement had recognized long ago that the Mass had to be adapted in its rites and texts to the capacity of children.¹ Soon after Vatican II, visibly at the occasion of the first Synod of Bishops (1967), the Church officially acknowledged the urgency of the problem and began to reflect on how participation of children at Mass could be made easier. Cardinal Lercaro as the president of the Council for the Implementation of the Constitution on the Liturgy laid down some basic principles how the Mass could be adapted when celebrated with children. To integrate children finally in the regular celebration of the Sunday Mass in their home parish must be the final aim of their religious and liturgical education. It would be wrong, therefore, to create for them an entirely special Mass rite. The existing Mass rite, as it was published in 1969 has to be retained. But it can be shortened; some elements may be omitted. Also a better selection of texts may be made.²

In response to repeated petitions from bishops all over the world, the Congregation for Divine Worship began to prepare a special Directory for Masses with Children. Some countries felt this need more than others and pressed for earlier, if only partial solutions. Thus the bishops of the German-speaking countries obtained from Rome a simplified Order of the Mass with a special eucharistic prayer for Masses with deafmute children.³ The Philippine Bishops' Conference published, with Roman approval, a Mass

¹ Cf. H. Fischer, *The Children's Mass*, in: A. Kirchgaessner (ed.), *Unto the Altar* (New York: 1963) 98-106.

² *Notitiae* 3 (1967) 368.

³ H. J. Graf, *More Eucharistic Prayers? Teaching All Nations* 9 (1972) 109-119.

MASSES WITH CHILDREN 225

for first communion with a new eucharistic prayer.⁴ There appeared local directories for Masses with children in France and Germany which later on proved of considerable help for drawing up the Roman Directory that finally appeared under the date of November 1, 1973. It was prepared as a supplement to the general instruction of the Roman Missal and is, therefore, included in the Sacramentary of the United States.

This Directory is destined for children "who have not yet entered the period of pre-adolescence" (n. 6),⁵ children up to the age of about twelve, i.e., of elementary school age. In the case of retarded children the age-limit may be higher. Generally speaking, the Directory is destined for those "who have yet to be fully initiated through the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist" and those who have "only recently been admitted to holy communion" (n. 1).

Children, baptized in their infancy, have to grow in their union with Christ and their brethren. This communion has to find its deepest expression in the celebration of the eucharist. How to achieve this is the main aim of the Directory.

II. Liturgical Education of Children

In its first part the Directory for Masses with Children is strongly influenced by the General Catechetical Directory.⁶ For the celebration of the eucharist children have to be prepared in their families, at school and in the very celebration of the liturgy.

Extra-liturgical elements preparing children in a more remote way for the celebration of the eucharist are "exchange of greetings, capacity to listen, to seek and grant pardon, expression of gratitude, experience of symbolic actions, a meal of friendship, and festive celebrations" (nn. 9 and 13). It is not enough to impress these human values on the children theoretically. They have to be practiced in class and at home. Children should be led to personal religious practice. Parents, and in a secondary line, the godparents have the duty "to enable the child to know God ... to receive confirmation, and to participate in the holy eucharist".⁷ In their families children should not only learn what love, forgiveness, belonging, gratitude, friendship, joy and sorrow mean. Parents should teach their children how to pray by praying with them and by fostering

⁴ *Liturgical Information Bulletin* 6 (1971) 10-26 and 30.

⁵ Numbers in parentheses indicate the paragraphs of the Directory for Masses with Children. An easily accessible translation is that of *Amen*, Nov.-Dec. 1973, 267-271. 286 and Jan.-Feb. 1974, 315-317.

⁶ Published by the Congregation for the Clergy in 1972.

⁷ Rite of Infant Baptism, Introduction, n. 5.5.

personal prayer. "If children are prepared in this way, even from their early years, and do take part in the Mass with their family when they wish, they will easily begin to sing and to pray in the liturgical community, indeed they will have some kind of foretaste of the eucharistic mystery" (n. 10).

This is a strong suggestion that children should be led to liturgical celebrations in general and to the Mass in particular at an early age. It is true, they will not understand everything they hear and see there. But even in their families they cannot always understand everything that they experience with adults. "It cannot be expected... that everything in the liturgy will always be intelligible to them" (n. 2). Life of the liturgy is a similar learning and growing process as the children undergo in their families and in their early schooling.

The Christian family's life and education has to be supported by catechetical instruction, because "before men can come to the liturgy, they must be called to faith and conversion".⁸ Of special urgency is this catechetical instruction when families do not fulfill their responsibility of Christian education. Pre-school programs Catholic schools and religious instruction in and outside schools have then to fulfill an important task. Within programs of catechetical, scholastic and parochial formation the necessary importance should be given to catechesis on the Mass, and, concerning Mass texts, on the eucharistic prayer. Preparation for first communion should also include the catechesis of the Mass.

The liturgical education of children in school should start with non-eucharistic celebrations which are positively encouraged by the Directory (nn. 13-15). The Mass should not become the only form of worship in common. Celebrations of the word of God, celebrations connected with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and common prayer to which the children spontaneously contribute should be held (n. 27).

Open to misunderstandings is the remark of the Directory that "weekday Masses in which children participate can certainly be celebrated with greater effect and less danger of weariness if they do not take place every day (for example, in boarding schools)" (Ibid.). The Congregation for Divine Worship had to clarify this point subsequently.⁹ Children should not get the impression that they **have to** go to Mass by force of law. Their education should lead them gradually to a fuller understanding of the Mass. Since

⁸ Const. on the Liturgy, art. 9.

⁹ *Notitiae* 11 (1975) 125 f.

the Mass involves the whole assembly, also children should help to prepare the celebration. This needs time and can be more easily achieved "if there is a longer interval between celebrations" (n. 27).

III. The Sunday Situation

Most of our parishes are unable to provide on Sundays special Masses for children. Actually, Masses for special groups should, as a rule, not be held on Sundays and holydays of obligation.¹⁰ Therefore, the Directory treats the common parochial Sunday situation of Masses with adults in which children also participate (chapter II).

There can be an advantage for both children and adults when children take part in the Sunday Mass of the adults. Children observe and experience the faith and the devotion of the adult community at prayer. Nothing can be better and more wholesome than children witnessing the faith of father and mother. Their presence at the Sunday Mass is therefore important for the religious and liturgical formation of children. But also adults can profit from and be inspired by the piety of children in their sincerity of expression.

The presence of children at the Sunday Mass of the parish may demand some adaptations. The Directory makes the following suggestions:

Pre-school children could be placed in the parish nursery while their parents attend Mass. Only during the rite of dismissal they should be brought in to be blessed with the whole community. It is doubtful, however, whether this well-intentioned proposal is feasible in a Philippine parish. Are mothers ready — or the children themselves — to be separated from one another during Mass? Children of kindergarten age must not necessarily become a nuisance for the assembly. Children of this age are very eager to imitate their parents. Much depends, therefore, on their general and Christian training.

Some token account to the presence of grade-schoolers may be made. The priest may address them directly in the opening words of the Mass; he may add some reference to them in his homily. Children could be involved in some of the tasks of the celebration, like accompanying the parents in the offertory procession, and especially in the singing and in giving the answers together with the adults.

¹⁰ Instruction concerning Masses for Special Groups, n. 10,a: *Notitiae* 6 (1970) 54.

If the number of children of elementary school age in a Sunday Mass is significant, it may be advisable to celebrate the service of the Word of God for the children in a room separated from, but close to the church (school) where the adult community is having their own service of the Word. For the celebration of the eucharist the children are led to the church, preferably in the form of a procession. Some of the children could then take part in the offertory procession of the adult community.

Due consideration should be given to the place where the service of the Word is held for the children. Not any place should be chosen. Children must be taught to respect and reverence the Word of God, while, at the same time, opening up their hearts to its message. The surrounding in which the celebration of the Word of God is held should be conducive to the opening of the children's mind.

IV. The Weekday Situation

The final chapter of the Directory is specifically concerned with Masses for children at which only children, or relatively few adults are present. Here the Directory grants much freedom, though the celebration of the Mass with adults remains normative. Masses with children may be adapted, but they still remain just that — for children. The children should be led to fuller and more intelligent participation. At the same time these Masses should lead the children, in line with their continuing religious education and formation, finally to the regular celebration of Mass with the adult community. This is the main reason why the basic structure of the Mass and the general purpose of the individual elements within the Order of the Mass have to be retained.

1. Offices and Ministries

An eight-year old girl, permitted to formulate one of the intentions of the prayer of the faithful, prayed in a Roman parish: "Lord, send us priests, who speak in such a way that also we children can understand."¹¹ This girl felt intuitively that a priest should be able to step down to the children's level when he celebrates Mass and addresses children. Alas, not all priests can celebrate Mass with children. Some do not have the natural gifts nor the training. Those who have this charism have the duty to develop it further by carefully preparing with others for children's Masses. The lion's share of preparation rests always with the celebrant.

¹¹ *Gottesdienst* 8 (1974) 74.

Following the prescription that "in liturgical celebrations, whether as a minister or as one of the faithful, each person should perform his role by doing solely and totally what the nature of things and liturgical norms require of him",¹² the roles of the diverse ministries should be distributed among the children when they can properly fulfill them. "Every effort should be made to increase this participation and to make it more intense. For this reason as many children as possible should have special parts, for example: preparing the place and the altar, acting as cantor, singing in a choir, playing musical instruments, proclaiming the readings, responding during the homily, reciting the intentions of the general intercessions, bringing the gifts to the altar, and performing similar activities in accord with the usage of various communities" (n. 22).

2. Place and Time

For the celebration of a truly living liturgy, the time and the place of the celebration should be appropriately arranged with great care. Attention should be given to positioning all the children in an atmosphere that aids their external-internal participation. A classroom does not seem to be the best place for a Mass with children.

Children like to sing. This natural proclivity should be used in the selection of vocal music and instrumental accompaniment. Therefore, the Directory recommends the use of musical instruments specifically when played by the children themselves. Even technically produced music is permitted "in accord with norms established by the conference of Bishops" (n. 32). The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines allowed the use of instruments played by the children as well as the use of tape recorders, cassettes, records and the like to support the singing of the children. But these technical means have to remain subservient to the liturgical celebration.¹³

Also the value of the audio-visuals is recognized by the Directory and has been approved by the Bishops' Conference (Ibid.). Music, gestures, slides, objects (like candles, cross, chalice, book) are means of drawing the children into a deeper liturgical participation provided they are used with proper intent and clarity. These elements can illustrate a homily, give a visual dimension to the penitential rite and the intentions of the general intercessions, or inspire to meditative reflection (cf. n. 36). Once again, it has to be stated that the function of the audio-visuals is to aid the children in prayer, not to replace prayer.

¹² Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 28.

¹³ *Liturgical Information Bulletin* 10 (1975) 140.

3. Adaptation to the Order of the Mass

The final seventeen numbers of the Directory comprise the most important section in terms of actual, ritual adaptation.

a. Introductory Rites

According to the Order of the Mass the following elements belong to the introductory rites: entrance procession and entrance song, greeting and introduction to the celebration, penitential rite, Kyrie, Gloria and the opening prayer (collect). It would be detrimental to the clarity of the celebration if the celebrant would always try to insert all these elements into the celebration. They are introductory rites and should be always relatively short. "Any excess of rites in this part of the Mass" has to be avoided (n. 40).

The priest should select, because in this part he may omit some elements, or on occasion enlarge the one or the other part. During Lent and the time of preparation for the sacrament of Penance the penitential rite could be more elaborate. But it should never become so long that it would be out of all proportions to the Mass as such.

The Entrance Procession

Children are not seldom unruly and distracted when they come to Mass; recollection is necessary. How to achieve it? By means of an entrance procession (n. 34), for example. The children gather in front of the church (chapel), perhaps with lighted candles, led by the processional cross, or a larger-sized gospel-book, and enter the church singing. The cross is then placed on or near the altar, the gospel book on the altar.

Greeting and Introduction to the Mass

First the priest greets the children. He should use the traditional words of greeting. The acclamations and the responses to the greetings of the priest should never be adapted for children (n. 39). If the priest's address and the people's common responses were variable the assembly would often be perplexed as to what the correct response should be.

Either the priest, or after his greeting a catechist, a teacher or another educator may give an introduction to the Mass. In a few sentences the introduction is to familiarize the children with the occasion or the mystery celebrated on that day (saint, liturgical season).

After the priest's greeting, in which he intends to establish contact with the children, the children could also greet one another as a sign of their mutual fellowship (by a handshake, by holding hands or in some other locally suitable form). The priest, or someone of the adults present could also greet the children individually if the group is not too big.

The introduction may also start from a short story, closely related to the mystery of the celebration. A short report of a personal experience may similarly attract interest and lead the children to the theme or the mystery of the celebration. One may also start with a poster or large photograph to attract the children's interest. The main theme of the Mass can also be explained in the form of a dialogue, in the form of question and answer.

Also hymns, sung responses and acclamations could introduce the children to the Mass of the day. The introductory words should then briefly indicate the reason why this song has been chosen. For younger children it is of great help if an adult first slowly recites the text and, if necessary, explains its meaning.

Penitential Rite

The children should be brought to recollection, which aims at active participation, in the rite of penance. They are to become aware of their failures, to admit their shortcomings, and to ask for forgiveness.

How to achieve this? By suggestions which lead to an independent examination of conscience. Here one may start from situations in the life of the children, or from certain sectors of their lives: the family their brothers and sisters, the school, etc.

Failures and deficiencies of children in the first years of elementary school are not always sins in a theological sense. This is the reason why in Masses for children the admission of guilt must not always be directed to God. The admission of guilt is to lead the children to the petition that God or other people may forgive them. Important is also to insert suggestions for reparation. They should be shown how they can make up for past mistakes, and how to improve in the future.

The Kyrie Acclamations and the Gloria

The children have to be brought not only to activity, but especially to prayer. The Kyrie-acclamations in their different forms are well suited for this. They could easily refer to the theme or the occasion of the celebration.

On weekdays the Gloria is seldom used. If it is part of the Mass of the day it should be sung, if possible. One may also use a paraphrase of the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus and Agnus Dei (n. 31). If it cannot be sung it may be recited together, or alternatively.

The Collect

The introductory rites are concluded with the collect. In Masses for children the presidential prayers (collect, prayer over the gifts and prayer after communion) may be freely selected from the enriched and enlarged treasure of the Roman Sacramentary. But these prayers were composed with the adult community in mind. Therefore, the celebrant is free to adapt them to the needs of the children since the children "are to consider the prayers as the expression of their own lives and their own religious experience" (n. 51). This adaptation should be done in such a way that preserving the purpose of the prayer and to some extent its substance as well, the priest avoids everything that is foreign to the literary genre of a presidential prayer, such as moral exhortations or a childish manner of speech" (Ibid.). Thus, for example, the prayer after communion has to remain a petition for the fruits of holy communion, or for the fruits of the mystery celebrated; it is not to be made a prayer of thanksgiving.¹⁴

When used in Masses for children these prayers ought to be simple in content and structure. The celebrant may be content with one basic thought per prayer. Sentences should be short and clear, by no means complicated. Subordinate clauses are to be avoided, except in their simplest form. It is better to place related, co-ordinated sentences side by side, rather than subordinate one clause to another. The Instruction for Translators (January 25, 1969) can here be helpful with its suggestions: "The prayers from the ancient Roman tradition are succinct and abstract. In translations they may need to be rendered somewhat freely while conserving the original ideas. This can be done by moderately amplifying them, or, if necessary, paraphrasing expressions in order to concretize them for the celebration and the needs of today. In every case pompous and superfluous language should be avoided"¹⁵

In Masses for children these prayers should be concrete. Abstract words like love, forgiveness, compassion, service, contrition are to be rendered, if ever possible, by means of concrete expressions. Instead of the rather literal translation of the opening prayer on

¹⁴ T. A. Krosnicki, *Ancient Patterns in Modern Prayer* (Washington: 1973), 273-279.

¹⁵ Originally published in *Notitiae* 3 (1969) 3-12. Here n. 34. — An English translation is found in *Catholic Mind*, April 1969, 49-56.

the first Sunday of Advent in the English Sacramentary, "Increase our strength of will for doing good", one could say: "Help us to love and obey our parents, to help our brothers and sisters at home, and to be good friends with our classmates."

The opening prayer is a "collecta", a summary of a previous, silent prayer of the assembly. The children have also to be taught how to pray in the silence of their hearts. Instead of simply saying: "Let us pray", the priest could say, for example: "Now we are going to pray. First we pray, each one of us, in the silence of our hearts. We tell God what we think, what we want to have, what we need. For this prayer in our hearts we must be completely silent and quiet. In the prayer which I say afterwards I collect and offer to God all your silent prayers."

Also in Masses with children "silence should be observed at the proper times as a part of the celebration" (n. 37). But children need a kind of introduction so that they know what to do and how to do it during these moments of silence.

b. Service of the Word

The service of the Word contains the following elements: readings from Sacred Scripture, chants between the readings, the homily, sometimes the profession of faith, and the Universal Prayer: "When Scripture is read in the church, God speaks to his people, and it is Christ present in his word who proclaims the gospel ... The chants and the profession of faith comprise the people's acceptance of God's word. Finally, moved by this word, they pray in the general intercessions for the needs of the Church and the world."¹⁶ This structure has to be taken into consideration also in Masses with children. Different forms are possible among which one has to choose wisely.

The Readings

Preparing the liturgy of the word is a matter of great importance. One is allowed to reduce the number of readings (never, however, omitting the gospel). One may freely select the readings from an approved lectionary. To listen to readings is not easy for children; they are so easily distracted. For the lower grades — until age 9 or 10 — only one reading seems to be preferable (gospel). For the older ones it depends on the difficulty of the message or of the reading expressing the message; if they are simple and easy one may select two Scripture passages.

¹⁶ General Institution of the Missal, art. 9 and 33.

Normally, the readings for children's Masses are to be taken from the official lectionary. Paraphrases of the Bible text should not be taken. There exists also the possibility to develop a lectionary for Masses with children. Actually, there exists one approved by Rome for the Philippines,¹⁷ obsolete by now, unfortunately. Here is a matter of future action by the Bishops' Conference as to determining the feasibility of editing a new lectionary for children.

A short introduction to the individual reading may be very helpful or at times even necessary. This may be done in different ways; the reader himself or someone else (an adult, or one of the children) reads or narrates a story e.g., of the experiences of a doctor treating lepers to make the children ready to hear the gospel of the cure of lepers. To prepare the children for a reading from Deutero-Isaiah in Advent he may describe what home sickness is, or report on refugees who are no longer allowed to return to their home country. "On a saint's day, an account of the life of the saint may be given ... before the reading in the form of a commentary" (n. 47).

Dramatization is also permissible. The passage from Sacred Scripture may be assigned to different children "as is provided for the reading of the Lord's Passion during Holy Week" (Ibid.). This had been allowed by Rome for the Philippines as early as 1971.¹⁸ Some liturgists and educators would only haltingly encourage further dramatization (in the form of dances, little dramas, tableaux, etc.), because of the proclamatory character of the liturgy of the word which might be easily obscured by too marked a type of dramatization. This danger moved our bishops "to suspend approval for the moment until further studies and clearer rules would justify" these forms of gestures and actions during Mass.¹⁹ Also audio-visuals may be employed during the service of the word to further clarify the message.

Chants between the Readings

If there is a second reading, sung verses of psalmody is the ordinary response to the first of them. Also an Alleluia-acclamation with a simple melody is possible. At times a period of reflective silence might prove to be more beneficial (n. 46). At other times the listening to soft instrumental music or the contemplation of a large picture, illustrating in some way the reading, may be sufficient. If there is only one reading (gospel) a song may be sung

¹⁷ *Liturgical Information Bulletin*, Dec. 1966, pp. 116-118.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6 (1971), 13-15 and 40.

¹⁹ *Liturgical Information Bulletin* 10 (1975), 140 f.

after the homily. Also the Credo is an answer to the word of God. "The Apostles' Creed may be used with children, especially because it is part of their catechetical formation" (n. 49). But gradually they should also learn the Nicene Creed.

The Homily

The word of God always needs an explanation. One has here the choice between a homily or a dialogue (n. 48) with the children. The proclamation and explanation need not be done exclusively by the priest (or deacon). Parents, catechists, and teachers with special training have not seldom a better contact with and approach to the children (n. 24). There is an added advantage if lay people address the children: the children experience lay people professing their faith; its proclamation is not only the task of the priest.

The Universal Prayer

In the Universal Prayer the assembly prays for the Church and the whole world. This is the reason why also in children's Masses the petitions should not only refer to their own, personal needs, or the needs of those who are closest to them; they should learn early to reach out into the world in their mental outlook, as far as this is possible for children.

The individual intentions — three to five are enough — are best prepared beforehand (by the celebrant, teacher or catechist together with the children). Either one child reads all intentions, or, if the group is relatively small, the intentions may be distributed among the children.

c. The Eucharistic Celebration

The service of the word and the eucharistic celebration are parts of a single act of worship in which salvation is proclaimed and communicated to those who believe. The great deeds of God reach their climax in the paschal mystery whose memorial celebration is held sacramentally in the Mass. The unity of the service of the word and the eucharistic celebration has always to be kept in mind.

Preparation of the Gifts

The offertory rites are preparatory in character. They should not get too much attention, and, compared with the other parts of the Mass, should not take too much time. This has to be taken into consideration in the selection of songs, texts, and rites for the preparation of the gifts. The priest and his helpers have to avoid

the impression that this part of the Mass contains the very oblation of the sacrifice ("offertory"). They may allude, however, to the self-giving of the children who should be led, in an appropriate way to the participation in Christ's sacrifice.

Since the service of the word took a relatively long time and attracted the children's attention, it seems better to offer them, during the preparation of the gifts a kind of relaxation. This can be done in different ways:

By making the altar ready for the celebration of the eucharist. This can be done in various forms, all of which should be used in the course of time, to make the children familiar with them. As a rule the children sit during this time. They may be allowed to look in silence when the altar and the gifts are prepared. They may also listen to instrumental music. They may also sing suitable songs or verses (responses) of songs.

The children may also become active themselves by bringing flowers, candles, lighting the candles, bringing wine, water, hosts, chalice and taking up the collection, particularly at special occasions, like Mission Sunday and the Sunday of the Holy Childhood.

The Eucharistic Prayer

Concerning the eucharistic prayer the Directory notes that for the time being the four approved texts are to be used "until the Apostolic See makes other provision for Masses with children" (n. 52). This "other provision" has been made when Rome published three eucharistic prayers for Masses with children. Their English version has been approved in the meantime for the Philippines.²⁰

"To encourage participation it will sometimes be helpful to have several additions, for example, the insertion of motives for giving thanks before the priest begins the dialogue of the preface" (n. 22). It seems to be better, following the Directory of the French bishops for Masses with small groups, to insert these motives for giving thanks after the initial dialogue, "The Lord be with you . . .", and "Lift up your hearts". Afterwards the priest proceeds, saying, for example: "For all these things, and for all God has accomplished through our Lord Jesus Christ 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God'." The children then answer, as usual, "It is right to give him thanks and praise", and the celebrant begins to proclaim the preface.

There is a clamor these days for additional acclamations in the eucharistic prayer, especially at children's Masses. The three

²⁰ *Liturgical Information Bulletin* 10 (1975), 139.—The English version of the same prayers is found *Ibid.*, pp. 83-98.

new eucharistic prayers for children offer such acclamations (optional). If these prayers are relatively short, additional acclamations do not seem to be necessary.

Additional acclamations may become eventually a hindrance, not permitting the children to realize the unity of the eucharistic prayer, since acclamations have the tendency to fragmentalize the prayer. Yet, as it is difficult for children to pay attention for some time to the thoughts of the eucharistic prayer, longer eucharistic prayers should have some additional acclamations.

d. Rites before Communion

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal enumerates seven elements which lead directly to the communion of the people: the Lord's Prayer with introduction and embolism, the rite of peace, the breaking of bread, the commingling, the Agnus Dei, the private preparation of the priest, and the invitation to communion (56, a-g). Three of these, the Our Father, the breaking of bread and the invitation to communion should always be retained in Masses for children (n. 53), being of principal significance for this part of the Mass.

The other elements may be left out, in part or completely. If all rites and prayers of this section would be used always — as in Masses with adults — it would easily confuse the children. In selecting the optional parts one should be aware of their weight according to the circumstances: the theme or special mystery of the Mass, the feast or some other situation, like first communion, opening or closing of the school year, etc.

Obligatory Rites

Also in Masses for children the text of the Our Father should never be changed (n. 39). One may recite the text in common, or sing it together; a cantor or prayer leader may recite or sing a petition and the children repeat it; they may also answer to each one of the petitions with "Amen", thereby making the petition their own.

The rite by which Christ broke the bread at the Last Supper "gave the entire eucharistic celebration its name in apostolic times. In addition to its practical aspect, it signifies that in communion we who are many, are made one body in the one bread which is Christ".²¹ It is equally a sign of brotherly love when this sacred bread is divided among brothers and sisters. In a celebration with a small group of children the priest may take a larger, single host

²¹ Roman Missal, General Instruction, art. 56,c.

which can be broken into many smaller pieces. It is then important that the priest performs this rite without haste, in line with its sacramental significance.

If the priest introduces the invitation to holy communion with some other text or free words — which may be taken from the communion antiphon of the Mass of the day — or may be freely formulated,¹² they should be concluded with the usual words: "...called to his supper." Then the children know when and how to answer without further explanation and invitation.

Optional Rites

In the sign of peace those assembled for Mass express their union with one another before they eat of the one Bread. The form of giving the sign of peace to one another should vary according to the age of the children and their actual situation. As to the gesture: they may shake hands, or join hands. Also the smile and the bowing of one's head, as used in many adult communities should be brought to the children's attention and practice. Care must be taken that these gestures do not appear to be too artificial to the mentality of the participants. Then they may lead to making fun among themselves.

The Agnus Dei is to accompany the breaking of the bread and should, therefore, last as long as the breaking. If the priest wants that the children should pay exclusive attention to the breaking the Agnus Dei may be omitted. Philippine children rarely know what a lamb is. Yet the biblical image (Exodus, Isaiah, John the Baptist, Last Supper) is very rich in theological and spiritual content. Therefore, the "Kordero ng Diyos" should be retained. But also other songs may accompany the breaking of the eucharistic bread, songs referring to the sacrificial aspect of the celebration, and also to the very rite of breaking bread.

Also the priest's silent prayer before communion may become meaningful for children. It may help them as immediate preparation when the priest occasionally says the text aloud, introducing it with these, or similar words: "Lord, like Zachaeus, I want to receive you. Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy..."

f. Rites following Communion

After the reception of communion the children should not only give thanks — in songs or prayer — for the communion received.

²² H. J. Graf, Positive Aspects of a Negative Document, *Liturgical Information Bulletin* 8 (1973), 84 f.

Certain aspects of God's activity for them and their answer to it could easily become a theme of thanksgiving.

This may be done in songs. One may also recite a psalm in simplified form with the children. Sometimes one of the children or one of the adults present may say slowly a prayer which the children make their own in the silence of their hearts. If there is a song of thanksgiving it should be in another form than that sung during the distribution of holy communion for the sake of variety.

Even in a simplified form the priest's prayer after communion, which brings the communion part of the Mass to its close, should remain a prayer of petition for the fruits of communion and for the mystery celebrated.

A final word of admonition before the dismissal seems especially suited for Masses with children. It offers the opportunity to recapitulate the celebration and to make practical applications in terms of life. The formula of blessing is usually the short one. Once in a while, however, the priest should also use "the richer form of blessing" (threefold blessing, prayer over the people) (n. 54).

V. Final Considerations

We have to be aware always that in the eucharist we celebrate the paschal mystery of Christ, the salvific presence of Christ's sacrifice. Unfortunately, it has become popular in some quarters to make the fruits of this celebration (like unity, charity, peace, togetherness, joy, etc.) the very object of the celebration. But the basic thrust of the eucharist is not "homo qui", but "Deus qui".

We celebrate what God has done and is doing here and now for us through the person of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. The recalling of God's "wondrous deeds" — the greatest of them the person and the work of Jesus Christ — causes the community of the Church to unite in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the Father who continues to do works of wonder in the midst of the Church.

THE FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

A COMMENTARY

By

H.J. Graf, S.V.D.

In a letter to the presidents of the national conferences of bishops concerning eucharistic prayers (April 27, 1973) the Congregation for Divine Worship notified the bishops of the world that "it does not seem advisable at this time to grant episcopal conferences the general faculty of either composing or approving new eucharistic prayers" (n. 5). At that time hardly anyone would have expected that today, less than three years after the publication of that letter, we have five new eucharistic prayers which may be lawfully¹ used in addition to those four printed in the official Sacramentary: three for Masses with children, and two with the theme of reconciliation. The latter were not only destined for the Holy Year 1975 but may "be used when there are special celebrations with the theme of reconciliation and penance, especially during Lent and on the occasions of pilgrimages or spiritual meetings."²

Those who know how to interpret the style of the Roman documents had expressed hope for a change of policy when they read the Directory for Masses with children according to which only the four approved eucharistic prayers were to be used "until the Apostolic See makes other provisions for Masses with children."³

This change came exactly one year after the publication of said Directory (Nov. 1, 1974). These new eucharistic prayers are only approved "for experiment and for three years, that is, until the end of 1977."⁴ A further restriction was that "an episcopal conference may choose only one eucharistic prayer for Masses with children and one for Masses of Reconciliation" (Ibid., n. 2). Later, however, Rome reconsidered its stand and gave permission — upon

¹ They are all approved for the Philippines: *Liturgical Information Bull.* 10 (1975) 139.

² Decree on Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children and for Masses of Reconciliation, Nov. 1, 1974, n. 1.

³ Directory for Masses with Children, Nov. 1, 1973, n. 52.

⁴ Decree on Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, n. 1.

FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER WITH CHILDREN 241

request — to use all of the new eucharistic prayers. Originally, our bishops had obtained the permission to use the first of the eucharistic prayers for children.⁵ In their meeting of July 1975 the bishops decided to ask Rome also for the two other eucharistic prayers for Masses with children since the individual eucharistic prayers are destined for different age groups. It would not have been good to use only one of these prayers for all age groups of children.

The reason for choosing originally the first of these three prayers was the simplicity of the text and of the structure. — "To encourage this internal participation which should be a deep concern of the pastors of children, it is necessary that the celebration be preceded and followed by careful catechetical instruction. Among the texts which will clearly express this catechesis to children, a prominent place belongs to the eucharistic prayer which will be used as a high point in the celebrations" (Ibid., n. 21). Priests have to instruct their faithful on the eucharistic prayer. The following commentary intends to offer a modest help for such instruction.

Preface

After the usual introductory dialogue (The Lord be with you . . .) a rather lengthy preface, divided into three parts takes up the theme of thanksgiving and praise. It is a new feature of this preface that it breaks up the Sanctus into three parts, each of which is concluded by "Hosanna in the highest."

**God our Father,
you have brought us here together
so that we can give you thanks and praise
for all the wonderful things you have done.**

**We thank you for all that is beautiful in the world
and for the happiness you have given us.**

**We praise you for daylight
and for your word which lights up our minds.
We praise you for the earth,
and all the people who live on it,
and for our life which comes from you.**

**We know that you are good.
you love us and do great things for us.
[So we all sing (say) together:**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

A short introduction gives the reasons why this community came together. God has gathered them in the Church to give him praise

⁵ *Liturgical Information Bull.* 10 (1975) 82.

and thanks for all that he has done for them. This short, first section takes, therefore, the place of the traditional introduction to the Roman prefaces: "Father, all-powerful and ever-living God, we do well always and everywhere to give you thanks."

The work of creation is the theme of thanksgiving and praise of the first part of the preface. For all that is beautiful: for the earth for people, for life, for all that bestows happiness the Church gives thanks. Explicitly mentioned are the daylight and man's ability to think and to express his thoughts in speech. The context concentrates on the work of creation. From this we have to conclude that God's "word which lights up our minds" does not refer to divine revelation, but to the gift of reasoning and speaking.

In the work of creation, God showed his love for us. The great things which God made for man (Gen. 1:28) praise him: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 18 (19):2). In the assembly the children acknowledge this praise of God for the work of creation, saying: "Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest." Was it wise to introduce this acclamation in the English version with "Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might"? There is the danger that it diverts the children's attention from the theme of thanksgiving and praise for the work of creation.

**Father,
you are always thinking about your people;
you never forget us.
You sent us your Son Jesus,
who gave his life for us
and who came to save us.
He cured sick people;
he cared for those who were poor
and wept with those who were sad.
He forgave sinners
and taught us to forgive each other.
He loved everyone
and showed us how to be kind.
He took children in his arms and blessed them.
[So we are glad to sing (say):
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.]**

The soteriological part of the preface begins with a reference to God's plan of salvation, "the mystery of God's will, the loving plan he has formed to be accomplished" in Christ (Eph. 1:9). God loves us though we are sinners. Even when we went astray he did not want to leave us to our fate, which in its last extremity is condemnation and hell.

Our age feels so much the absence of God. But this is not due to God, but to man who in sin separates himself from God.

FIRST EUCHARISTIC PRAYER WITH CHILDREN 243

This idea of separation from God caused by sin, found both in the Latin and French versions of this eucharistic prayer, both published by Rome, is absent from the English provisional text.⁶ It ought to be there as explanation of the fact that the Father sent Jesus, his Son "who gave his life for us" and our salvation.

In his ministry here on earth Jesus cared for the whole man, soul and body. He cured those who were sick (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 11:5, etc.). He cared for the poor. "Rich as he was, he made himself poor for you so as to enrich you by his poverty" (2 Cor. 8:9). He wept with those who were sad as the gospel shows most vividly at the death of his friend Lazarus, when he saw the sorrow of his sisters (Jn. 11:35). He forgave sinners (Mk. 2:5; Lk. 23:43) and loved everyone so much that he even gave his life. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:13). In its whole tenor and content this section reminds us of the Post-Sanctus of the official Eucharistic Prayer IV.

Our age is known for its moralizing tendencies. Many prayer formulas, especially those composed for the universal prayer at Mass wag their finger at those for whom they pretend to pray. The English provisional version of this eucharistic prayer could not resist this tendency by admonishing the children to be good. While both the Latin and the French texts are content to state that "Jesus forgave sinners. He loved everyone" the English version adds: "He taught us to forgive each other . . . he showed us how to be kind."

When the first unofficial eucharistic prayers appeared some ten or eleven years ago, one of the main reasons for their composition was that the Roman Canon was too long. A eucharistic prayer for children should be short, though not as short as the "Liverpool Anaphora" which contains only twelve lines.⁷ The second official eucharistic prayer is shorter by a full third than this eucharistic prayer for children. The preface of this eucharistic prayer seems to be too long; it makes the whole prayer top-heavy. Of the hundred lines of text, close to half (45) are devoted to the preface, its introduction and acclamations.

Jesus, for whose redemptive work the children thank in the second part of the preface is present in the midst of those who are gathered in his name (Mt. 18:18). He wants to become present in an even more intensive manner under the eucharistic species. Therefore the acclamation: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

⁶ The original has the following text: "Father, you are always mindful of man; you do not like to be separated from him."

⁷ *Herder Correspondence* 5 (1968) 254.

**God our Father,
all over the world your people praise you.
So now we pray with the whole Church:
with N., our pope and N., our bishop.
In heaven the blessed Virgin Mary,
the apostles and all the saints
always sing your praise.
Now we join with them and with the angels
to adore you as we sing (say):**

Holy, holy holy . . .

In their usual structure the Roman prefaces conclude with a common thanksgiving and praise that invites also the Church in heaven, the angels and the saints: "And so with all the choirs of angels in heaven we proclaim your glory . . ." Therefore, this preface begins its third section with the remark that "we are not alone in praising" God, at least according to the Latin and French versions. Unfortunately, the English translation omits this thought.

It was not a bad idea to bring "the communion of saints" and the ecclesial dimension of the eucharistic celebration to the fore in the preface. It has been correctly observed that unofficial eucharistic prayers often leave "unexpressed the idea of an earthly liturgy joining in a heavenly liturgy".⁸

The third section of this preface addresses the heavenly Father together with the whole Church: the Church in heaven and the whole church on earth, with the pope and the local bishop. "Our union with the Church in heaven is put into effect in its noblest manner when with common rejoicing we celebrate together the praise of the divine majesty . . . Such is especially the case in the sacred liturgy, where the power of the Holy Spirit acts upon us through sacramental signs. Celebrating the eucharistic sacrifice, therefore, we are most closely related to the worshiping Church in heaven as we join with and venerate the memory of . . . Mary, . . . of all the saints and the angels".⁹

One may be content to say, or even sing with the children the opening words of the Sanctus. One may also sing — as the English version proposes — the entire text. This is a good proposal because "it is necessary that children should also learn to sing or recite the (whole) Sanctus".¹⁰ The same rubric reminds the celebrating priest of the concession of the Directory for Masses with Children that it is sometimes possible to use, in place of a direct translation of the Sanctus "musical settings . . . even if they are not in complete

⁸ J.B. Rynan, *The Eucharistic Prayer* (New York: 1974) 188.

⁹ Constitution on the Church, art. 50.

¹⁰ Introduction, n. 18.

agreement with the liturgical text, in order to facilitate the participation of the children".¹¹

Post-Sanctus and Pre-consecratory Epiclesis

**God our Father,
you are most holy
and we want to show you that we are grateful.**

**We bring you bread and wine
and ask you to send your Holy Spirit to make these gifts
the body ✠ and blood of Jesus your Son.**

**Then we can offer to you
what you have given to us**

In a very short text of transition from the Sanctus, that reminds us of that of Eucharistic Prayer II, the text proceeds to the pre-consecratory epiclesis. In our desire to give thanks — according to the Latin and French version — we brought bread and wine and ask the Father to make them the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Following the Roman Canon this eucharistic prayer does not ask for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Only the English version has a Spirit-epiclesis.

Difficult to understand for children is the phrase leading from the epiclesis to the institution narrative: "Then we can offer to you what you have given to us." Almost all anaphoras of the Eastern Churches contain this phrase. In the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I) it has its place after the institution narrative where it is part of the anamnesis-oblation: "From the many gifts you have given us, we offer to you, God of glory and majesty..."

This is a biblical thought. Shortly before he died king David prayed: "All things come from you, and of your own have we given you" (1 Chron. 29:14).¹² But why is this fact stressed in the eucharistic prayer? Its insertion was occasioned by a heresy. During the second century, Gnosticism over-emphasized the spirituality of Christian worship; the spirit was the only thing that mattered; everything material was considered worthless and even from the devil. Visible, material creation could not have come from the good God. In view of these tendencies the Church had to defend the material world, the visible creation. Christian worship, however spiritual it may be, has its beginning in matter. It is "from the many gifts" God has given us that we can offer "this holy and perfect sacrifice" (Roman Canon).¹³

¹¹ Directory for Masses with Children, n. 31.

¹² Ps. 49 (50): 7-15 expresses the same thought.

¹³ Cf. C. Vagaggini, *II Canone della Messa e la riforma liturgica* (Torino: 1966) 146-148.

This gnostic danger is a thing of the past. So we may ask ourselves why this difficult thought has been inserted into a eucharistic prayer for children of the first years of elementary school (cf. n. 15). Another transitional formula to the institution narrative could have been found easily. Could we not simply say: "Then we can fulfill the command of your Son"?

Institution Narrative

**On the night before he died,
Jesus was having supper with his apostles.
He took bread from the table.
He gave you thanks and praise.
Then he broke the bread, gave it to his friends and said:
Take this, all of you, and eat it:
this is my body which will be given up for you.**

**When supper was ended,
Jesus took the cup that was filled with wine.
He thanked you, gave it to his friends, and said:
Take this, all of you, and drink from it:
this is the cup of my blood,
the blood of the new and everlasting covenant.
It will be shed for you and for all men
so that sins may be forgiven.
Then he said to them:
Do this in memory of me.**

In the institution narrative the term "disciples", unusual and difficult for children, has been replaced by "apostles" and "friends". In the words "mystery of faith" the institution narrative of the Roman Canon had inserted in the middle of the words of the Lord a foreign element. Some years ago this insertion has been eliminated and given another place. Now, before the command of the Lord, "Do this in memory of me" the words, "He said to them" have been inserted. The purpose of this re-arrangement is to enable the children to distinguish more clearly what is said over the bread and wine and what refers to the continuation of the celebration (n. 3).

Anamnesis-Oblation

**We do now what Jesus told us to do.
We remember his death and his resurrection
and we offer you, Father, the bread that gives us life,
and the cup that saves us.
Jesus brings us to you;
welcome us as you welcome him.
Let us proclaim our faith:
Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Immediately after the genuflection, the celebrant continues with the anamnesis, at the end of which comes the acclamation. The

postponement of the acclamation makes obvious the connection between the Lord's command and the memorial pronounced by the priest. "So that the children may clearly understand the connection between the words of the Lord, 'Do this in memory of me,' and the memorial pronounced by the priest, the acclamation is not made until the memorial (anamnesis) has been spoken" (n. 19). The acclamation is predominantly anamnestic in character. So it seemed better to have it made after the priest has pronounced it. This insight may, in the long run, have also consequences for the four official eucharistic prayers.

For seemingly practical reasons the English version retains the usual wording of the acclamation (Christ has died . . .). The Latin and French texts clarified the meaning of the acclamation which in English seems to be a merely abstract statement. The Latin text has: "Christ died for us; Christ rose from the dead. We wait for your coming, Lord Jesus!" This formulation conveys a message to the children. The death of the Lord is "for us". This "for us" is so characteristic for the Christian faith that it became part of the Creed. The fact that Christ will come again is not a bit of information like that given in a newscast. It affects those who celebrate the eucharist; they hope and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus. That there is need for such an expression of our hope is shown in the recent development of a theology of hope.¹⁴

Communion Epiclesis

**Father,
because you love us,
you invite us to come to your table.
Fill us with the joy of the Holy Spirit
as we receive the body and blood of your Son.**

According to the original version of this prayer, the first two lines leading to the communion epiclesis contain a petition to be admitted to the table of the Lord.

From baptism on, the Spirit dwells and is active in the hearts of those who belong to Christ. The same Spirit brings forth in them "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22) which is made manifest in those effects which are the foundation and realisation of the Christian's personal life in the Church. Before all, the Spirit gives "love, joy and peace" (Ibid.) with their unifying effect. Unfortunately, the English version does not mention this unity at all. This seems to be a deficiency in a communion epiclesis. Nor does the English text render the thought of the Latin text that those who receive the body and blood of Christ are "united in the joy of the Holy Spirit" (in Sancti Spiritus gaudio coniuncti).

¹⁴ J. Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (London: 1967).

Intercessions

**Lord,
 you never forget any of your children.
 We ask you to take care of those we love,
 especially of N. and N.,
 and we pray for those who have died.**

**Remember everyone who is suffering from pain and sorrow.
 Remember Christians everywhere
 and all other people in the world.**

**We are filled with wonder and praise
 when we see what you do for us
 through Jesus your Son,
 and so we sing:**

Through him . . .

The communion epiclesis and the intercessions are intimately connected. Eucharistic communion is the visible sign of union and unity in the Church. As third sacrament of Christian initiation, holy communion is even an effective cause of man's full incorporation into the Church.

Intercessions in the eucharistic prayer offer the opportunity to stress the "communio sanctorum" and to fulfill the command to "pray for one another" (Jas. 5:16). The children pray for those they love. The priest may mention their parents, brothers and sisters, classmates and teachers, some of whom may eventually be mentioned by name.¹⁵ Also the dead are remembered, all those who suffer, all Christians and all the people of the world (cf. 1 Tim, 2:1-4).

The last section is a transition to the final doxology which, in line with n. 39 of the Directory for Masses with Children, remains that of the four official eucharistic prayers of the Roman rite. But another transition to the doxology should be found. The present "... and so we sing" is an invitation to the children to join in the very doxology and not only in the traditional final "Amen."

¹⁵ Cf. the Letter "Eucharistiae Participationem" of the Congregation for Divine Worship (April 27, 1973), note 13.

COMMUNICATION

ON THE PROPOSAL TO LEGALIZE DIVORCE

History tells us that a sound family life is essential to the security and well-being of a nation for it is an undeniable fact that the family is the basic unit of society — the very foundation of the structure of the state. And as such it must by all means be built on the rock foundation of marital fidelity and marriage indissolubility in accordance with the divine injunction, so that the state may be strong, and may thus be able to stand against the whips and scorns of time. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen. 2.24). 'What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.' (Matt. 19.6).

Hence our great Filipino statesmen and framers of our constitution, conscious or aware of this fact and of the Filipino idiosyncrasy and of moral theology, have made a provision in our Fundamental Law under Article II, Section 4 which specifically states: "The State shall strengthen the family as a basic social institution. The natural right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth for civic efficiency and the development of moral character shall receive the aid and support of the government. "And let us bear in mind that our patriotic Constitution framers have wished to express "an emphatic determination, an express of will come what may, by reversing the form used to express future" — "The State shall strengthen..." "The natural right and duty of parents in the rearing of the youth shall receive the aid and support of the government.

So, I suggest that a serious study be made as to whether or not the proposal to legalize divorce will run counter to the provision of our Constitution above mentioned; for undoubtedly divorce will undermine and weaken our Filipino family. As Bishop Cornelio M. Ferrer says: "Divorce is the number one American social cancer." "Most of our criminals come from broken homes," said another writer.

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HOMILETICS

by

Bernard LeFrois, S.V.D.

I. BIBLICAL NOTES

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 2, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19

Second Reading: First John 2: 1-5a

Gospel Reading: Luke 24: 35-48

First Reading: After curing the cripple in the temple, Peter presents a summary of the kerygma. It comprises a brief but vivid account of the passion and resurrection of Christ, with a call to sincere repentance. Jesus is the suffering Servant of Yahweh (Is. 52: 13 to 53: 12). He was rejected by his own people and delivered up for crucifixion, but highly honored by the God of their fathers, who glorified him by raising him from the dead. From him comes this power of healing the cripple. Let everyone accept God's merciful offer for conversion, repenting their sins and turning to him for reconciliation and salvation. Note the many titles used for Christ: Besides "suffering servant", "the holy one", "the just one", "author of life", "Messiah". "Author of life" does not refer here to Christ's creative power, but to him as the source of new life for all in the resurrection.

Gospel Reading: The point Jesus is driving home is the reality of his resurrection. All eleven of the chosen band are now witnesses of the identical reality. And as if the senses of sight, hearing and touch of so many individuals were not enough, Jesus offers to eat something before their very eyes. That they were "incredulous for sheer joy" simply means they were overjoyed and couldn't believe their eyes. Now they are simply forced to accept that Israel's Messiah was a suffering Messiah, something that had always remained unintelligible and unacceptable. The Risen Savior presents a completely new phenomenon in their experience, but Jesus emphasizes that it had been foretold in their sacred books. It took a special charism to see that: he opened their eyes. The scene ends

with the universal commission to preach repentance in his name, in view of forgiveness of sin to all nations starting from Jerusalem. (To translate "penance" for metanoia is not felicitous. It is repentance, engaging an inner change of heart.) To enable them to bear witness to the reality of the Risen Christ, Jesus promises them the Spirit as the Father's gift.

Second Reading: The beloved disciple designates his readers as "little ones" (teknia: seven times in this letter and Jn. 13:13), in view of the spiritual childhood inculcated by the Master (Mt. 18:3), and also to express the paternal love of the aged apostle. The ideal to be striven for is sinlessness like the Master's, but no one need lose hope if one has been weak. Jesus Christ is the Father's gift to us, and he the all-holy one acts as our intercessor in the Father's presence (the Greek word is paraclete, advocate). By reason of the sacrifice of himself he is also the atonement (propitiation) of anyone's sins, the world over.

Only by keeping Christ's commandments can we claim to have true knowledge of him, because then our lives are conformable to his teaching. God's love can grow apace in such persons. Mere intellectual knowledge of Christ without accompanying conformity of life is simply self-deception (of the Gnostics, as incipient heresy of that time). Knowledge without moral goodness is of no avail.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 9, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 4: 8-12

Second Reading: First John 3: 1-2

Gospel Reading: John 10: 11-18.

First Reading: When asked by the Sanhedrin "by what power or in whose name" the cripple of 3:8 has been healed, Peter responded by stoutly confessing Jesus of Nazareth to be the source of all healing both physical and spiritual (v.12). He inserts the kerygma in briefest form: Christ rejected by them, glorified by God in his resurrection. The quotation from Ps. 118 (117) 22 aptly describes this: rejected by the Jewish leaders, Christ was restored to the chief place in God's edifice. Even the Pharisees did not deny the messianic character of this passage (cf. Mk. 12:10). Three times Peter refers expressly to the name of Jesus (which is the expression of a person's power) and places all salvation exclusively in him. The name "Jesus" gives added meaning for it signifies etymologically "Yahweh saves."

Gospel Reading: Jesus is the perfect or model shepherd. The scriptures are replete with this appealing image, referring it both to God (Ps. 22)

and to Christ, as well as to those who care for his flock (1 Pet. 5:3). A true shepherd loves his sheep and has personal care for each, even to risking his life. Not so the hired man, who at the first sign of danger abandons them. So deep is the intimate interpersonal relation between Christ and his own that it is a faithful reflection of the intimate union between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love. That is why he willingly lays down his life for them. A final promise visualizes all nations together with the chosen People of old as the one flock of Christ. This will be brought about by his death and resurrection. (Christ's main thought here is the union of Jew and Gentile in the one Church, not the return of the separated brethren).

Second Reading: John is overwhelmed by the thought of our being truly God's own children, the result of God's greatest gift of love, that of his Son (Jn. 3:16), by which we are sons in the Son. What matter if the "world" (hostile to God) does not "know" us, that is, treat us with love and understanding! It did not do so even to God's own Son while on earth. Our divine sonship is truly a present reality, but it will be perfected in the end-kingdom. Then in the full vision of God, we shall be completely conformed to Christ who is the perfect image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). "When it comes to light" (NAB) can also be translated "when he appears (that is, Christ in his Parousia) we shall be like him" (either Christ, who is God's perfect image, or like God, into whose image we are being daily more and more transformed (2 Cor. 3:18.)

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 16, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 9: 26-31

Second Reading: First John 3: 18-24

Gospel Reading: John 15: 1-8

First Reading: Some time after Saul's conversion at Damascus, he journeyed to Jerusalem to meet the believing community, but a cold shower awaited him there. They were not convinced that this arch-persecutor of their brothers was sincere in his conversion. It was Barnabas who saved the day, and through his endorsement Paul was accepted into their midst. He soon began his work of evangelization, fearlessly professing Christ. His independent manner and perhaps lack of tact brought him into serious trouble. It evidently displeased the community who were enjoying on all sides a period of peace (v. 31). So they decided to send him off to his own home-country (Tarsus).

Gospel Reading: This is a superb allegory, in which the individual parts have a corresponding meaning. It is a vivid description of the vital union between Christ and his members in what Paul would call his Body. Christ is the source of all life and energy for everyone. Unless one remains in Him, he becomes useless and ends in frustration. It is the Father's will that everyone bear much fruit, and for that reason he "prunes" each branch, trimming away useless growth so that it bear the most fruit. This trimming is called a "cleaning", and the Lord continues that his divine revelation has already "cleansed" them by giving them true knowledge and proper attitudes. Only let them remain one in him. Then they can obtain anything they ask from the Father. (This is why the liturgy always approaches the Father "through Christ our Lord").

Second Reading: The command to love is selfless practical service in deeds. Words remain empty promises. By deeds of love we can be sure we are pleasing to God even though we may fail through weakness. The more one comes closer to God, the greater assurance he has of being heard in his requests. John reiterates the quintessence of the Christian dimension: faith in God's Son and love of one's fellowmen. That insures union with Christ to which the Spirit himself bears witness.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

(May 23, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48.

Second Reading: First John 4: 7-10

Gospel Reading: John 15: 9-17

First Reading: Peter admits the first pagans into the believing community, in the person of Cornelius and his household. It took a special vision to convince Peter that the pagans were equally called to share the riches of Christ (cf. 10:15). He refers to this impartial salvific action of God in v. 34, and even intimates that a non-Jew could be pleasing to God (v. 35). The fact that the Spirit was poured out on the pagans as on the Apostles at Pentecost left no doubt in Peter's mind as to his course of action. (Note that although the Spirit could be imparted apart from the baptismal rite, nevertheless the rite of baptism was required for admission into the community).

Gospel Reading: The source of all love is the Father who through his Incarnate divine Son pours out his Spirit of love on all who are Christ's. Knowing that they are so greatly loved produces that atmosphere of joy and happiness that characterizes a truly Christian community. Yet to

remain steadfast in Christ's love demands continuous mutual love of fellow-men, or love in action, as the saints demonstrated throughout their lives. The greatest proof of such selfless love is willingness to suffer and die for others, as Christ did. He has made his chosen ones close friends, disclosing to them all the Father's secrets (as friend to friend); and he has invested them with his own mission. They are to continue his salvific work of man's redemption, and bear fruit in abundance therein (reverting to the image of the vine).

Second Reading: One of the most pregnant passages of the Scriptures. It is summary and highlight of the Johannine kerygma. The reason for the command of mutual love is the fact that love itself is from God and God himself is love. "God is love" is John's mightiest statement. (Note that he does not say: "love is God," but "God is love"). It follows that only those who love are born of God (truly his sons) and really know God. God has proved that he is love by the very gift of his Son to us to be our propitiation for sin, and our means of sharing his divine life. This is God's sheer gift, no merit on man's part.

SOLEMNITY OF THE LORD'S ASCENSION

(May 30, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 1: 1-11

Second Reading: Ephesians 1: 17-23

Gospel Reading: Mark 16: 15-20

First Reading: The period after the resurrection was of great importance for the chosen band. Jesus continued to give them proofs of his being alive so that they would be staunch witnesses of that fact. He also concentrated on the special preparation needed for their role in the believing community where God would reign. He also impressed upon them the importance of the Gift of the Father, the Spirit, in which they would be invested (baptized). Forty days is a symbolic number used by Luke as often in the Old Testament for a definite period of preparation for a specific work; for example, Moses on Mount Sinai receiving divine instructions (Ex. 24: 18).

Jesus also corrects their idea of a temporal kingdom and an imminent Parousia. At first there lay before them the gigantic task of bearing witness to all nations on the entire globe, something they could only perform properly when endowed with the Spirit. In describing the Ascension, Luke is emphasizing the **parting of the Lord's visible presence**. The manner of description belongs to Luke's literary technique. This per-

spective of Luke can well be harmonized with that of John who places the Ascension on Easter day, with emphasis on Christ's exaltation and new existence with the Father, so that the appearances are of the Risen and Ascended Lord. Luke's perspective may be connected with the end of the forty days when Moses received the Law, for the New Law of Love is the Gift of the Spirit.

Gospel Reading: This longer ending to Mark's gospel is written by a different hand although it is accepted as inspired and canonical. It is a resumé of Christ's activity after the resurrection; it contains: 1) The universal commission to preach the gospel of salvation to all nations, as in Mt. 28: 16-20. 2) The necessity of faith in the gospel message and of incorporation into Christ by baptism. Refusal spells condemnation. 3) The promise of accompanying charisms, as driving out demons, healing, tongues, and others. 4) The ascension and exaltation of Christ. "Seated at the right hand of God" symbolizes Christ's equality with the Father in power and dignity. 5) The fulfillment of the promises given in Mt. 28:20: I am with you always even to the consummation of the world.

Second Reading: Paul's prayer for his Christians is intimately bound up with the Father, the Son and the Spirit (in his gifts). Its object is that they clearly know God (wisdom) and appreciate his work in them (insight). Such insight involves a better understanding of their calling, a fuller appreciation of the riches of their inheritance and a deeper grasp of God's power working within them. That power is identical with the power at work in Christ's resurrection, his exaltation to God's right hand, making him superior to every possible created being, giving him universal dominion, and thus supremely exalted, constituting him as Head of the Church.

The Church is both Body of Christ and his fullness. According to Cerfaux, the word "fullness" in five passages of the captivity letters is used to signify with great stress the concentration of the sanctifying power of God. This has been concentrated in Christ, the primordial sacrament of God, and he in turn concentrated it in his Body, the Church, which is likewise the fundamental sacrament which communicates Christ to men. God is the fullness which lives in Christ.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

(June 6, 1976)

First Reading: Acts 2:1-11

Second Reading: First Corinthians 12:3b-7. 12-13

Gospel Reading: John 20: 19-23

First Reading: Pentecost in Israel was a harvest festival (Ex. 23:16). Thus it symbolized fulfillment, and from that aspect St. Luke depicts the outpouring of the Spirit, for it is the fulfillment of the salvific work of Jesus.

It was celebrated seven weeks or fifty days after Passover, and hence was called pentecosté, the Greek word for fifty. Fifty was the sacred number of jubilee year which signalled the remission of all debts and a new start for the People of God (Lev. 25:6). It is these theological dimensions of Pentecost that Luke is presenting rather than a chronological one, for Pentecost, the fulfillment of Christ's Paschal Mystery, is when the believing community came alive with the life of his Spirit.

The Promised Gift is that of the invisible Spirit of God himself (v. 4) who is communicated to all present. Visibly and ostensibly he is manifested and perceived in the charism of tongues poured out on the disciples. Its object in this scene is the public praise and extolling of God for his marvellous deeds (v. 11) above all for the Paschal Mystery of the Savior. It is also possible that Luke from his theological standpoint is giving us an idealized picture of the Early Church, comprising events that happened over a longer period of time. What he is trying to communicate is that the Spirit of God is the great Gift of the Father and the Son for the final age. By the power of this Spirit the Apostles are endowed from on high to proclaim everywhere and to all nations the mighty salvific work of God. Luke's "table of nations" is a selection of peoples of the then-known Mediterranean world, symbolizing all nations united in the one community of Christ by and in his Spirit, which is the Bond of union and love. Thus the events at the Tower of Babel are reversed (Gen. 11). Salvation is universal, and for all nations, but gained by belonging to the New People of God.

Wind, fire, tongues (for speech) all symbolize the Spirit. **Spirit and wind** are identical in both Hebrew and Greek (*ruah*, *pneuma*), though Luke uses a slightly different word, yet from the same root. It was foretold that Jesus would immerse his followers in the Spirit and fire (Lk. 3:16). Tongues, coming from a central source, indicate that one and the same Spirit is imparted to all, to speak the **new language** of the Spirit to the world, the message of love concerning Christ and his universal salvific work, to which the Spirit bears witness.

Gospel Reading: Since the outpouring of the Spirit climaxes the entire salvific work of Jesus or his Paschal Mystery, John wishes to portray this close connection between the giving of the Spirit and the resurrection-event before ending his gospel-account (originally ch. 20). It is not the time element that John is indicating but a theological dimension (note how Luke's perspective in Acts 2 differs). In order that the Apostles (that is, those sent, from the Greek word *apostello*, to send) carry out the identical mission that Jesus received from the Father, he breathes into them his Spirit (symbolized by the breath), so that they in turn as other Christs continue his work of transforming the world by cleansing it from sin, and re-creating it in the Spirit (see Gen. 2:7). Since the mandate of Christ

is both to forgive sin and to retain it, the duty incumbent on the ministers of Christ is to **judge the sins** of believers. But one cannot judge without the believers making known their sins or confessing them.

Second Reading: A passage rich in content. Paul writes to the Corinthian community which experienced the abundance of the Spirit's charismatic outpouring. Yet he makes clear that the primary activity of the Spirit within the baptized Christian is to enable him to confess the divinity and sovereignty of Jesus. Only then does he mention the gifts of the Spirit (which include here various ministries and functions). Moreover, it is the same identical Spirit at work in everyone, imparting his gifts to the individual members as he pleases, but all for the benefit of the whole Body (v. 7). Comparing the Body of Christ with the human body, Paul shows the necessity of variety of functions. That all should have the same function is against the very notion of an organized body. So in the Body of Christ, each member contributes in his own way and by means of his particular gift to the good of the whole community. What one member accomplishes affects all the others.

The reality of our incorporation into the Body-Person of Christ is clearly brought out by authors today. Baptism incorporates the Christian into the risen, glorified Body of Christ, so that the Church is the manifestation and extension of the Lord's Body in this world. Its members share in the life of the Risen Lord (JBC). Paul can speak of "drinking of the Spirit" since Jesus referred to the Spirit as the living water (Jn. 4:10; 7:38f).

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY

(June 13, 1976)

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4: 32-34. 39-40

Second Reading: Romans 8: 14-17

Gospel Reading: Matthew 28; 16-20

First Reading: Part of a superb homily on God's unique election of Israel to be his covenant-people, so unique as to be unknown before to man. Both in word and in deed Yahweh manifested himself in the marvels of the Exodus and Sinai events, revealing himself in a manner unparalleled in any other nation. That calls for faithful service of the One True God, and the earnest endeavor to keep his commandments. All the more does this hold good for the New People of God.

Gospel Reading: A final summary of Christ's salvific work. A mountain is mentioned to symbolize the position of authority. In this mandate

of Christ, the Early Church expresses her awareness of her universal mission. It can be described as **the fourfold all**, for the original Greek uses the same word for "all" four times (*pan*), whereas English translations prefer a variety of words.

1) **All power:** the fullness of sovereign authority, possessed by the Risen Christ. In view of this, one can justly infer Christ's cosmic role as king and heir of the universe, exercising full authority over all created intelligence.

2) **All nations:** In virtue of this delegated authority, the believing community is to make disciples or "Christify" all mankind. From Christ's salvific work no nation, no race, no minority group is excluded. God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 18:18) is thus fulfilled. By the initiation rite of baptism man is actually immersed (the fundamental meaning of baptize) into a new atmosphere which is the Christian Trinitarian atmosphere. The baptized Christian relates to God as **triune**. "Unto the name" expresses intimate belonging, closest covenant-fellowship with the holy and triune God.

3) **All things I commanded you:** Teaching is a primary duty of Christ's apostles. They share the role of Christ, the Great Teacher, held up as such in Matthew's five great discourses (5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24). They are to teach the fullness of Christ's message that leads to true life, not watering it down to cater to the whims of men.

4) **All days:** A fitting close to the gospel which began with the Savior-Child who was given the name of Emmanuel: God with us (1: 23). Christ lives on now in the believing community in his dynamic person, exercising continually his saving action so that God's reign among men be fully realized. "End of the world" does not imply annihilation but consummation, effected by the Parousia of Christ.

Second Reading: A particularly pregnant passage in the eighth chapter of Romans, which climaxes the entire letter. It is an eminently trinitarian passage and parallels Gal. 4: 4-7. The Father truly imparts the very Spirit of his Son to the believer, to be the vital principle and impulse of the new Christ-life. Only by the Spirit of his Son do we, in intimate relation of sons in the One Son Christ, proclaim God as Father in the unique Christian sense. It is not a mere legal adoption that the Spirit brings about, but a true participation in the life of the Divine Son. "Abba" is an Aramaic term of endearment, best rendered in English by "O Father" or "loving Father". With the utmost filial confidence Jesus prayed thus in the Garden (Mk. 14:36), and the Early Church retained the original Aramaic along with the Greek in her community worship. So close is God's Spirit knit to our own that both co-jointly bear witness to man's divine sonship. In virtue of that sonship, we inherit Christ's glory and divine riches, provided we also share his sufferings now on earth.

SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

First Reading: Exodus 24: 3-8

Second Reading: Hebrews 9: 11-15

Gospel Reading: Mark 14: 12-16; 22-26.

First Reading: The ratification of the Sinai covenant by means of a covenant-sacrifice and a covenant-meal (v. 11), in which the whole people took part by representation from the various tribes. They openly state their full consent and willing participation in the covenant (v. 3). Moses the intermeddiary pours out half of the blood on the altar which represents Yahweh; since the blood was the symbol of life and stands for the victim itself, the emphasis is on the life of the victim offered to Yahweh. Then from the identical source, the blood is sprinkled on the people, signifying the intimate union between Yahweh and his people; they thus enter into covenant-union of new life with Yahweh. In v.8, the covenant is declared to be ratified by the outpouring (sacrifice) of the blood. There are remarkable similarities with the ratification of the New Covenant in the Blood of Christ.

Gospel Reading: The institution of the Eucharist is placed in the setting of a meal. The Passover was a sacrificial meal, the chief items needed for it were the paschal lamb and unleavened bread. Through Christ's divine foreknowledge, Judas was not able to learn beforehand the place where the disciples were sent to prepare. A spacious, well-furnished room placed at the Master's disposal, would indicate that the owner was himself a follower of Jesus. There Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb, inaugurates the new and permanent covenant with God, by means of his Body and Blood which are shared by his intimate friends in the form of a meal of bread and wine. Crystal clear is the Lord's statement so that there can be no doubt as to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, which only divine power could bring about. "This is the Blood of the New Covenant" unmistakably parallels Ex. 24:8 in today's first reading, marking the Eucharistic meal as a sacrificial banquet, and the Eucharist a sacrifice. Partaking of the Blood means sharing Christ's life which he offered to the Father for our salvation and took up again in the resurrection. The Covenant-theme remains central also in the Christian era, bringing man into closest union with God through the sacred humanity of the Divine Savior of men.

Second Reading: The sacrifice is presented in contrast to the sacrificial rites of the Old Covenant. Only the Highpriest and only on the Day of Atonement could enter the Holy of Holies (where God's presence was mani-

fested). He took with him the blood of the slaughtered victim in order to sprinkle that blood on the Mercy Seat above the Ark, as a token of reconciliation between God and his people, though it could not effect it. But Christ, the True Highpriest, entered the real Holy of Holies of God's heavenly presence with his own precious Blood, the sacrifice of himself, achieving true and lasting reconciliation and deliverance from sin. Cleansing by animal sacrifices could only bring about a legal and ritual purification, but the sacrifice (blood) of Christ really cleanses man from sinful works that wrought death. Now with new life he can serve the living God. As Mediator of the New Covenant, Jesus by his death freed the men of the old covenant from their transgressions and made them inherit the blessings of the New and Eternal one.

"The greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by hand" is perhaps best understood of the Risen Christ's glorified Body which is the true and living Tabernacle of God (Jn. 2:19), of God's new creation (resurrection). By means of his Paschal Mystery (death-resurrection-ascension all in one) he won man's redemption. "His eternal spirit" is not understood by present-day authors as the Holy Spirit but as the spiritual motivation for his life in the flesh even unto death. Yet it's also possible that the author has in mind the Pneuma-Spirit theology of Luke and Paul, by which Spirit Jesus was impelled and guided all through life, and thus all the more at the moment of his sacrificial death, the supreme act of his life's oblation.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(June 27, 1976)

First Reading: Wisdom 1: 13-15; 2: 23-25 (Greek: 2: 23-24)

Second Reading: Second Corinthians 8: 7.9. 13-15

Gospel Reading: Mark 5: 21-43 (or shorter: 21-24. 35b-43)

First Reading: Death and life are sharply contrasted. Death is not God's doing. He is the living God who gives life to all his creatures and it is his will that they continue in its possession. His marvelous creation was never intended to be destructive to man but beneficial. Death's realm is the underworld. Death itself is the work of Satan who brought man to turn against his God at the outset, so that it became the punishment of man's sinfulness. Those who go over to Satan's side will taste death forever. From the outset, God intended man for immortality, a reflection of his own image (or, according to other manuscripts, his own eternity). But

this immortal life must be won by a good life (one of justice). Evidently, the author understands death in a wider sense than physical death only, for it includes eternal frustration, loss of Life itself that is God, the "second death" of Rev. 21:8.

Gospel Reading: In these two miraculous cures, Mark betrays consummate skill in vivid description, so that the scenes fairly come alive. The chief lesson intended is the role of faith in Jesus. To offset any thought of magical powers at work, Jesus stresses in both cases this necessity of faith, without denying his own part in the matter. In the first level of interpretation it is confident trust in the Prophet from Nazareth that is meant, and both cures display the magnitude of his power, for in the case of the woman all human means had been exhausted, and in the case of the child, further requesting seemed to be useless, since meantime she had died. Jesus' inquiry who touched him may be a hint that he did not always make use of superior infused knowledge, but it could also be merely a way of bringing the cure out into the open for all to recognize. Peter and James and John are the same three who will witness the Transfiguration and be with Jesus in the Garden, three intimates of Jesus, among whom Peter holds the first place. "Sleep" is the same word used by Jesus for the deceased Lazarus in Jn. 11:11; for Jesus, real death is only that from which there is no returning. Physical death is merely the passage to another life.

Writing for Christians several decades after the events, the evangelist describes them with intentional symbolic nuances which bring out his Christian message more forcefully. In the light of the Easter Faith, Jesus is presented as the Divine Physician come to conquer sin and Satan as well as sickness and death, consequent on the works of Satan. Laying on of hands is often used in the New Testament for exorcisms. Both Jairus and the woman display the proper attitude of those seeking spiritual salvation from the Savior. The very words of Jairus and the woman: "get well" and/or "live" are fraught with the Christian meaning of salvation and new life in Christ. Physical contact with Christ's garments or the touch of his hand reflect the Christian conviction that God willed to grant all salvation through the Sacred Humanity of his Son. The symbolic number twelve in both instances can denote Christ's power over universal evil. The child is told to rise up to new life, and be given food (the bread of Life).

Second Reading: A lesson in generous almsgiving. The Corinthian community is rich in charismatic gifts and in sharing Paul's love, so let it not forget to be generous in material help for the mother-community in

Judea. Paul's strongest motivation for generous giving is the infinite Son's own stupendous example of emptying himself (Phil. 2:7), and living the common life of the poor in order to enrich all with heavenly gifts. However, no community is expected to deprive itself of necessities in order to provide easy living for another community. God's loving and impartial care was manifested toward everyone in the desert-sojourn of God's People, where all were expected to share the manna equally, though some could gather more than others (Ex. 16:17). When the Corinthian community in turn will be in need, similar help from their Judean fellow-Christians can be expected, (unless Paul is referring to the spiritual abundance flowing from the Mother-Church to all).

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 4, 1976)

First Reading: Ezekiel 2: 2-5

Second Corinthians 12: 7-10

Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 1-6

First Reading: To carry out one's prophetic role is not easy, especially when your audience is hostile and unwilling to accept your message, as was Israel, who could not be convinced that she was in need of repentance. Ezekiel must nevertheless carry out his commission, for the Lord will not forsake his people. God's Spirit enables him to do so. He is called "son of man" not in the messianic sense of Dan. 7:15, but merely to stress the weakness and littleness of man in comparison with the greatness of God.

Gospel Reading: In his own hometown, Jesus is received by a large expectant crowd but with very questionable dispositions. They seemed to resent this "carpenter's son" playing the role of prophet, and even beginning his ministry elsewhere first. One can almost hear the heated remarks in the many questions used by Mark to enliven the scene. Despite his eloquence he is not accepted by most of them, prefiguring that almost total rejection of him by Israel later on. Yet Mark points out that some of his townsmen did accept him. Well does St. John write: "To his own he came, yet his own did not receive him" (Jn. 1:10). "Brothers" is meant in the Semitic wider sense of cousins, for another Mary is the mother of James of Joses in Mt. 27:55. Their lack of faith caused Jesus in turn to be amazed.

Second Reading: Paul admits to have been the recipient of great favors from God, but at the same time he has been given a heavy cross to bear, in order to keep him humble. He calls it a thorn in the flesh. The Lord did not remove it despite his frequent pleas, for man's weakness is the best condition for God's power to accomplish great things through him. So Paul gladly puts up with the cross and even boasts about it.

In general, the "thorn" is some humiliating circumstance that was an apparent hindrance to Paul in his work. It is not easy to determine in what it consisted. Concupiscence is not meant, for it is common to all men including Paul, and Paul could hardly boast about it. "Thorn" (skolops in Greek) as a hindrance is found in Number 33:55, meaning the pagan nations whom Israel did not conquer, and who remained a great hindrance to her in many ways. Hence it could refer to Paul's unconverted fellow-Jews who were constantly hindering his work, but despite them, God would make it have a successful issue. Or finally, it is some malady that humiliated Paul, such a malaria, or an eye infection (Gal. 4:14), which hindered him. Whatever it was, Paul could depict it as messenger used by Satan to inflict him, like he inflicted Job with calamity and sickness (Job. 1:12; 2:6-7).

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 11, 1976)

First Reading: Amos 7: 12-15

Second Reading: Ephesians 1: 3-14

Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 7-13

First Reading: Under Jeroboam II of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, prosperity had made the country reckless. The religion of Yahweh was greatly neglected. When Amos was sent to threaten dire punishments on king and people on account of their religious crimes (2:13-15), he incurred the wrath of the unlawful priest of the royal sanctuary at Bethel, who accused Amos of political meddling, and threatened to kill him if he did not flee at once. Amos stood his ground and put forth his credentials: He was not a self-made prophet. He did not depend on the king for a living as the false prophets of the king. He was definitely not meddling in politics if he charged the king with failure in his duties. Of himself he was a simple shepherd and caretaker of fruit trees which only the poor made use of. But Yahweh himself had chosen him, and sent

him to denounce Israel's sins. (As proof, he foretold dire chastisements for Amaziah and his entire family: v. 16).

Gospel Reading: After his rejection by the people (6:1-6), Jesus concentrates on the Twelve who would be the pillars of the believing community (Acts 1:13). In this their first commission they are invested with the very powers of Jesus himself: driving out demons, healing, and authority to preach, all of which signalled the overthrow of Satan's reign and the establishment of the Reign of God. Repentance (*metanoia*) was the message with which Jesus began his own ministry (1:15). The Twelve were to carry themselves with the greatest simplicity and detachment, depending entirely on God's loving providence after the example of Jesus himself. Shaking off the dust from their feet symbolized complete dissociation from those who did not receive them, and they were to be left to the judgment of God.

Second Reading: In these twelve verses, which make just one long sentence in the original Greek, Paul breaks out into a sublime magnificat, in a hymn which has rightly been called Paul's trinitarian song of praise. In it the immense love of God for man, expressed in the threefold action of Father, Son and Spirit, concentrates on the great mystery that is Christ. This is the object of Paul's thanksgiving, and he combines all the favors and blessings poured out on us by the most Blessed Trinity.

1. The Father chose us to be holy in Christ in love; he fore-ordained us to be his sons by sharing in Christ's Sonship; he has taken us into his favor in the person of his Beloved Son. Our response is: praise the Lord!

2. In Christ we have redemption and abundance of gifts; in Christ all things are brought together in harmony under the one headship of Christ; Not only the Jew but all nations are called to be God's special portion and obtain the inheritance. V. 10 touches on the cosmic role of Christ, and places him square in the center of the universe. Our response is again: Praise the Lord!

3. The Spirit carries Christ's work to completion. He is like a "seal" or imprint impressed on the believer, thus henceforth marked as God's property. He is himself the promised inheritance, given now in foretaste and pledge of full possession in heaven. A third time our response: Praise the Lord!

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 18, 1976)

First Reading: Jeremiah 23: 1-6**Second Reading: Ephesians 2: 13-18****Gospel Reading: Mark 6: 30-34**

First Reading: For Jeremiah, the Lord himself is the good shepherd who cares for his people, whereas many who have governed them are more hirelings than shepherds (the last kings of Juhas ruling at the time). Severe punishment will be meted out to them. But God will still realize his covenant-love with his people. Their true Shepherd and King comes from David's lineage, (the messianic shoot or bud also mentioned in Is. 11:1). His deeds are all just and holy. The remnants of Judah and Israel will be together under his rule. He will be the true Zedekiah. Zedekiah was the last king on the throne of Judah (586), and his name meant: The Lord is justice. But he was anything but that. Christ, the Messiah-King, realizes this name to the full by his genuine righteousness and benevolent rule toward God's people.

Gospel Reading: After having been sent out on their first mission (6:7-12), the Twelve on their return gave a detailed account to the Master of their actions and their teaching. But they were so besieged by the throngs that in genuine solicitude Jesus withdrew with them by boat to a less inhabited place to afford them some respite after the tiresome journeys. The crowd, however, anticipated the movement and when Jesus arrived with the Twelve, the throng awaited them with eager expectation. They were not as yet to have any rest.

Second Reading: For Paul, so used to stringent laws of separation of Jews from non-Jews, the call of all men to be one in the Body-Person of Christ was most meaningful. That barrier of hostility was symbolized by the partition wall in the Temple, separating Jews from proselytes who could only worship in the "Court of the Gentiles." Any non-Jew passing beyond was guilty of the death sentence. By his sacrificial death, Christ brought to a close the Old Covenant with its numerous demands and prescriptions, put an end to the laws of separation by inaugurating a new Covenant of love in himself. He thus accomplished the miracle of union of all nations in his Body-Person. He himself is the true Peace of all mankind. In Christ all are brothers and can come into the presence of the Father through him, united in his Spirit of love.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(July 25, 1976)

First Reading: Second Kings 4: 42-44

Second Reading: Ephesians 4: 1-6

Gospel Reading: John 6: 1-15

First Reading: The account of Elisha's multiplication of loaves to feed the hungry belongs to a series of narratives, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the power of Yahweh manifested through the prophet for the good of his People. In such narratives, handed down orally for a longer period of time, details were often added as time went on in order to heighten the primary religious message. It is remarkable how many details prefigure the Gospel scene of today.

Gospel Reading: All four Gospels carry the account of the multiplication of the loaves; both Mark and Matthew carry it doubly. The miraculous event had made a deep impression on all. Here it is linked to the Passover feast, which brings to mind the Eucharist which Jesus celebrated a year from then. It is this special angle of the miraculous event which the sacred writers are stressing. They even couch the Lord's words and actions in the Eucharistic liturgical words and actions of their community worship. Both events declare the magnanimity and generosity of the loving Savior. He has a heart of compassion for the multitude, and even chooses the bread of the poor (barley) to work his wonders. He aims to satisfy each individual. Notice his solicitude that nothing go to waste. This also reflects the Christian liturgy in which the same care is given to the Eucharistic particles left over.

Recognizing in Jesus the prophet promised by Moses (Deut. 18:15), who fed them like Moses did, they want to proclaim him as a temporal and political Messiah, which Jesus rejects outright. That was not the plan of the Father. But even the disciples had to be forced to give up their joining the crowds, and were made to sail away at once. They still do not understand the Master.

Second Reading: After Paul had exposed at great length in the first part of this letter the secret plan of God to bring together all things in heaven and on earth under the one Headship of Christ, thus forming a marvelous and unique unity, he now pleads that those who have received the call to carry out this unity by their Christ-like virtues. It is founded on the Spirit of love and the peace of Christ. It is a oneness that is sevenfold in ma-

nifestation (Body, Spirit, hope, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father of all), and intimately bound up with the three persons of the Trinity (Spirit, Lord, God and Father). It is penetrated by God's all-pervading presence, who not only is in everyone, but positively works in everyone. Paul spared no effort to bring about the consummation of this mighty plan of God which was also the object of Christ's priestly prayer in John 17: that all may be one as I in you, Father, and you in me.

II. HOMILIES

THE CALL TO SINCERE REPENTANCE

(May 2, 1976: Third Sunday of Easter)

The Human Situation: Chain-smokers or heavy alcoholic drinkers may go on for years until suddenly they become aware that their health is in precarious condition. It is either give up the bad habit or expect the worst. It will require more than a superficial and half-hearted resolution to accomplish this. What is needed is solid conviction that a change of habits is a dire necessity if life is to be preserved.

The Good News: Having conquered Satan, the source of all sin and its consequences of sickness and death, the Risen Savior now gives a universal commission to his chosen band. They are to sound the message far and wide that man has sinned and stands in need of God's mercy. This offer of mercy is available through God's Beloved Son who died for their sins and rose again to be with his own as their continual sacrifice of expiation and their Living Bread in the Eucharist. Therefore there is need of a true, internal conversion, a sincere repentance, a change of living habits.

This is the self-same message that needs to be sounded far and wide today, when sin has been belittled, and the doors flung wide open to all manner of self-indulgence. An avalanche of obscene literature, comics and cheap paperbacks floods the market, where young and old can buy at will and avidly read the latest forms of sadistic perversion. Many movie houses think nothing of bringing down everything that is sacred in marriage and sex to the level of the gutter, in anything that might cater to man's lowest instincts. Nor is that the only angle of man's sinfulness. The crying need of the impoverished goes unheeded, the low-wage earner and the marginalized sectors are passed over with a helpless shrug. Daily

the newspapers give accounts of murder, rape, robberies, briberies and other injustices. Can anyone doubt that there is great need to heed the Savior's call to sincere internal repentance? The wages of sin are death.

Like air pollution that gradually and almost unnoticeably affects everyone living in a modern city, the evils of the day also begin to enter into everyone's life and almost imperceptibly choke the good spirit. Conscience is dulled, attitudes adapt to pragmatic circumstances, the heart of man becomes hardened. There is a definite need of self-examination and reflection to discover whether one's spiritual health has not been impaired, and good principles eroded by the wide-spread corruption. Turning to the Spirit promised by the Savior will enable the sincere Christian to recognize the ailments, apply the proper remedies and grow steadily into the proper Christ-life which was begun in baptism. Christ has undergone his paschal mystery for each individual. It cost him exceeding pain. Should all this go unheeded and in vain?

Our Response: From time to time a brief scrutiny of our inner attitudes towards sin is very much in place. This can be done in a recollection, or at home at the week-end. One ought to pin-point how far one has come from the Catholic standpoint and the Church's views. It may mean life or death for our inner spirit. If we go regularly to the physician for a check-up to avoid any sudden fatal sickness, we ought to do the same for our spiritual health which has for its objective life that is eternal.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

(May 9, 1976: Fourth Sunday of Easter)

The Human Situation: In North Dakota years ago, a young married couple went in for sheep-raising on a large scale. They really liked sheep. Coming one day upon the flock as they were riding in their brand new station-wagon, they were horrified to see the sheep in a pile-up. This easily happens when the first row falls into a ditch or trench and those following (with the stupidity of sheep) keep piling on top of those beneath, killing several and maiming many others. With one swift action the young couple dashed into their midst, flung the sheep on top aside, and opening the doors of the new station-wagon, placed the wounded sheep on the newly covered seats. It mattered little to them that the seats became a mess of blood and dirt. What mattered was the life of their sheep. For they loved their sheep.

The Good News: Jesus fulfills eminently the three characteristics of a good, model shepherd:

1) Whole-hearted care and interest in the sheep out of sheer love, for they are his own. It is a joy to be attentive to their needs, guiding them, wandering with them in search of pasture. The hired man, working for his salary, has little interest in the sheep, and none at all when his own life is endangered. We are the flock of the Incarnate Son of God who has the greatest care and interest in each individual for whom he died and whom he is constantly leading to an ever more perfect form of Christ-life. He wisely surrounds them with the protection of his Church and his sacraments, especially his own Flesh and Blood.

2) Self-sacrifice in time of danger. A true shepherd faces the danger, and guards the helpless sheep from the wolf. Christ the perfect Shepherd goes forth boldly and battles the Destroyer, who seeks the life of the sheep. Innumerable are the wounds inflicted on him, and five scars he will retain for all eternity. Gladly he gave himself up to death for by that death his sheep will have life in abundance, life for ever. He himself has power to take up his life again and he lives in the midst of his flock at all times.

3) Intimate personal knowledge of the sheep. A true shepherd knows his sheep from the time they are born. He calls them by name and they respond eagerly. Between them there is understanding, confidence and intimacy. Christ the loving Savior knows each of his sheep in detail. He was there when we were born, when we at the baptismal font to become his own, and all through the years, caring for us with love. But his sheep know him also, and follow his voice faithfully as it echoes in his ministers. So close is this personal union between him and his own that it is a double of the unspeakable union between the Father and the Son themselves. Theirs is a union of perfect love in their Spirit, resulting in perfect joy and happiness. This is the happiness the Good Shepherd desires for his own.

Our response: One must be quite hardened in heart not to be touched by this exquisite love of the Good Shepherd for his sheep. It is not difficult to let oneself be guided by his all-powerful hand and tended by his mighty love. Even when we fail, he goes in search for the lost sheep and brings it back with tender care. Who else had laid down his life for us but he?

APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING**(May 16, 1976: Fifth Sunday of Easter)**

The Human Situation: Those who keep bees are well aware that they work with marvellous industry and superb cooperation and unity, building up layer upon layer of beautiful honey-comb with its delicious content, as long as the Queen is in their midst. From the Queen the entire activity of the hive and its accomplishment is derived. Take away the Queen and in no time the entire hive disintegrates, the work of the bees comes to naught. Such is the importance of the central figure, the Queen.

The Good News: Our Blessed Lord chose a remarkable image to illustrate the unique oneness of the believing community with himself, that of the vine and the branches. If the Master himself had not drawn this image for us, no disciple on his own would have been so daring, because it describes in a certain sense an identity, and that is just what Jesus intended. The great mystery or secret plan of the Father is to unite all men in the one Christ, sharing his divine sonship, his very personality, his holiness, his glory. What Jesus has by his own right, the Father wants his disciples to have by participation (grace). St. Paul does not hesitate to say: "All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with him (Gal. 3: 27). And again: "All of you are one in Christ" (3:28).

But it is only by remaining one with the vine that the branches can continuously obtain nutritious sap so necessary for life as well as for increase in growth so that abundant fruit results. Apart from the vine no branch can accomplish anything. It withers and is doomed, being cast away to be used as fuel for the fire. It is so necessary to be convinced of the necessity of relying entirely on our union with Christ to reach our destined goal that Jesus simply states: "Apart from me you can accomplish nothing". "Remain in me and I in you" he pleads. What an intimate communion of life and thought is revealed in these words, marking a unique phenomenon, that of the Body-Person of Christ! In Baptism we have been immersed into his Paschal Mystery (Vat. II). It is imperative then to think as he thinks, to will as he wills, and to live as he lived. Remaining thus closely united to Christ, there will be no straying in the faith, no wavering in Christian morals, no withering away in stunted Christian growth or frustration.

The Father in heaven has the greatest personal interest in the growth of Christ, the vine and branches. The life-fulfillment of each member of Christ is most dear to him. In order that each one bear fruit to full capa-

city, he prunes and cleanses it from harmful or superficial growth, or whatever hinders it from bearing fruit in good measure. Such "pruning" may entail trials of body and spirit, personal suffering or sharing the misfortunes of others. But the end intended by God is glorious. As the Father was glorified in his Son's sufferings, so he is likewise glorified that the branches of the vine bring forth much fruit through trials and suffering. God is admirable in his saints. Their close union with Christ made their prayers so efficacious before God, that they obtained whatever they asked.

Our Response: It is very profitable to reflect on this remarkable allegory. It not only spurs us on to remain in the closest union with Christ our Savior, but it is a powerful deterrent against jealousy, envy, vanity and self complacency. Apart from Christ no one can accomplish anything. Only from him and through him does one accomplish what is worth-while. And what one accomplishes accrues to the benefit of all the others. There is no room for envy. On the contrary, thanksgiving and praise swell the heart.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

(May 23, 1976: Sixth Sunday of Easter)

The Human situation: Today the world is torn by wars and threats of wars, by riots and frequent strikes, by ambitious aggression and seething unrest in several quarters. The rich nations make little effort to help sufficiently the crying needs of the poor. A growing flood of resentment, hatred, spirit of reprisal or ambitious expansion makes itself manifest. This is the work of the powers of darkness. And yet, are not these all God's children whom the Father wanted united in the one family of Christ? How could the powers of darkness have wrought such havoc on the family of man?

The Good News: The night before he died, the Savior of the world gave his followers an urgent command which he repeated over and over: "Love one another as I have loved you". Love was to characterize his followers the world over: "This is how all will know you for my disciples: your love for one another" (Jn. 13:35). Love of one another was to be the leaven that would pervade the whole of mankind and bring about the reign of God in its fullness by preparing it for the glorious Parousia of the Lord Jesus. Love was to cross the frontiers of the unknown, break down the barriers of nations, and spread the good news everywhere that God is love, and all men were called to union of love in his family.

But what has happened? How is it possible that even the Christian world experiences such jealousy and envy within its membership? How explain that instead of love leavening the world of man, hatred and cruelty have the upperhand, whereas suspicion, distrust and fear gain ground daily? Is it not because Christ's followers have not kept his commandment of love? He loved them to the extreme (Jn. 13:1). With the fulness of the Father's love he loved them, not only during a life of selfless, noble toil and labor at Nazareth, not only in his relentless journeying and preaching for their sake in his public life, but above all in laying down his life for them on the hard wood of the cross. He did that in order to obtain from the Father and pour out on them his own personal Spirit of Love, the first fruit of his passion and death. In that Spirit, men of all nations would form the family of God, permeated with love of God and love for one another. He sent out his disciples to preach this Good News to all the corners of the globe so that all mankind could come under the gentle sway of his Spirit of love. Have the messengers of Christ defaulted in their mission? Have the followers of the Crucified preferred selfish aims to the ideal of Christian love?

He does not call them slaves though they belong to him, God's own Son, with their entire being and all their possessions. He calls them his intimate friends to whom he has confided everything the Father confided to him. This is the mark of intimate friendship: to confide to another the deepest secrets of one's heart. As friends he puts them on equal footing with himself, he shares all he has with them, and chose them to be his doubles all over the globe. Because of their intimate friendship with him, the Father will grant all their requests, because they are made in his name, that is, in line with his express thought and intention. That intention is that they love one another as he loved them.

What has happened? Is the situation of today's world with its flood of hatred, war and cruelty a sign that Christ's commandment has been forgotten, laid aside and repudiated? What will shake the Christian world out of its lethargy so that once again love is on the move, and love conquers? What is needed is a new outpouring of the Spirit, that Spirit that conquered the ancient pagan world the first time, and transformed it into a haven of love and peace in countless Christian quarters: A haven where joy and peace reigned, and the powers of darkness were kept at a distance. Perhaps God has let the world of man sink deeper and deeper into the present miserable mess to awaken it to an awareness of its great need of love, which only the Spirit of love can bestow. Then there is hope, when man turns to God and begs him once again for a renewal of Pentecost.

Our Response: Pentecost is approaching, and we ought not let the matter stand still, but do something about it. Renewed endeavor to love those in my immediate neighborhood, renewed periods of earnest prayer begging God to grant a new outpouring of love, coupled with a deep conviction that we can and must do something about the situation will surely bring about good effects. A small fire can burn a whole forest, a single candle can start a chain-reaction of good. Let us not wait for the great ones to do it. God has always saved the world through his "little ones."

SOLEMNITY OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION

(May 30, 1976)

The Human Situation: When anyone works for a definite end, there is genuine rejoicing when the goal is reached: the student at his graduation, the scientist in his new invention, the soldier on the day of battle, the laborer at the completion of a definite task, parents in the successful accomplishments of their children. Success crowns the long and arduous toil. People are glad and make merry.

The Good News: Today's feast celebrates the exaltation of Christ at the Father's side, sharing his dignity, power and glory, he the King and Heir of the universe. The entire Christian world has followed him from his taking human flesh of the Virgin Mother by the power of the Holy Spirit until he was crucified for our sakes on Golgotha. They have gazed on him as a tiny babe, listened to his preaching on the hillside, suffered with him in his passion, rejoiced with him the Risen Christ, and now are exultant that he is enthroned at the Father's side, in glory that he had with the Father before the world began (Jn. 17:5).

The Ascension is a feast of great rejoicing. Everyone who loves the Savior will rejoice with him, for his life of toil and sacrifice now receives a magnificent and divine reward. The limitations which he had imposed upon himself during his earthly life have come to an end, and the glory of Jesus, Son of Mary, shines in the fullness of the Godhead. From the meek and humble Savior riding into Jerusalem on a beast of burden, he is the mighty Lord of the universe, in whom everything holds together and all things continue in existence (Col. 1:17). Yes, "all things in the heavens and on earth are being brought together into one under his headship" (Eph. 1:10), making him the Center and attracting Force of all creation. No wonder that the entire court of heaven breaks out with exultant praise: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, honor and glory and praise" (Rev. 5:12)

As Head of the Body, the Church, he has gone on ahead to prepare a place for us in the mansions of the Father, that where he is we also may be (Jn. 14:3). Our hope is bolstered up at the thought of what awaits those who remain faithful to him during this earthly pilgrimage, and endeavor to carry out the one command he so earnestly impressed on his followers: to love one another as he has loved them. In the great priestly prayer Jesus envisioned the glory of his faithful followers: "Father, all those you gave me I would have in my company where I am, to see this glory of mine which is your gift to me" (Jn. 17: 24). And the words of St. Paul in their fullest sense also apply here: "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who loved him." When the boy-saint Dominic Savio appeared after death to his religious father Don Bosco, the latter was filled with awe at the resplendent beauty of his spiritual son, refulgent with brilliance of light. Faltering, he asked Dominic whether this was the light of God. "Oh! No!", responded Dominic, "This is merely created light. Wait till you see the vision of the Infinite God."

Little does the heart of man realize what great things await him. Let the Christian lift up his heart. St. Paul assures us: "We are the very heirs of God, heirs together with Christ, if only we suffer with him so as to be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17). Every endeavor to live our Christian commitment within the bounds of our own individual calling, be it ever so insignificant in the eyes of men, will receive ample reward from the King of kings and Lord of lords. For God will never be outdone in generosity.

Our response: Faith alone opens up to us these grand vistas of the glory to come. But faith needs to be treasured, to be fostered, to be increased day by day, lest we lose the savor of Christian endeavor, and our hope gradually dims. Rejoicing with our Blessed Savior in the glory of the Father is a true stimulus to follow him faithfully now, so as to be with him forever in the eternal abode.

IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(June 6, 1976)

The Human Situation: In the dry season, the river beds barely contain a trickle of water, the land is parched, life is dormant and seemingly non-existent. Everything appears scorched and barren, and in some places food and water are at a great scarcity. But let the rains come again, that

life-giving flood of water, and the entire picture changes. Now life appears again in abundance, growths spring up everywhere. Grass, grain, flowers and leaves all flourish. Man is given new hope. What a marvel is water! But it symbolizes a still greater marvel: the living water: the Holy Spirit. **The Good News:** Jesus had promised rivers of Living Water to those who would accept him and he meant the Spirit that gives life, refreshes, animates (Jn. 7: 38f). What a change the Spirit wrought in the Apostles at his coming! They who were once so timid and cowardly are now filled with new life and vigor. No more hiding behind doors for fear of what others would do to them as followers of Jesus, or what men would say about them. They forget all about themselves, their energy is now directed to a new goal. Now they have a mighty job to do, a stupendous project: endowed with the Spirit, they set out to conquer the world for Christ!

Now they are no longer hesitant, inactive, but up and doing. Transformed by the Spirit to men of action, they fearlessly bear witness to Christ's resurrection. Impelled by the Spirit as Christ was before them, they preach the Christian Way of life in season and out of season, although it means telling their very leaders that they did wrong in crucifying the Messiah-King. Filled with the Spirit, their life and example are now like that of Christ, pointing the way to true values for life and eternity.

Now they do not shirk from pain but willingly suffer even the torture of scourging for Christ's sake, for the joy of the Spirit buoys them up. Reproach and shame, even prison itself they gladly endure, for the Spirit gives them to understand the value of suffering for Christ. Now, united in the one bond of love of the Spirit, they are no longer quarrelling among themselves in envious striving to be first. There is cooperation, sharing of goods and ideas, unity in diversity. With one mind and heart all that they have they put at the service of the community. United in prayer, by the same Spirit they raise their hearts in the filial cry of "Abba-Father"! With Mary in their midst, the Spirit is drawn powerfully to the believing community, and showers on them his charisms in abundance.

In Baptism, we have all received the same Spirit of Jesus, and a fuller potion of the Water of Life in the sacrament of Confirmation. Now it is our turn to be more fully aware of his biding presence within us, to be open to his suggestions, to work with him for the upbuilding of our fellow-men be it in the family, the community, the parish. With the Spirit we will not lack vigor and drive, for he is the promised Gift of Living Water. **Our Response:** Since each member of Christ has received from the Spirit a charism or special gift for the common good, one ought to foster it and utilize it to the utmost, so that greater benefit come to those we serve.

The gifts of the Spirit ought not lie dormant, but be put to use. Even natural gifts can be heightened by the Spirit and constitute a valuable charism for the community. Each charism has as its chief aim the common good.

IMMERSED IN THE TRINITY

(June 13, 1976)

The Human Situation: Initiation rites for student groups have a definite meaning for those initiated. By means of them a person becomes a full-fledged member, and belongs in a particular way to that group, taking upon himself its aims and plans. There are obligations and also privileges. The spirit of the group channels much of his energy and thought for the common purpose of the group.

The Good News: Baptism is the initiation rite for the Christian. It immerses him into a new atmosphere, the Christian atmosphere of the Most Blessed Trinity. One now belongs to a community of believers whose final goal is God Holy and Triune. To Israel of old God revealed himself as the One, True God, all-powerful, adorable, the God who cared for his People and was leading them to a destined goal. To the Christian he reveals himself still more: he is a Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Spirit, one God in a community of love of three Persons. God is community and every community especially the Christian community finds its perfect archetype in that community of love.

The Blessed Trinity is not only the profound mystery of our Christian faith which we accept whole-heartedly, but it is also that Supreme Reality that enters into our daily lives and gives Christian meaning to them. Truly, we often begin our prayers and our works in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, but it even more necessary that the Christian become more aware of the personal relation in which he stands to the individual persons of the Trinity. When he ponders on the love of the Father who so loved us that he did not even spare his beloved Son, in order that we come to share his divine sonship, the Christian cries out "Abba-Father" in the full realization that he truly stands in relation to the Father as Christ his Son, whose member he is. He is overwhelmed at the depth of God's love, a love which Israel never came to realize for it had not as yet known the excruciating pains and death to which the Father gave up his Son in order to reveal his infinite love for man.

When we come to realize that the Divine Son could so easily have redeemed us by a mere act of his will, and delivered us from Satan's slavery by a legal external act of some kind, but entered instead into our very race, took our very flesh from the Virgin, underwent all the inconveniences and hardships of the common man, and then was rejected by his own people, we begin to understand somewhat the immense love he has for us his brothers, whom he also calls his friends (Jn. 15:15). And our relation to our Divine Kuya becomes an intimate friendship of love and a blood-relationship of brothers, so great is God's love for little man. So much did Christ love us that he gave himself as our sacrifice to the Father, and now gives himself continually as our food to sustain us for the battle of life.

Furthermore, we have become the very Temples of the Spirit, the first-fruit and primary gift of the passion and death of Jesus. It is the Spirit with us who is constantly encouraging, inspiring, impelling us to live our baptismal commitment, which is the life of Christ re-lived on earth once more. He is the Paraclete, our Advocate, pleading for us at the Tribunal of God. Many are hardly aware that they carry this Treasure within them, and so easily desecrate the Temple of God by serious sin. But we glorify him, the more we cooperate with the calling he has given us and the special charism he has imparted. So close is the Christian knit to the Spirit that St. Paul dares to say that he has the very imprint or seal of the Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

Those who endeavor to enter into the great mystery of the Trinity realize more and more the great concern of the Three Persons in God for each one of us, and their individual activity at work for man's happiness here below and for all eternity. Not only ought the Christian know, love and adore the One God as Israel did of old, but his awareness of the supreme mystery of our Christian faith ought to manifest itself in the prayers he utters; for this purpose the liturgy is an excellent guide. It always prays to the Father through the Son in the Spirit, recalling again and again the individual Persons of the Trinity. The "Glory be" and the "Glory to God in the highest" are also expressions of our Christian faith in the Trinity, the mystery of community-love that one wishes to carry out in his own life with those one lives with.

Our Response: If God has revealed himself as triune in person, let everyone pray not merely to God in general, but to the Father of all, as Paul so often begins his prayers, and with the Beloved Son who is in our midst praying to the Father with us, and in that Spirit of the Father and the Son whose precise function it is to unite us to God Father and Son in love,

as well as unite all men together in the community of his Church. Awareness of the Trinity quickens the life of the believer, and he prays with renewed understanding the "Glory be" as the prayer of our Christian commitment, for the glory of the New Covenant was manifested in the Incarnate Son (Jn. 1:14) and through our Christian living, that glory permeates also every member of Christ's Body-Person, until it engulf the universe, and God is "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

THIS IS MY BODY

(June 20, 1976)

The Human Situation: A birthday or wedding anniversary always calls for a celebration with all the members of the family especially gathered together for a festive meal. It is a joyful gathering, an expression of happiness of the entire family, commemorating a special event. The Eucharist is also a joyful family gathering, a sacred meal, for it is Christ's love-feast. But it is more: it is a sacrificial meal, and it is not only a memorial of something past, but in a special manner it makes the event present again.

The Good News: When Jesus reclined at table with his disciples the night before he died, he took bread into his sacred hands and said: "Take and eat, this is my Body, which is given up for you" (1 Cor. 11:24). This tells us very much, both that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist (which we call transubstantiation), and also why he is present, namely he is given up in sacrifice for our sakes (which is now called transfinalization, for it tells the purpose of it all). Furthermore, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as our Food and Drink, to signify that in order to sustain us in the divine life we received in Baptism, he is the True Bread and the True Wine (which is now called transignification, for it gives the signification of the choice of bread and wine).

But the original wording in the Greek tells us still more. For first of all, there is no verb "given up" in the Greek. This is supplied in thought. The wording is simply: This is my Body which is for you. Moreover, "body" in the Semitic mind is not only the physical body as we would express it today, but includes the entire animated and corporeal person, whose thoughts and desires are contained and revealed under the sensible aspect of body. One could express it very briefly and clearly: This is **me** who is all for **you**. This brings out very strikingly that Jesus in the Eucharist sums up his entire life of living for others in the service

of love. The sacrificial angle of the Eucharist is emphasized to the utmost in the simple words of the Greek original. Jesus crystallized in one marvellous mystery his entire life of oblation to the Father which manifested so vividly the love that God bears toward man. God wills to give himself totally to little man through his Beloved Son, vividly portrayed in the sacrament of the altar.

What can the sincere Christian do in the face of such love and such total commitment to the service of love? He ought to make a return of love. He will esteem highly the Eucharist, and this estimation will manifest itself by his fidelity to his participation in the Eucharistic celebrations above all on Sundays and holydays, whenever possible; also by a certain attraction toward the tabernacle that finds him before the Hidden God in odd moments of the day or evening. Many business men find it extremely helpful for their own peace of mind and tranquil living to put some time now and then before the tabernacle. Many others join the Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament for a nightly vigil. If God has gone so far to manifest his love for us to be present in this great Sacrament always in our midst, ought we not show deep appreciation for this mystery of Christ's love and come to partake of his sacred meal as often as we can? The Eucharist is the center of the life of a true Christian.

Our response: If we have dependents under us either in the home or in our business, we ought to give them ample time to participate in the Eucharistic celebrations on given days. Parents will offer the best example to their children by going themselves frequently to the holy table of the Lord. Above all, we ourselves will benefit by the Eucharist if we realize it is the Bond of union between God and man, and between man and his fellowmen. Those who continue on with family quarrels, or personal hatred of someone else, have never understood what the Eucharist is intended to be, and fall short of living a truly Christian life. Before receiving the Lord at mass, we now are invited to give each other the sign of peace. That ought to be a sincere gesture of reconciliation if necessary, so that the same Lord can take up his abode in each Christian heart.

JESUS OUR RESURRECTION AND OUR LIFE

(Thirteenth Sunday: June 27, 1976)

The Human Situation: Some who have been on the brink of death and then have been given a new lease on life are wont to state that when death seemed inevitable, they experienced deep regret for not having spent their lives more profitably, and were determined to change their ways ra-

dically, should life be extended for them. It can also happen that a person comes to the very depth of a sinful life before he comes to his senses and resolves to start anew, like the Prodigal son who in the depth of his misery turned back to his father.

The Good News: Two persons in today's gospel seek healing from Christ. Jairus represents the realm of men and the woman her own realm. Both come to Jesus in extreme need, one for his child so dear to his heart, the other for herself. Jairus knows that his child has not long to live, and indeed the messenger reveals to him the sad news. The woman was at her wits end what to do next for she had used up all her resources to obtain a cure but in vain. In these last extremes, both came to Jesus, the source of health and new life. They came with genuine confidence and humble prayerful petition.

All mankind needs Christ. His Sacred Heart is the refuge of every man in need, young and old, rich and poor. Like the woman in distress, so man is often subject to lingering bad habits, to evil ways he finds impossible to conquer. He longs for health of spirit, but of himself he is unable to obtain it. Like Jairus he must seek the help of the all-powerful Savior, whose Sacred Heart is the foundation of life and holiness. Even when the life of the spirit has almost been extinguished, and sin holds him in its deathly clutches, man can always find new strength, new life in the Heart of Christ. From him alone comes the spiritual resurrection from an evil way of life that even the greatest sinners sometimes long for.

The Heart of the Savior understands the heart of man for he became man to experience all the ups and downs on our human existence. Nothing pleases him more in the repentant sinner than a change of heart, and the sinner's confidence in him, the Savior, to heal him. He will take him by the hand and raise him up to new life as he did the child lying dead in the home of Jairus. He will infuse new ideals and new vigor into despondent and discouraged hearts. He will give his Spirit in new abundance to start life anew and its battle for good. Do not fear, he says, I am with you, to help you conquer the works of death and perform the works of the Spirit.

Our Response: To overcome evil habits it will be necessary to strike out in a more positive direction, finding ways of doing good to others, or helping others in need. Evil habits are overcome by opposing them with good ones. The energy once spent in sinful ways will then be channeled to positive projects and profitable undertakings, so that evil is overcome by good. Yet, alone man cannot accomplish this. It is only with the help of the Sacred Heart of the Savior of each, that good can be carried out.

UNBELIEF: THE SIN OF THE WORLD**(Fourteenth Sunday: July 4, 1976)**

The Human Situation: Acceptance plays an important part in the working ability of any man, Psychologically, everyone needs to be accepted for what he is or what he stands for. If he is not, the inner man feels paralyzed and crushed. To carry on, becomes increasingly difficult.

The Good News: Jesus had to put up with much unbelief in his ministry. His own townspeople were skeptical of him, because he had lived an ordinary life in their midst for many years. He was a common laborer, a layman with no special education. (He was not a priest of the order of Levi and could not enter the Holy Place of the Temple). He gave no promise of being the spectacular deliverer they believed the Messiah would be. This incredulity and lack of faith dogged his steps all the years to follow. The leaders contradicted him. His own brothers did not believe in him (Jn. 7:5). The great throng of followers melted away, once he began to instruct them with deeply spiritual realities (Jn. 6:60). His enemies plotted his death, and one of his own intimate friends betrayed him. Only a few faithful followers remained at the end.

It is hard to work with a hostile audience. It is very painful and frustrating to realize that you are not accepted by those you came to help and even save from dire calamity. Jesus could well have been often tempted to quit. But he did not quit. He faced the situation, convinced that in all this the Father's will would be accomplished, although he saw clearly as time went on that it was through his sufferings and death that he would bring salvation to the world. Despite the refusal of his own people to believe, he bore his cross to the bitter end. But by his death, he won for us life.

The sin of unbelief is rampant today also. Many a Christian is tempted to doubt the efficacy of the Christian faith in face of so much evil in the world: wars, oppression of the poor, the avalanche of immoral practices flaunted by the mass media, the tragedy of earthquakes, starvation and floods. What is the meaning of sorrow, evil and death, which continue to exist despite so much progress in the world? Those that thought scientific advancement alone to be man's salvation and happiness are confronted with the possible destruction of all mankind through nuclear weapons. Advanced technology also brings totally new problems which baffle even the scientists. Industry is causing the death of the great cities through air-pollution. Unemployment stalks many countries like a ghost.

Can the Christian see behind the clouds as Jesus did? Can he recognize the need to turn to God who alone is man's salvation and happiness? Can he learn to suffer the present-day situations which man himself has brought upon himself, and humbly bear his cross as Jesus did, desiring only to carry out the will of his heavenly Father? The all-powerful God could change the fact of the earth in short notice if he so wanted to. But he does not, for he has let the future of the world in the hands of man, and it is man now, relying on God, who must build a better world. The unbelief of Israel crucified her Messiah. The faith of mankind lets it share his resurrection.

Our response: There is much good on earth. There are many who are following Christ with firm faith and ardent love. The Spirit raises up loyal couples to live their married vows in noble Christian fashion. The Spirit moves men and women of all races and ages to seek God in the depth of their heart and to come to the help of their fellowmen in sincere Christian charity. Men of science openly profess their need of God. Youth find their fulfillment again in Christ. Mankind turns anew to God in the faith of their fathers. And that too is our response and our contribution: faith in Christ who alone can bring salvation and fulfillment to every human heart and to mankind at large.

PAUL'S TRINITARIAN SONG OF PRAISE

(Fifteenth Sunday: July 11, 1976)

The outline given in the biblical notes for today's second reading offers ample material for a homily on the blessings poured out by God on us.

CHRIST OUR TRUE PEACE

(Sixteenth Sunday: July 18, 1976)

The Human Situation: Many have been the solutions offered for the peace of mankind. Summit meetings mull over the situations. "United Nations" grapple with the problems and pronounce sanctions. Bans on nuclear armament seek to lessen the danger of war and devastation. Men high in the governments are sent to smooth out differences between countries. Yet there continues to be wars and outbreaks in so many countries. Why cannot man live in peace with his brother on this Planet Earth? Has he really tried every possible solution for peace?

The Good News: God himself gave his solution for peace on earth long ago. His own Son is our Peace-maker. Christ died in order to unite all mankind in peace and love. There can be no true peace without Christ. He offers the means for true peace both in his gospel message of love, and in the Sacrificial Banquet of his Body wherein all men share the same Food at the Table of the Lord, who is the Bond of peace in the one Family of God. He emptied himself and underwent the abasement of the cross in order to win for man the powerful Spirit of God, who is the Spirit of joy, love and peace. What more can Christ do, what more can he give us, so that all nations and all men throw off the barriers that separate them, and come to the one Father of all through his Son and in his own Spirit of redeeming love?

But it is necessary for modern man to accept God's solution for peace: he must accept Christ as his sole Savior, and ponder his mystery, in order to make it specific for our own times. How do the sons of God live the Christ-life in our rapidly changing world? How relate their divine sonship to the needs and conditions of our cybernetic age? How does he solve the problems engendered by modern progress which at times obscures the real meaning of life? God expects us to use our intellects and all our abilities to apply the Christian message for the needs of today. The fundamental message will remain as it always was: metanoia: change of heart. Modern man must relinquish his selfish and ambitious aims, nations must stop encroaching on the rights and possessions of other nations, those well-to-do must be willing to share the means at their disposal with the less fortunate of their fellowmen, and everyone must make an honest endeavor to live in peace with one's neighbor despite their deficiencies and failures.

When will the nations give Christ a full chance to ennoble them with his Spirit? When will those individuals who are the representatives of nations or of organizations submit their plans to God and let their plans reflect the Gospel of Christ, who was sent to give peace on earth as was already announced at his birth? When will the great ones of earth realize that they must turn also to God to solve their problems, in order to bring about a lasting peace? Christ came to bring peace to all men. War, hatred and dissension are the works of the Evil One. But Christ lives now in his members. It is they who must make every effort to live his message anew. The voice of the Great White Shepherd in Rome has sounded the message of peace again and again but how many heed it?

Our Response: We can do our part by fostering reconciliation in our homes and in our daily situations. We can spread the peace of Christ

by our words and actions. Blessed are the peace-makers, says the Lord in the beatitudes, they shall be called sons of God (Mt. 5:9). Peace however will only be established with great cost. There is needed a constant battle against friction, selfish aims and ambition, and all other elements that incite men to quarrels and animosity. Let the Christian do his best, and God will bless his efforts.

CHRIST'S UNIQUE COMMUNITY

(Seventeenth Sunday: July 25, 1976)

The Human Situation: For centuries the Roman Empire succeeded in forming an imposing unity which ruled the world. It amalgamated many nations and peoples into one, absorbing their religion and their culture, but imposing its own law, language and organization. Yet in time it fell apart because there was no lasting spiritual principle of union to keep it alive.

The Good News: Christians have been molded into a single harmonious religious community by the Spirit of God. It is He who is the living and life-giving Principle of love animating the whole body and the body is the Body of Christ. All the nations of the world are called to fellowship in this Body. The greatest in this community, according to the Lord's own word, are those who serve: "Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest, and whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all (Mt. 20:26f). As in one body there is unity in diversity, so in the Body of Christ, each member has his own role to play, his own charism to exercise for the good of the whole (1 Cor. 12: 12-20). All the members share the sufferings of Christ and will eventually share his glory (Rom. 8: 17).

One and the same Spirit vivifies every member of Christ's Body, impelling them as He impelled Christ on earth to every good deed, even to the offering of himself for the salvation of others. The Spirit impels each member to come to the aid of others, and if need be, to lay down his life for his fellowmen. This is Christian love at its best. Great is the hope of their calling, so much so that it becomes an object of St. Paul's ardent prayer: May God enlighten your vision to know the great hope to which he has called you (Eph. 1: 18).

All the members of this unique community have the same Lord and Master Jesus Christ for he has purchased them with the price of his

blood (1 Cor. 6: 20). They all share the one faith that was handed down by Christ's apostles when he sent them forth with this command: Go and make disciples of all nations . . . teach them to carry out all things I have commanded you" (Mt. 28: 19). All over the world, one and the same faith is professed by all. All have become partakers of Christ by means of the one Christian baptism, by which they have been immersed in the Paschal Mystery of Christ, immersed likewise in the atmosphere of the Blessed Trinity, which is the final goal of every Christian. Finally, all have one and the same Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his all-pervading presence is at work in everyone transforming them into Christ by the working of his Spirit.

Our response: To be proud of our heritage and to live our Christian commitment faithfully. Our Christian faith is God's greatest gift to us, for with that faith we are partakers of the very life of God himself.

· SHORT NOTICES ON BOOKS

Marxsen, Willi: *La Resurrección de Jesús de Nazaret*. Editorial Herder, 1974 — 240 págs. — Rústica 260 pesetas.

The author is a Protestant theologian who in 1964 had written "The Resurrection of Christ as a Historical and Theological Problem" by which he came under a cloud among fellow-Protestant scholars. So in the winter of 1967-1968 he held a series of lectures which are embodied in this book, and which failed to reinstate him into the good graces of his former confrères.

For the author, who is ambivalent in his interpretation of Christ's resurrection, what is important is not whether Jesus Christ really and historically arose from the dead, and undertook to preach it with all his ardor and zeal. For Marxsen the resurrection of Christ takes place whenever Christ has an inner encounter with any believer — even the 20th century faithful.

Berger, Peter L.: *Rumor de Angeles*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 176 págs. — Rustica 200 pesetas.

The author, a distinguished American sociologist, asks whether spiritualism and Christian theological thought are still possible and relevant in our contemporary society, which is predominantly naturalistic or materialistic, ecstatically drunk in the science explosion in the fields of physics and medicine. He answers in the affirmative, and adds that spiritualism or supernaturalism as a theme belongs both to the expert and uninitiate.

The author rises up from anthropological facts and principles to an inductive faith, in the tradition of the pioneer of liberal Protestant theology Schleiermacher. This essay, while not entirely orthodox, has been widely acclaimed in the English-speaking world as an eloquent witness to supernaturalism in our materialistic age.

Grabner-Haider, Anton: *La Biblia Y Nuestro Lenguaje*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 520 págs. — Rústica 625 pesetas, tela 750 pesetas.

Fundamental concepts, or the so-called prime principles, have not changed nor can change with the march of time. Thus the axioms and maxims of common sense, such as: *The whole is bigger than the part; evil should be avoided*, etc., are perennial truths. Thus fundamental concepts in the Bible have not evolved nor can evolve. But culture and civilization have advanced, and we often construe many biblical ideas in the light of our 20th century context.

The book under consideration, edited by Grabner-Haider, has 56 contributors Protestant and Catholic, and thus is an ecumenical approach to the theme which is how to interpret biblical terms in the context of contemporary culture. This is a work intended for readers both Catholic and Protestant who are well grounded in the dogmatic and moral differences between their respective faiths. The uninitiate is liable to get confused and even misled; and this is possibility with every "ecumenical" literature of some depth and dimension.

Heimerl, Hans: *El Sacerdote Secularizado*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 112 págs. — Rústica 150 pesetas.

A Catholic priest who leaves his vocation without the necessary dispensation from Rome is worse than an AWOL serviceman. But when

a priest had first obtained all the canonical dispensations before returning to the secular life, he is often at peace with God, but still ostracized by many of his former associates and acquaintances. Thus he should prefer to start all over again in new surroundings.

The present book analyzes the provisions of Canon Law and of the *Normae* of the Synod of 1971, and advocates broadmindedness in our dealing with ex-priests, and explores some possibilities of using their expertise in laical apostolates in the Catholic Church, especially during our times of dearth of priests and scanty vocations.

Küng, Hans: *Lo Que Debe Permanecer en la Iglesia*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 68 págs. — Rústica 100 pesetas.

It was Cardinal Bea who once said that dogma, natural law and divine positive law are the only permanent elements in the Catholic Church; and that human positive law may be compromised with, by the competent ecclesiastical authorities, on behalf of ecumenism.

About this same subject Küng says that it is only Jesus Christ that is permanent in the Catholic or even any other Christian Church, and elaborates on the extent of his assertion for our times, for the Christian churches, for society and for every individual Christian.

If Küng means that what Jesus Christ taught by word and example is the only permanent element of the Church, he merely says in so many words what Cardinal Bea had said. The rub is that even the name of Jesus Christ is a weasel word that can be slanted to any purpose, much in the same way that the Bible has been used to prove any new-fangled doctrine which is not really of God. For instance, some heretics of old argued from that Jesus Christ was a celibate the evil origin and nature of matrimony. Thus Küng's essay is much less precise than the formula of Cardinal Bea, even for the careful reader.

Kuss, Otto: *San Pablo*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 488 págs. — Rústica 650 pesetas; tela 750 pesetas.

Revelation is contained in Holy Scripture and Tradition, and St. Paul wrote about one-fifteenth (1/15) of the Bible and contributed much to Tradition. Professor Kuss, an eminent biblical scholar, authored this book in which he tries to answer the following and related questions: 1. Why was St. Paul the most prominent spokesman of Christianity, even during the lifetime of the other Apostles? 2. Who were his main adversaries? 3. How enduring has been his influence? 4. What is his relevance to our age? His elucidating answers substantiate once more that St. Paul's doctrine is a perfect and comprehensive compendium of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Macquarrie, John: *El Pensamiento Religioso en el Siglo XX*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 556 págs. — Rústica 650 pesetas; tela 750 pesetas.

The author is a scholar of surprising erudition and uncommon depth. This work of his, which customarily should have required a team of researchers and scholars working overtime for several years, was finished single-handed in the short span of four years. This is, as we know, the most comprehensive history of 20th philosophical and theological thought of all colors, shades and hues. Our trivial brickbat is that the treatment of Catholic thought of our century suffers

from incompleteness by comparison with other less important ideologies or systems. But we admire the impartiality and objectivity of Mr. Macquarrie in his exposition of Catholic currents, though he is of another Christian persuasion. Kudos to him, whose work we heartily recommend to serious students of contemporary philosophy and theology.

Trilling, Wolfgang: *Jesús Y los Problemas de Su Historicidad*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 224 págs. Rústica 250 pesetas.

This book makes for an absorbing perusal even by those of us who have never entertained the least shade of doubt about the historicity of Jesus Christ and His deeds. The reader gets the impression that Jesus Christ was so self-effacing and humble he cared little about being noticed and reported about by coeval historians, a few of which, however, devoted to Him some lines or even paragraphs. This work of Trilling, an eminent biblical scholar and biblical consultant to the German Hierarchy, has been a "best-seller" in its original German edition and even in its translations.

Jesus Christ chose His own unpretentious historians, namely, the authors of the gospels and other portions of the New Testament, the coherent testimonies of which led Rousseau to say: "The facts of the life of Socrates of which no one doubts are less attested than those of Jesus Christ."

Though for the faithful this book is of little use and relevance, for the doubting Thomases indeed it is a spiritual bonanza.

Basset, Bernard: *Orar de Nuevo*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 184 págs. — Rústica 200 pesetas.

This book has the *imprimatur* of the Ordinary of Barcelona. The portion of the book about the "First Steps" (pp. 96-120) is the most useful for the aspirant to holiness. According to our Lord, solitude and paucity of words are conditions of *personal* prayer (cf. Matth. 6:6-7), but the Christian enjoys a wide leeway as to posture, time and other circumstances of personal prayer. The exercise of the presence of God is the best preparation for prayer. This book is a very practical guide on the most noble act of man: his conversation with God.

Enomiya-Lasalle, Hugo M.: *El ZEN entre Cristianos*. Editorial Herder, Barcelona, 1975 — 80 págs. — Rústica 100 pesetas.

According to Cicero's dictum, there is no system but has some truth and good. Or as the adage goes: "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good." The Zen and yoga are Buddhistic systems of (transcendental) meditation and ways of life, in which special emphasis is given to physical postures (especially the lotus or cross-legged sitting pose), methodical breathing, and psychical concentration. Prayer both vocal and mental (meditation) is one of the basic duties of every Christian, but many a one prays by spurts or on spurts of the moment. Many Buddhists — and Moslems too — seem to be more earnest than many Christians as to the externals of prayer, but the content of their meditation is abysmally different from that of Catholic contemplation. So from the Zen we have a few lessons to learn and practise, in step with the ecumenical movement so much encouraged by Vatican II.